



The Office Of State Treasurer
Denise L. Nappier

News

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TREASURER NAPIER RECOGNIZES 48 STATEWIDE WINNERS ON 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF CHET DREAM BIG! COMPETITION

*\$26,000 in CHET College Savings Accounts Awarded To Kindergarten – 8th Grade
Students*

HARTFORD, CT – Future engineers, designers, firefighters, journalists, artists, photographers, police officers, teachers, scientists, astronauts, and more were among the winners of the 2017 CHET Dream Big! Competition, which asks students to share their dreams about life after college through drawings and essays, State Treasurer Denise L. Nappier announced today.



The 48 winners were invited to an open house reception at the Connecticut Science Center on Friday, May 19. Treasurer Nappier presented certificates to each student winner and celebrated the competition's 10th anniversary with a festive birthday cake.

“As the cost of a college education continues to rise, so does the concern for how Connecticut's families are going to help their children pay for that education. Dream Big! serves as a stepping stone for many families to start on their journey to saving for college,” said Treasurer Nappier., Trustee of the Connecticut Higher Education Trust (CHET), Connecticut's 529 college savings program.

The competition, which was open to students in kindergarten through eighth grade, drew more than 2,800 entries from schools in 106 of the State's 169 municipalities. Four grand prize winners will each receive a \$1,000 contribution to a CHET college savings account, and 44 additional students will receive \$500 contributions.

Over the last 10 years, the CHET Dream Big! Competition has made contributions to 724 accounts, totaling more than \$239,000. Over 31,000 Connecticut students have shared their college dreams in Dream Big! entries.

The grand prize winners are Mary Singer, an 8th grader at Tolland Middle School, who wrote about the importance of service to the community and a college education as a foundation; Nathaniel Johnson, a 4th grader at George Hersey Robertson Intermediate School in Coventry, who wrote that he wants to become a wildlife photographer and create national parks to protect animals; Juliet Murphy, a 3rd grader from Kelley Elementary School in Southington, who said she wants to be an evening news anchor; and Amber

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Apicelli, a kindergartener from Pomfret Community School, who said she wants to be a police sketch artist.

In her essay, Mary wrote, “Why is it important that the future generations are educated and politically active? An educated generation will find a cure for cancer, build life-saving technology, and even visit Mars. A politically aware generation will seek world peace, volunteer in the community, and stand up for equality everywhere.”

“As a wildlife photographer, I would like to travel the world taking pictures documenting the current state of endangered animals. I would also like to use some of the money I make taking pictures to buy land for national parks where animals can live without pollution and hunting,” Nathaniel wrote in his essay,

Juliet’s entry was an unusual 3-D drawing depicting three news anchors behind a desk. Amber depicted herself at an easel drawing a sketch of a police suspect.

Among the other winners, for the first time, an entry included an actual painting. Thea Barbioto, a 3rd grade student at Multicultural Magnet School in Bridgeport, submitted a self-portrait of herself painting in a studio at night. Her drawing depicted a painting on the wall of the studio and her entry included the actual painting -- an outdoor scene of fall foliage on canvas. Thea was a Fairfield County winner of a \$500 CHET contribution.

For the Dream Big! Competition, kindergarteners through third graders were asked to share artwork depicting what they want to do after they go to college. Fourth through eighth grade students were asked to answer in a 250 word essay how they will change the world after college.

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

Eight \$500 School Prizes Awarded to Top School in Each County

Eight schools, one in each county, won a \$500 prize for submitting the highest number of entries on behalf of students in that county.

Smalley Academy in New Britain, the winner in Hartford County, submitted the highest number of entries statewide with 490 students entering the competition. Additional school winners were: Madison Elementary School, Bridgeport (Fairfield County); Eli Terry Jr. Middle School, Terryville, (Litchfield County); Macdonough School, Middletown, (Middlesex County); Edith E. Mackrille School, West Haven, (New Haven County); North Stonington Elementary School, North Stonington (New London County); George Hersey Robertson Intermediate School, Coventry (Tolland County); and Woodstock Elementary School, Woodstock (Windham County).

The Dream Big! Competition is sponsored by the State Treasurer’s Office, TIAA-CREF Tuition Financing, Inc. (TFI) and CHET. It is funded by TFI, the program manager; no state funds are used for awards issued through the Dream Big! Competition.

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

- Malk Abdalla, Smalley Academy, New Britain
- Manal Amrani, Scofield Magnet Middle School, Stamford
- Paris Andino, The Bridge Academy, Bridgeport
- Amber Apicelli, Pomfret Community School, Pomfret
- Thea Barbieto, Multicultural Magnet School, Bridgeport
- Aishwarya Benzy, Dodd Middle School, New Haven
- Alexander Carter, Spaulding Elementary School, Suffield
- Drew Caouette, Alcott Elementary School, Wolcott
- Davis Collette, Gainfield Elementary School, Southbury
- Marcus Concepcion, St. Mary Magdalen School, Watertown
- Athena Cope, East Rock Community Magnet School, New Haven
- Rachel Coppinger, Henry James Memorial School, Simsbury
- Molly Crabtree, Brooklyn Elementary School, Brooklyn
- Georgia Cross, Woodstock Elementary School, Woodstock
- Elena DeWire, Lisbon Central School, Lisbon
- Madeline Eberhard, Staffordville Elementary School, Stafford Springs
- Matthew Fleischer, Spring Glen School, Hamden
- Julia Freeman, Nathan Hale-Ray Middle School, Moodus
- Nathan Gray, Sarah Noble Intermediate School, New Milford
- Marcus Helenski, Frederick Brewster School, Durham
- Evelyn Hladky, Rock Hill Elementary School, Wallingford
- Nathaniel Johnson, George Hersey Robertson School, Coventry
- Aditya Kabra, East Lyme Middle School, East Lyme
- Alimatou Kao, The Bridge Academy, Bridgeport
- Raima Maitra, Lawrence School, Middletown
- Benjamin Martinez, Oakdale Elementary School, Oakdale
- Kyle McGuire, John Trumbull Primary Elementary School, Oakville
- Leomar Almo-Meléndez, Smalley Academy, New Britain
- Isabella Mitchell, Oakdale Elementary School, New London
- Saoirse Milikowski, George Hersey Robertson School, Coventry
- Juliet Murphy, Kelley Elementary School, Southington
- Tyler Odorski, Woodstock Elementary School, Woodstock
- Katherine Paz, Multicultural Magnet School, Bridgeport
- Mary Petrisko, Richard J. Kinsella School, Hartford
- Alex Perez, Vance Village Elementary School, New Britain
- Emma Perez, Smalley Academy, New Britain
- Arihanth Pharshy, South School, New Canaan
- Sophia Portillo, Vance Village Elementary School, New Britain
- Nathalie Saon, Davenport Ridge Elementary School, Stamford
- Yuvan Sampath, Lawrence Elementary School, Middletown
- Elliot Schatz, Derynoski Elementary School, Southington

- Mary Singer, Tolland Middle School, Tolland
- Remy Socha, Windermere Intermediate School, Ellington
- Lexi Thomas, Washington Primary School, Washington
- Samuel Victoria, Parish Hill Middle School, Chaplin
- Aislyn Wachnuik, R.M.T. Johnson School, Bethel
- Sena Wazer, Homeschool, Mansfield
- Kofi Obiri-Yeboah, Dr. John A. Langford Elementary School, East Hartford

About CHET

The Connecticut Higher Education Trust (CHET) direct-sold college savings plan was established in 1997 and as of April 30, 2017 has grown to more than \$2.77 billion in assets and 114,000 accounts. Nearly \$1.44 billion has been withdrawn from CHET accounts to help more than 40,000 students pay for college expenses.

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. Investment earnings are exempt from state and federal taxes if used for qualified educational expenses.

The CHET college savings plan offers fourteen 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.

The CHET direct-sold plan is administered by the Office of Connecticut State Treasurer Denise L. Nappier, 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. Find us on Facebook ([facebook.com/CHETcollegesavings](https://www.facebook.com/CHETcollegesavings)) or follow us on Twitter (@CHET529).

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