



The Office Of State Treasurer  
Denise L. Nappier

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## News

**PRESS RELEASE**  
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### **CHET ADVANCE SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS CHEERED, PRAISED BEFORE PACKED HOUSE** *Winners Come From All Eight Counties, and Almost Half the Towns in the State*

HARTFORD, CT – It was standing room only recently at the Legislative Office Building when more than 300 people came together to share with students their excitement at winning a 2013 CHET *Advance* Scholarship. The parents, relatives and state and school officials joined State Treasurer Denise L. Nappier in a special ceremony to celebrate the award of 200 \$2,500 Scholarships to high school seniors from across the State.

Emotions were evident at the ceremony, as students and their parents told how the scholarships being awarded made their dreams of college more real. Several students said they did not really think that college was a possibility until the scholarship opportunity arose; others said that this is the first time they had won anything, certainly nothing as important as a \$2,500 college scholarship.

“I was so moved by the students’ stories,” said Treasurer Nappier, Trustee for CHET. “We can talk abstractly all we want about the cost and importance of a college education, and offer reams of statistics, but none of that compares to the compelling stories of actual students with the will to succeed,” she said.

When Eric Vega got the news that he had won a 2013 CHET *Advance* Scholarship, the senior at Central High School in Bridgeport bounded down the stairs to share his excitement with his parents.

“We gathered for a group hug and with tears of joy that their little boy is going to college to study in Criminology & Forensic Science,” said Vega, who is applying to George Mason University and the University of New Haven, among other schools.

A second winner, Rachel Leaverton, arrived at the Legislative Office Building with her parents an hour early for the October 30 ceremony to celebrate the 2013 CHET Scholarship winners; she was so excited, she didn’t want to miss a minute.

Rachel, a senior at Platt High School in Meriden, took the opportunity to tour the State Capitol, where fittingly in 1996 the General Assembly created CHET, the Connecticut Higher Education Trust, to help families save for college.

“Both of my older siblings have attended college at UCONN, which has put a huge monetary weight on my parents’ shoulders. With this scholarship helping fund my college education, I can focus more on my studies,” said Rachel to an overflow crowd at the celebration. She plans to study Accounting at the University of Connecticut, Quinnipiac University or Bentley University.

Dar’Ron Brown, a senior at the small Metropolitan Business Academy in New Haven, touched the audience when he told them, “With this scholarship I plan to make a difference in my own life and with that difference, I pray I make a difference in someone else’s.” Dar’Ron plans to study at Western Connecticut State University to become a surgical nurse.

“These students had the drive to put their applications in and go for an opportunity. Their remarks remind us that affordability is a critical concern for many students and their parents. And while we are far from making college accessible to all students, I hope that the CHET *Advance* Scholarship can help these 200 students to fulfill their academic potential,” Treasurer Nappier said.

A total of 3,635 students entered the CHET *Advance* Scholarship contest. A breakdown of the winners found that:

- They attend 98 different high schools, comprised of 85 public high schools; 10 parochial high schools; and three independent high schools. Two of the winners are home-schooled students.
- The high schools with the most winners are New London High School, Central High School of Bridgeport, and Platt High School of Meriden.
- Almost half the towns in the State have at least one winner, and all eight counties are represented among the winners. One hundred-thirty of the winners are young women; 70 are young men.
- Thirty-five of the 200 recipients said that the University of Connecticut is their first choice for college. Another 24 listed one of the four state universities as their top choice. The remainder offered schools as distant as Arizona State University. Regionally, several expressed hope that they will attend Columbia, Yale University or the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. And, one said he is applying to the U.S. Naval Academy.

Also speaking at the ceremony were school officials, who echoed the comments of the students, noting the joy that their winners showed when they learned the news and expressing thanks that the program was open to all students, in all corners of the state.

Maureen Gore, School Counselor at Central High School in Bridgeport, told the audience, “This program has provided many immigrants, non-traditional families and first-generation college bound students within Bridgeport and other metropolitan areas the possibility of the American Dream. It created an excitement among students that conversations and decisions within government were directly inclusive and reflective of their needs and challenges.”

CHET *Advance* Scholarship is an annual program administered under the banner of CHET, Connecticut’s 529 college savings plan. TIAA-CREF Tuition Financing, Inc. and The Hartford, plan managers for CHET Direct-Sold and CHET Advisor-Sold, respectively, contribute annually into a scholarship account to finance the scholarship program in accordance with their contracts with the Treasurer’s Office to manage CHET 529. No state funds are used for awards issued under CHET *Advance* Scholarship.

Plans are underway to roll out the second phase of CHET *Advance* Scholarship during the next calendar year for younger students as well, with a portion of the scholarship winners chosen based on need and scholastic achievement. Altogether, CHET *Advance* Scholarship plans to distribute a total of more than \$2 million during the next four years.