



The Office Of State Treasurer
Denise L. Nappier

News

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CHET LAUNCHES 2016 DREAM BIG! COMPETITION

Art and Essay Contest Encourages Elementary and Middle School Students To Start Saving for College; Competition to Award \$30,000 to Connecticut Students and Schools

HARTFORD, CT – State Treasurer Denise L. Nappier announced today the launch of the 2016 Dream Big! Competition, a statewide drawing and essay contest aimed at getting Connecticut students in kindergarten through eighth grade to think about their education and careers.



Now in its ninth year, the Dream Big! Competition will award a total of \$26,000 in CHET contributions to 48 students who best share their dreams about life after college in an original drawing or essay. Four students will receive a \$1,000 grand prize; the others will receive \$500. Winners will receive their prize as a contribution to a new or existing CHET account.

In addition, schools that submit Dream Big! entries on behalf of students have a chance to win one of eight \$500 cash prizes.

“The Dream Big! entries we receive showcase that even at a young age this generation has a profound desire to help others and make a positive impact on our society,” said Treasurer Nappier, Trustee of CHET. “We want to encourage students, even those who are just starting formal education this year in kindergarten with much hope and promise, to envision their future and for their families to begin thinking about how that future can be achieved.”

To enter, kindergarten through third graders are asked to share artwork depicting what they want to do after they go to college. Fourth through eighth grade students are asked to answer in a 250 word essay how they will change the world after college.

The four \$1,000 grand prize winners will be chosen from all entries; one winner each will be chosen from grades K and 1; grades 2 and 3; grades 4 and 5; and grades 6, 7 and 8. Thirty-two winners (four per county) will each win a \$500 CHET account. Twelve statewide winners representing Connecticut’s Review and Turnaround Schools or judges’ picks also will each be awarded a \$500 CHET account.

The 2015 competition, which ran from January to March, 2015 received over 6,200 entries, the highest number of entries in the competition's nine year history.

One entrant was Julia Walker, a 7th grader from East Lyme, who wrote an essay about her dream to "inspire children who are less privileged than I" with stories she has written from the heart. "When I am done writing my books, I will go to poor schools and donate my writing to them. Everybody deserves the same amount of education, even if we are in different countries, and I want equality around the world," she wrote. Julia received one of the four grand prizes in 2015.

Also a 2015 grand prize winner, Matthew Breier, a 5th grader from Woodbridge, said he wants to study biology in college to become a scientist involved in conservation. "By being a scientist, I know that I will be able to use my observations not only to help primates, but also to save our forests and our world in all its amazing green beauty," he wrote.

"Attending college is one of the most important steps a young person can take on the path toward making their dreams come true and the record breaking number of entries in 2015 underscores the help families need to save for college," added Treasurer Nappier. "Our mission is to educate families about the importance of saving early and to assist them by providing an affordable savings option that will help make college achievable for their children,"

Eight schools statewide, one in each county, will also be awarded a \$500 cash prize and recognized as the top Dream Big! school in that county. To be eligible the winning school in each county must submit a minimum of 100 entries on behalf of entrants and have the highest number of entries in that county. School winners in prior years have used the money to purchase library books, classroom material and other items to enrich their students learning experience.

"Dream Big! is a strong match for schools and teachers who even at the youngest grades are focused on preparing their students for their future and making sure they are on a path to being college ready. Many teachers take advantage of the art or essay element and use it as a tool to inspire students to think about their future and establish the link to the role college plays in achieving their goals," Treasurer Nappier said.

The Dream Big! Competition is sponsored by the State Treasurer's Office, TIAA-CREF Tuition Financing, Inc. and CHET. Entry deadline is March 30, 2016. Printable entry forms, official rules and additional details can be found at www.CHETDreamBig.com. No purchase is necessary to enter or win.

Dream Big! entries are judged within four grade groups -- K-1, 2-3, 4-5, and 6-8 -- based on theme, originality and creativity. Drawings will also be evaluated based on artistic design and attractiveness with essays also judged on overall grammar, spelling and punctuation.

About CHET

The State of Connecticut offers CHET to help families save for future college costs. Funds saved in a CHET account can be used at accredited colleges, universities, and vocational trade schools across the country for qualified higher education expenses. Some colleges abroad are also eligible.

Since CHET was established in 1997, more than 35,000 students have used more than \$1.2 billion in CHET funds to pay for college costs through the CHET Direct and CHET Advisor programs, as of December 31, 2015. Currently, CHET has more than \$2.7 billion in assets and over 120,000 accounts.

The CHET direct-sold plan is administered by the State Treasurer's Office, and managed by TIAA-CREF Tuition Financing, Inc. For more information about CHET, visit www.aboutchet.com or call the customer service center at (866) 314-3939.

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