

## Local students win in CHET's Dream Big! competition

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A number of Litchfield County students were among the winners of the recent CHET Win Big poster and essay contest. Above, a poster by winner Matteo Conception, a student at St Mary Magdalen School in Oakville.

HARTFORD - Winners of the statewide 2019 CHET Dream Big! Competition, which asks students to share their dreams about life after college through drawings and essays, were recognized at a recent Hartford Yard Goats game against the Trenton Thunder.

CHET Dream Big! entrants were very specific about what they wanted to be when they grew up. Professions included FBI agents, pediatric surgeons, mechanical engineers, marine biologists, chemists, space scientists, mechanics, teachers, architects and entrepreneurs just to name a few.

Four grand prize winners will each receive a \$1,000 contribution to a CHET college savings account, and 44 additional students in grades K-8 will receive \$500 contributions.

"I am incredibly impressed with the heartfelt essays and expressive artwork that our talented young entrants produced for this year's competition. It's clear that a lot of time and effort were spent on these

entries. I congratulate all who entered, along with their teachers and parents. It was challenging to pick winners from among more than 2,000 submissions," said State Treasurer Shawn T. Wooden, who serves as Trustee for CHET.

Since inception, the CHET Dream Big! Competition has made contributions to 820 accounts, totaling more than \$291,000. More than 36,000 Connecticut students have shared their college dreams in Dream Big! entries.

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.

Litchfield County Winners include Carly McGuire, Polk Elementary School, Oakville, grand prize winner; Matteo Concepcion, St. Mary Magdalen School, Oakville; Madeline Hosking, Litchfield Center School; Rafael Morataya, Sarah Noble Intermediate School, New Milford; Payton Mozelak, Thomaston High School, Thomaston; and Molly Thomas, Sarah Noble Intermediate School, New Milford, Judge's pick.

Additionally, the CHET Dream Big! Competition awarded six schools a \$500 prize for having the highest percentage of student submissions. Those winners include: Gainfield Elementary School, Southbury; Vance Village Elementary School, New Britain; Madison Elementary School, Bridgeport; George Hersey Robertson School, Coventry; North Stonington Elementary School, North Stonington; MacDonough Elementary School, Middletown; and Sarah Noble Intermediate School, New Milford.

The Dream Big! Competition is sponsored by the State Treasurer's Office, TIAA, 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 gallery of winners and their entries are viewable at [www.chetdreambig.com](http://www.chetdreambig.com).

The Connecticut Higher Education Trust (CHET) direct-sold college savings plan was established in 1997 and as of December 31, 2018 has grown to more than \$2.9 billion in assets and 125,000 accounts. Nearly \$1.9 billion has been withdrawn from CHET accounts to help more than 51,000 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 direct-sold plan is managed by TIAA Tuition Financing, Inc. For more information about CHET, visit [www.aboutchet.com](http://www.aboutchet.com) or call the customer service center at 866-314-3939.