



CONNECTICUT  
STATE TREASURER  
SHAWN T. WOODEN



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# Treasurer Wooden Announces 2021 CHET Dream Big! Winners; Prizes Will Help Students Save For Higher Education

*Over \$4.5 Million Has Been Awarded  
To Connecticut Students Since 2013*

**HARTFORD, CT**, November 2, 2021 — Today, State Treasurer Shawn T. Wooden, Trustee of the Connecticut Higher Education Trust (CHET), announced the winners of this year's CHET Dream Big! competition. Treasurer Wooden noted that since 2013, this contest has awarded over \$4.5 million dollars to Connecticut students to help pay for future education expenses.

The competition theme for K-8 students focused on encouraging entrants to think about how they can make a difference in their community. From planting trees, recycling, and creating community compost farms to improve the environment, to dreaming of becoming cartoonists, teachers, and inventors, this year's entries showed how much students not only want to help make the world a better place to live, but how they also want to help one another succeed.

"I am proud of all the students who entered this year's CHET Dream Big Competition and am encouraged by their vision, dreams, and how so many are eager to make a difference in their communities. Their creativity and enthusiasm for finding ways to help our community is inspiring," said State Treasurer Wooden. "These are our future leaders, and it is this optimistic spirit that will propel change in the coming decades, creating a better Connecticut for us all."

Sixth-grader Janna C. of South Windsor, one of the winners, wants to become a community farm organizer to encourage people who enjoy farming to come together and share in their

passion. She also plans to organize an event where she invites members of the community to bring food scraps for composting to help reduce food waste and make the environment beautiful.

For the high school component of the CHET Dream Big! Competition, seniors were asked to showcase their future goals and/or leadership in their community. Topics that have recently dominated the news are of growing concern for this graduating class. Students tackled challenging topics including access to healthcare, financial literacy, the impacts of COVID - 19 across all socio-economic groups, and other forms of inequality.

Grand prize winner Christopher G. R. of Milford plans to attend Harvard University next fall to study political science with the goal of effecting change, on numerous levels, including promoting policies that improve and ensure equal representation of Latinos in elected office. “Think tank work, helping to craft effective policy that ultimately ends up being adopted by the legislatures can be just as impactful, both in shaping the conversation a la Green New Deal and the Sunrise Movement and as actual law as the inspiration for some of the most innovative policy we see today,” wrote Christopher.

“It makes me hopeful for the future to know that the high school class of 2022 has ambitious goals,” said State Treasurer Wooden. “Helping these students realize their goals is what CHET is all about and knowing that CHET will play a role in helping them achieve their dreams is nothing short of amazing. I encourage anyone learning about CHET for the first time to also open an account to help save for their loved ones’ higher education costs.”

A gallery of select CHET Dream Big! winners and their entries can be found at <https://www.fidelity.com/about-chet/dream-big-competition-winners>.

### **About CHET**

The Connecticut Higher Education Trust (CHET) direct-sold college savings plan was established in 1997 and has grown to more than \$3.5 billion in assets and 132,000 accounts. Over \$2.1 billion has been withdrawn from CHET accounts to help more than 57,000 students pay for college expenses. The State of Connecticut offers CHET to help families save for future higher education 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. For more information, visit [AboutCHET.com](https://www.aboutchet.com). Find us on [Facebook \(facebook.com/CHETcollegesavings\)](https://www.facebook.com/CHETcollegesavings), follow us on [Twitter \(@CHET529\)](https://twitter.com/CHET529) or on [Instagram \(@CHET529\)](https://www.instagram.com/CHET529).

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**The Connecticut Higher Education Trust (CHET) 529 College Savings Plan - Direct Plan is offered by the Treasurer of the state of Connecticut and managed by Fidelity Investments. If you or the designated beneficiary is not a Connecticut resident, you may want to consider, before investing, whether your state or the beneficiary's home state offers its residents a plan with alternate state tax advantages or other state benefits such as financial aid, scholarship funds and protection from creditors.**

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