

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Coloring and Dreaming Earns JoMari Varner from Griffin  
\$1,529 Toward His College Savings**

*Anne Street Elementary School Was Also Awarded \$1,000*

ATLANTA, Ga. — This September, students across the state were encouraged to use their creativity and imagination to color *Hootie the Wise Old Owl* and answer the question, “When I graduate, I’m going to be a \_\_\_\_.” For JoMari Varner, a first grader from Griffin, Ga., this effort paid off as he was selected as the winner of \$1,529 to put toward his college savings. Varner’s school, Anne Street Elementary, also won \$1,000.

“JoMari told me he was going to win the day he colored it, and what a surprise when we found out he did win! We are all so excited, and it’s wonderful that his prize is money for his college education,” said Chandra Latae Varner. “He wants to be a veterinarian, and I hope this contribution to his college savings will help him make his dream come true.”

The sweepstakes was held by the ***Path2College 529 Plan***, the State of Georgia’s 529 college savings plan, to celebrate College Savings Month and encourage Georgia families to begin preparing financially for their children’s higher education. It was available to all Georgia children in Pre-Kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> grade, and Varner was selected randomly from the more than 4,000 entries as the 2011 winner.

“Each day when we received the entries, we were excited to read about the dreams these children have for their future,” said Shannon Ferguson, director of the ***Path2College 529 Plan***. “Whether a child wants to be a doctor or a farmer, we know that education is key to their success. We hope that this sweepstakes got Georgia students thinking about the work they need to do in order to achieve their goals and that it raised awareness among parents about the importance of planning for future college costs in order to help their children achieve their dreams..”

Anne Street Elementary hopes to use its winnings to support several of its programs to improve the quality of students’ education and educational experience. Some of the ways the school might use the money include supporting its math programs by bringing in a consultant to help

train teachers, taking students who participate in the Six Flags Reading Program to the amusement park and strengthening the school's behavior intervention rewards program.

"This money is great for our school, but what I'm really excited about is the contribution to JoMari's college savings," said Evelyn Jones, principal of Anne Street Elementary School. "This money is a seed that has been planted, and not only will it continue to grow, but his mindset toward life can be changed by this and his opportunities grow as well. He now has a college savings, and that is something to build on both financially, as well as for JoMari's expectations for life."

Dr. Curtis L. Jones, Jr., Griffin-Spalding County School System Superintendent, said, "I am excited that JoMari won this contest because it will help him work towards his dreams of going to college once he graduates from the Griffin-Spalding County School System. JoMari is a great example of how Griffin-Spalding students are achieving and daring to do better!"

In addition to the coloring sweepstakes, the **Path2College 529 Plan** is also currently offering a newborn sweepstakes open to Georgia residents. The sweepstakes will award one lucky Georgia newborn \$5,529 toward his/her college savings. Georgia babies born between January 1, 2011 and December 31, 2011 are eligible. Parents and grandparents of 2011 newborns can enter to win this exciting prize. No purchase necessary. Void where prohibited.

To learn more about the **Path2College 529 Plan**, and open an account online, visit [www.path2college529.com](http://www.path2college529.com).

#### **About the Path2College 529 Plan:**

The **Path2College 529 Plan** is a state of Georgia program that helps families prepare for the future costs of college tuition and other qualified expenses, such as fees, books, and certain room and board costs for colleges in Georgia and nationwide. The plan is easy to use and understand, with no sign-up, maintenance or third-party sales fees – just a low annual asset-based management fee, and an account can be opened online with as little as \$25.

Any earnings in the **Path2College 529 Plan** are federal and Georgia income tax-deferred and withdrawals for qualified higher education are federal and Georgia income tax free. In addition, the State of Georgia offers a state income tax deduction on contributions of up to \$2,000 per year, per beneficiary. (Transfers from another 529 plan are not eligible for the deduction. Recapture provisions apply.) Your account assets can be used at virtually any college or university in the country. The plan offers seven investment options and participants can arrange for automatic contributions to their accounts to be drawn directly from a bank account or made through payroll deduction with participating employers.

The **Path2College 529 Plan** is managed by TIAA-CREF Tuition Financing, Inc., which is part of the TIAA-CREF group of companies. The **Path2College 529 Plan** has more than \$1 billion in assets under management and more than 122,000 accounts as of July 1, 2011.

**Consider the investment objectives, risks, charges and expenses before investing in the Path2College 529 Plan. Please visit [www.path2college529.com](http://www.path2college529.com) for a Disclosure Booklet containing this and other information. Read it carefully.**

**Before investing in a 529 plan, you should consider whether the state you or your 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 that state's 529 plan.**

**We are required to notify you that 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. Taxpayers should seek advice based on their own particular circumstances from an independent tax advisor. Non-qualified withdrawals may be subject to federal and state taxes and the additional federal 10% tax.**

Account value for the Investment Options is not guaranteed and will fluctuate based upon a number of factors, including general market conditions.

TIAA-CREF Tuition Financing, Inc., Program Manager.

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