



**The Office Of State Treasurer
Denise L. Nappier**

Press Release

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**STATE TREASURER NAPIER ANNOUNCES 63 WINNERS OF
2014 CHET DREAM BIG! COMPETITION**

Three Students Win Top Prize of \$1,000 CHET Contribution

HARTFORD, CT – The statewide CHET Dream Big! Competition, which asks students to share their dreams about life after college through drawings and essays, has selected 63 winners – including three \$1,000 grand prize winners – from nearly 4,000 entries.

Aspiring doctors, police officers, teachers, charity workers and more participated in this year's competition. In addition to the three grand prize winners, who each will receive a \$1,000 contribution to a CHET college savings account, 60 students from the State's eight counties won \$500 contributions.



“Dream Big! emphasizes the notion of going to college for students. We’re pleased that through CHET we can introduce so many families to the importance of saving for college early and give them a head start in planning for their children’s education,” said State Treasurer Denise L. Nappier, Trustee for the Connecticut Higher Education Trust (CHET).

Liya Simon, a 5th grader from Middlefield and recipient of one of the three grand prizes, wrote an essay about her dream to keep books alive for the next generation. “I am inspired to be a writer by the books that I have read, and I think that other kids might be too, if they would read more,” she shared after learning she was a winner. The other two grand prize winners were Rana Dest, a 1st grader from Mansfield, and Gavin Yu, a 2nd grader from Montville.

The Dream Big! Competition, which ran from January 27 through March 26, 2014, is aimed at getting students to think early about college. It features two entry categories based on grade level. Students from kindergarten to third grade submitted drawings expressing what they want to do after college. Students in fourth and fifth grade wrote an essay answering the question, “How will I change the world after college?” Entries were judged based on five criteria: creativity, originality, portrayal of theme, spelling and grammar.

The 3,954 entries, up from 2,300 entries in 2013, came from 132 of the State's 169 municipalities. The 63 winners hail from 38 different cities and towns across the state.

Prize Awarded to School with Highest Number of Entries

This year's competition also included school and teacher prizes. Vance Village School in New Britain submitted the highest number of entries on behalf of its students, with 239 students entering the Competition. Vance won the Competition's first ever top school prize of \$500.

"Vance Village School is extremely honored to be recognized by the CHET Dream Big! Competition. We encourage our students daily to set goals and have hopes and dreams throughout the school year. As an elementary school, we lay the foundation with our students, discussing the journey to college and what it can look like as long as you put in the effort," said Sarah Harris, Principal of the school. "Dream Big! was a great way for us to reinforce our district and school goal of preparing students to be college and/or career ready. It was a very special day receiving notification that Vance Village School had the largest number of participants! It truly takes a village, and we are honored to receive this recognition."

Ten teachers statewide who submitted the highest number of student entries each won an iPad mini for their classrooms. Two teachers from Hartford and one each from schools in Bridgeport, East Hartford, New Britain, Bridgeport, Wolcott, Trumbull, New Haven, and Meriden were recognized for their participation.

"I believe that contests like Dream Big! have a meaningful impact on my students. They really enjoyed creating goals for themselves and, for some of my younger students, this planted the seeds for seeing higher education as a tool for obtaining their dreams," said Rachel Glover, a teacher at Madison School in Bridgeport. "I was thrilled to be able to challenge my students to dream big and help to instill the idea that they can go to and graduate from college."

All the winning students and teachers were recognized at a ceremony today at Rentschler Field in East Hartford, with Scot Haney of WFSB-TV Channel 3 as the Master of Ceremonies. Treasurer Nappier awarded plaques to each student winner.

A full list of student winners follows. Winning entries will be viewable at www.chetdreambig.com.

- Gurbeer Athwal, Shepherd Glen Elementary School, Hamden
- Elizabeth Atkins, Harwinton Consolidated School, Harwinton
- Nicholas Atkins, Harwinton Consolidated School, Harwinton
- Reid Babcock, Birch Grove Primary School, Tolland
- Jayden Bailey, Margaret M. Generali Elementary School, Waterbury
- Camille Barclay, Marvin Elementary School, Norwalk
- Tyler Burdick, North Stonington Elementary School, North Stonington
- Matthew Cardamone, St. Mary Magdalen School, Oakville
- Evan Carpenter, George Hersey Robertson School, Coventry
- Marcus Chederquist, Mohegan School, Uncasville
- Daniel Collier, Lordship Elementary School, Stratford
- Adelyn Cournoyer, Woodstock Elementary School, Woodstock

- Zakiya Deas, Alfred E. Burr Elementary School, Hartford
- Kemuel Delgado, John S. Martinez School, New Haven
- Rana Dest, Dorothy C. Goodwin Elementary School, Mansfield
- Olivia Dickinson, St. Mary - St. Joseph School, Willimantic
- Dylan Dzat, George Hersey Robertson School, Coventry
- Marian Echevarria, Alfred E. Burr Elementary School, Hartford
- Patrick Ferns, Sterling Community School, Sterling
- Katie Fortin, Woodstock Elementary School, Woodstock
- Aidan Fox, Algonquin School, Prospect
- Taina Garrett, Nathan Hale Arts Magnet School, New London
- Olivia Giuffria, West Woods Upper Elementary School, Farmington
- Ashley Gomez, Brookside Elementary School, Norwalk
- Moises Quintanilla, Park City Magnet School, Bridgeport
- Wesley G. Szollosy-Hallock, Sarah Noble Intermediate School
- Alen Hrustic, Naylor School, Hartford
- Aiden Keegan, Annie Fisher STEM Magnet School, Hartford
- Sophie Kulas, Brewster Elementary School, Durham
- Matthew Lara, Haddam Elementary School, Haddam
- Dean Lawrence, Woodstock Elementary School, Woodstock
- David Levanto, North Stonington Elementary School, North Stonington
- Brooke Lloyd, Haddam Elementary School, Haddam
- David Lops, Newfield Elementary School, Stamford
- Justin Luce, Anna E. Norris Elementary School, East Hartford
- Shawnayza Mason, Macdonough School, Middletown
- Maya Mastroianni, Long Meadow Elementary School, Middlebury
- Skyla Mcelhattan, Vance Village Elementary School, New Britain
- Ashlynn Miles, Lisbon Central School, Lisbon
- Yanzel Montalvo, Smalley Academy, New Britain
- Makendra Mowad, St. Joseph School, Bristol
- Gus Nocera, Macdonough School, Middletown
- Katherine Park, Weston Intermediate School, Weston
- Sibora Qosja, Margaret M. Generali Elementary School, Waterbury
- Eva Ramos, Anna E. Norris Elementary School, East Hartford
- Randall James Rawcliffe, Woodstock Elementary School, Woodstock
- Angel Rivera, John S. Martinez School, New Haven
- Jessica Roy, Stafford Elementary School, Stafford
- Learra Ruggeri, Northeast Academy, Mystic
- Mannal Saleh, Smalley Academy, New Britain
- Mia Sanchez, Alcott Elementary School, Wolcott
- Isabelle Sarandrea, Polk Elementary School, Watertown
- Abby Scipio, Gaffney Elementary, New Britain
- Joseph Sheehan, Hindley Elementary School, Darien
- Chaz Simmons, Anna E. Norris Elementary School, East Hartford
- Liya Simon, Memorial Middle School, Middlefield

- Diana Sorto-Guzman, Madison Elementary School, Bridgeport
- Owen Staskelunas, Haddam Elementary School, Haddam
- Josephine Swinton, George Hersey Robertson School, Coventry
- Naiah Talbot, West Stafford Elementary School, Stafford Springs
- Alberto Velez, Gaffney Elementary School, New Britain
- A'zaria Womber, Polk Elementary School, Watertown
- Gavin Yu, Mohegan School, Uncasville

About CHET



The CHET direct-sold 529 college savings plan, which is managed by TIAA-CREF Tuition Financing, Inc., was established in 1997, and as of December 31, 2013 has grown to more than \$2 billion in assets and more than 91,000 accounts.

The State of Connecticut offers CHET to help families save for future college costs. Funds deposited into a CHET account have tax advantages and can be used at accredited colleges and universities across the country, including vocational and technical schools, and some colleges abroad.

Connecticut residents are allowed to deduct 529 contributions from their state income taxes -- up to \$5,000 for an individual or up to \$10,000 for a married couple filing jointly. As with all 529 plans, investment earnings are exempt from state and federal taxes if used for qualified educational expenses.

CHET is an investment vehicle, not merely a savings plan. It offers eleven investment options, allowing participants to select an option or combination of options that best fit their higher education saving needs and investment philosophy. Options vary depending on the age of the beneficiary and the participant's tolerance for risk.

For more information about CHET, visit www.aboutchet.com or call the customer service center at (866) 314-3939.

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