



**THE OFFICE OF
STATE TREASURER
DENISE L. NAPPIER**

NEWS

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Naugatuck Student Wins CHET Dream Big! Competition *Awarded \$750 at Award Ceremony for Winning Drawing*

HARTFORD, Conn. – June 4, 2009 – Naugatuck resident and third grade student at Maple Hill School, Sarah Michelle Viele, was one of three statewide winners of the CHET Dream Big! Competition sponsored by the State of Connecticut Treasurer's Office and the Connecticut Higher Education Trust (CHET). The CHET Dream Big! Competition is a statewide drawing, poetry and essay contest for students in grades Kindergarten (K) through six (6). CHET is the state's 529 college savings plan. Treasurer Nappier, who serves as trustee for CHET, hosted the official award ceremony held on May 27, 2009 at Goodwin College in East Hartford.

Hena Daniels, WFSB Channel 3 news anchor, was an enthusiastic emcee for the event. Goodwin College President Mark Scheinberg warmly congratulated the students, their schools and their families. But the luminaries of the afternoon clearly were the winners.



"I am so excited! I can't believe I won!" said state winner Sarah Michelle Viele. "My teacher, Mrs. Orsini, really wanted my whole class to enter and this goes to show that if you just try, you really can win!"

Nappier applauded all of the students who entered the Competition and who, at young ages, are already dreaming about college and their role in making a constructive contribution to their communities. "I am impressed with all of your work, which shows that you are not only talented and creative, but also reveals that you are all very thoughtful, smart and concerned about improving society," Nappier told the students.

In addition to stirring the creative juices of Connecticut students, a primary goal of the CHET Dream Big! Competition is "to emphasize to parents and loved ones the importance of having a plan in place as early as possible to help pay for the growing costs of a higher education," Nappier said.

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“Parents and guardians need to be knowledgeable of the potential benefits that investing early can provide to their long term educational goals, especially in these uncertain economic times,” she said.

In the CHET Dream Big! Competition, children in grades K through three (3) were asked to draw a picture that portrays the answer to the question, “*What do I want to do after I go to college?*” Fourth (4) and fifth (5) grade students were asked to write an essay explaining, “*How will I change the world after I go to college?*” Sixth (6) grade students answered the same question by penning an original poem.

Sarah Michelle Viele is one of over 1,800 children who entered the CHET Dream Big! Competition. A panel of judges, including writers, poets, artists, representatives from TIAA-CREF Tuition Financing, Inc. and the Connecticut State Treasurer’s Office selected the competition winners. Twenty county winners – three (3) from each of Connecticut’s eight counties – were selected. From those 20 county winners, three (3) statewide winners were chosen. Sarah’s drawing was chosen as a state winner based on its creativity, portrayal of theme and originality.

During the award ceremony, State Treasurer Denise L. Nappier presented Sarah’s parents with a total prize of \$750 that included a \$250 check that every county winner received, and an additional \$500 check for the statewide win. Sarah’s teacher, Mrs. Orsini, received a check for \$150 to put towards a classroom celebration in Sarah’s honor.

Sarah’s winning drawing, as well as all the county and state winning entries, can be found at <http://www.chetdreambig.com/>.

About CHET

The CHET Dream Big! Competition was developed to raise awareness about CHET, and remind families of the importance of developing a college savings strategy to help pay for future higher education costs. CHET also encourages all Connecticut families to plan 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).

Under a state law based on a proposal by Treasurer Nappier, Connecticut taxpayers may deduct from their Connecticut adjusted gross income contributions made to one or more CHET Accounts during the tax year up to these annual contribution deduction limits: (1) \$5,000 for an individual who is single, head of household, or married/civil union filing separately; and (2) \$10,000 for an individual who is married/civil union filing jointly, or qualifying widow(er) with dependent child. These limits apply on an aggregate basis (not a per beneficiary basis) to all contributions made to all CHET Accounts during the tax year. Connecticut taxpayers may not claim a deduction for a rollover into a CHET account from a non-CHET account or for a transfer into a CHET account from a Coverdell education savings account. This tax deduction applies only to CHET; no other 529 college savings plan in the state provides this incentive for Connecticut residents.

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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 \$351 billion (as of March 31, 2009), 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 **\$945 million in assets** with over **85,000 individual accounts (as of March 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; visit www.chetbigdream.com for more information about the CHET Big Dream! Competition and all 2009 student winners.

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 CHET. Please call toll-free 1-888-799-2438 or visit www.aboutchet.com for a Disclosure Booklet containing this information. Read it carefully.

The tax information contained herein is not intended to be used, and cannot be used by any taxpayer, for the purpose of avoiding tax penalties that may be imposed on the taxpayer. It was written to support the promotion of the products and services of the Plan. Taxpayers should seek advice based on their own particular circumstances from an independent tax advisor.

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.

The State of Connecticut, its agencies, TIAA-CREF Tuition Financing, Inc., Teachers Insurance and Annuity Association of America and its affiliates do not insure any account or guarantee its principal or investment return, except for TIAA-CREF Life Insurance Company's guarantee to the Connecticut Higher Education Trust under the Funding Agreement for the Principal Plus Interest Option. **Account value will fluctuate based upon a number of factors, including general market conditions.**

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