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## **CHET Challenges Connecticut Students to Dream Big** *Dream Big! Competition Inspires Creative Thinking About College*

**HARTFORD, Conn. – February 2009** – Connecticut State Treasurer Denise L. Nappier and the Connecticut Higher Education Trust (CHET), Connecticut's 529 college savings plan, have unveiled the CHET Dream Big! Competition. The competition incorporates drawing and writing essays and poetry into a motivational activity encouraging students to think about career opportunities.

The CHET Dream Big! Competition is a drawing, essay and poetry contest that runs until April 3, 2009 and is sponsored by the State of Connecticut Treasurer's office and CHET. A panel of writers, poets and artists and other local Connecticut celebrities, will judge all submissions. Three winners from each of the eight Connecticut counties will be chosen and the parents or legal guardians of these 24 county winners will each receive a \$250 prize. Three overall statewide winners will also be chosen and their parents or legal guardians will each receive a prize of \$500. Additionally, teachers or principals of the three statewide winners will receive \$150 for a classroom celebration.

This contest is created to excite students about drawing and writing in a way that is educational and inspires children to "dream big" about their future after college. The CHET Dream Big! Competition also creates a new line of communication through which CHET can educate children and families that dreams are the key to a future that includes college, but that dreams alone are not enough to pay for a higher education. It is never too early to start saving and planning for future higher education costs.

Designed for grades Kindergarten (K) through six (or home school equivalent), the contest runs until April 3, 2009. All entries for the CHET Dream Big! Competition must be postmarked by April 3, 2009 and received by April 7, 2009. In its final stages, the CHET Dream Big! Competition will award prizes to 24 Connecticut public school winners (or home school equivalent) who best express their dream careers following college.

Treasurer Nappier believes that all contest participants are winners as their families learn more about how the state can help their children to realize the dream of a college education through long term investments starting right now.

"Ultimately the goal in sponsoring this competition is to raise public awareness about the need to maintain confidence in the value of long term investing. We know that the current economic downturn has had a chilling effect on market activity and investor confidence," said Treasurer Nappier, who serves as trustee for CHET. "While I am focused on the immediate impact of the economic upheaval, as State Treasurer I am also keenly focused on the long-term potential value when investing our state workers' retirement funds. We want parents and guardians to be aware of the long term potential for investment because opportunities often occur when things look the bleakest. I believe that's the case right now, especially for families saving for college."

Nappier went on to say that a dream is a significant motivator, but merely having a dream won't pay for college tuition. "Even during this market downturn, continuing to invest in a child's future over the long term can assist in preparing to meet college expenses. Families should consider opening a CHET account or continuing to contribute to their CHET accounts. In that way, parents and guardians demonstrate to children that being a patient investor can help achieve financial success", she said.

The CHET Dream Big! Competition asks children in grades K through three to draw a picture that portrays the answer to the question, "*What do I want to do after I go to college?*" Fourth- and fifth-graders are asked to write an essay explaining, "*How will I change the world after I go to college?*" Sixth-graders will answer the same question by making an original poem. An award ceremony will be held in mid-May, where friends and family will be invited to join the celebration.

The CHET Dream Big! Competition is designed to raise awareness about CHET, and help all Connecticut families save for college regardless of background or income. Anyone with a Social Security Number or Federal Taxpayer Identification Number, can get started with as little as \$25 per investment option (\$15 if their employer offers payroll deduction). Investors can even automate their investments via CHET's Automatic Contribution Plan making regular investments on a schedule designed to help meet their unique college savings goals. CHET offers several different investment options, so account owners can select the investment options that suit their risk tolerance, while federal and state tax advantages help them to put more of their money toward future college expenses.

For official contest rules and more information, or to receive CHET Dream Big! materials, schools and parents are asked to call (860) 305-4605 or visit [www.chetdreambig.com](http://www.chetdreambig.com). The CHET Dream Big! Competition is sponsored by the State of Connecticut Treasurer's Office and CHET.

**NO PURCHASE NECESSARY TO ENTER OR WIN. VOID WHERE PROHIBITED.**

TIAA-CREF Tuition Financing, Inc. (TFI), serves as Program Manager for CHET. TFI is part of the TIAA-CREF group of companies. TIAA-CREF has been providing financial services and investment experience for 90 years. Their combined assets under management equate to approximately \$363 billion (as of December 31, 2008) and they are best known as the leading provider of retirement services in the academic, research, medical and cultural fields. The CHET program was established in 1997, and has now grown to over \$932 million in assets with over 84,000 individual accounts (as of January 31, 2009). Connecticut State Treasurer Denise L. Nappier serves as Trustee of CHET and has been granted the authority to oversee the program.

For more information about CHET, visit [www.aboutchet.com](http://www.aboutchet.com). Applications and other information about the program are also available by calling the customer service center at 866-314-3939.

***Before investing in CHET 529 College Savings Plan, you should consider whether the state you or your designated Beneficiary reside in or have taxable income in has a 529 plan that offers favorable state income tax or other benefits that are only available if you invest in the state's 529 plan.***

***Consider the investment objectives, risks, charges and expenses before investing in the Plan. Please call toll-free 866-314-3939 or visit***

[www.aboutchet.com](http://www.aboutchet.com). for a Disclosure Booklet containing this information. Read it carefully.

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The CHET Plan is administered by the Connecticut State Treasury. TIAA-CREF Tuition Financing, Inc. (TFI) serves as Program Manager. TFI's affiliate, TIAA-CREF Individual & Institutional Services, LLC, member FINRA, is the distributor.

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