



CONNECTICUT  
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SHAWN T. WOODEN



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## TREASURER SHAWN T. WOODEN ANNOUNCES TOP 18 CHET DREAM BIG! WINNERS

*THREE PRIZE-WINNING STUDENTS AWARDED \$25,000;  
15 STUDENTS AWARDED \$7,500*

*20 Connecticut Schools Also Announced as Recipients of  
Technology Prizes*

**HARTFORD, CT (December 21, 2022)** — State Treasurer Shawn T. Wooden, Trustee of the Connecticut Higher Education Trust (CHET), today announced the top 18 winners of this year's CHET Dream Big! competition. This year's prizes are the biggest in the history of the Dream Big! Competition.

Three students were awarded \$25,000 prizes, and 15 students were awarded \$7,500 prizes. An additional 240 students will be awarded \$500 prizes in January 2023.

Treasurer Wooden also announced 20 schools who will receive a \$7,500 technology prize. Each school in Connecticut that received at least one entry in the Dream Big! Competition was eligible for a random drawing for these prizes.

Since 2013, the Dream Big! Competition has awarded over \$4.5 million dollars to Connecticut students to help pay for future education expenses. This year's competition began on September 7 and ended on October 21 and was open to all Connecticut residents in grades K-12.

To enter, students were asked to submit a drawing, short essay or video answering a question focusing on their dreams for the future (depending on their grade level group, as defined in the competition Official Rules).

From advocating for therapy, promoting women’s rights, protecting the ocean, and creating a crossing guard program near school, to dreaming of becoming an astronaut, planting more trees, becoming a lawyer to fight for justice and equality, and helping sick children, the winning entries showcased imaginative and innovative dreams for themselves and their communities through essays, drawings, and videos.

“I am so impressed with the passion and inspiration expressed in the over 3,000 entries we received from Connecticut students in this year’s Dream Big! Competition,” **said State Treasurer Wooden**. “The students showed such creativity through their videos, essays and drawings, and I’d like to congratulate them and encourage them to keep pursuing their dreams and aspirations for the future.

“I also want to congratulate the 20 schools who won technology prizes,” he continued. “We are grateful for your dedication and your encouragement of your students to Dream Big.”

Grand prize winner in the kindergarten-fourth grade group, Annika of Avon, wants to become a scientist to help stop global warming. “And the first step of being a scientist is the next day of school.”

Grand prize winner in the fifth-eighth grade group Sofia of Plainville writes, “To improve my community, I want to get Hispanic voices heard....I think that we should have a speech/assembly on racism and equality because then that will show that it is not okay to do that, and would give people who say these mean things a moment to really think about it.”

First prize winner Julian of Woodbridge wants to use his family garden to help the less fortunate. “One day I would like to make a free farmstand where people can come and take what they need,” he wrote. “I think this idea would improve my community because in the New Haven area there is a lot of people who do not have a home and may not have food. If I could give them fresh free vegetables, then they could have a nutritious meal.”

For more information about the CHET Dream Big! Competition and winners vision [www.chetdreambig.com](http://www.chetdreambig.com).

### **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](http://AboutCHET.com). Find us on Facebook ([facebook.com/CHET529](https://facebook.com/CHET529)), follow us on Twitter (@CHET529) or on Instagram (@CHET529).

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