



FOUNDATION

Press Release

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North Carolina 8th Grader Finds Alpha in Portfolio & in Life, Wins SIFMA Foundation's InvestWrite[®] Competition

*Kaitlyn Ferguson Wins SIFMA Foundation's
Spring 2021 National InvestWrite[®] Competition*

New York, NY, August 26, 2021 – We could all learn something from 15-year-old Kaitlyn Ferguson. The extraordinary 8th-grader from Chapel Hill, North Carolina has charted her life goals and developed an investment strategy to fund them. Moreover, Ferguson developed her plan in the months that a pandemic created unprecedented challenges for her family and school life. For her brilliance and hard work, Ferguson cinched an exhilarating win in the SIFMA Foundation's Spring 2021 InvestWrite competition.

Competing in the middle school division, Ferguson, who attends Smith Middle, researched and composed an impressive short-term and long-term financial plan and now she is being recognized as the winner in the state of North Carolina.

SIFMA Foundation's InvestWrite national essay competition bridges classroom learning in math, social studies, and language arts with the practical research and knowledge required for saving, investing and long-term planning. It also serves as a culminating activity for The Stock Market Game[™] a highly effective in-person, remote learning and hybrid educational tool in which students invest and manage a hypothetical \$100,000 online portfolio of stocks, bonds, mutual funds and cash.

“SIFMA Foundation's programs provide youth of all backgrounds and especially in underserved communities the knowledge and tools for financial independence,” said Melanie Mortimer, President of the SIFMA Foundation. “We equip teachers to bring investor education into classrooms and prepare young people early in life to navigate the capital markets and financial decision-making. To date, we've transformed the lives of 20 million students like Kaitlyn through learning that is practical and fun.”

The Spring 2021 InvestWrite competition challenged students to write an essay about what is important for their future. They did research to determine how they would invest in the short run and

in the long term to benefit themselves and others and how stocks, bonds or mutual funds can be combined to create a successful diversified portfolio.

Ferguson developed a plan that would have an impact today and into the future and wowed the team of judges with her essay.

The Stock Market Game and InvestWrite are offered in North Carolina through the North Carolina Council on Economic Education and the programs are sponsored by Coastal Credit Union. “We honor and congratulate our InvestWrite winning student and teacher,” said Sandy Wheat, Executive Director of the North Carolina Council on Economic Education, “Helping North Carolina students better understand our economy, our markets, the role of investors, and how to make good investments will pay dividends for the students, their education, and the North Carolina economy.”

Kaitlyn Ferguson and her teacher, April Ferguson, were honored by the SIFMA Foundation and the North Carolina Council on Economic Education during the summer break.

Winning Essay by Kaitlyn Ferguson

The year 2020 was stressful because of Covid and my personal health problems. I was diagnosed with PCOS which caused me to gain more weight. I personally dealt with it by going to an endocrinologist and a nutritionist. They helped me by giving me information on how to eat healthier and exercise. My health issues helped me by giving me new recipes to work on and new goals. One of my goals is to become a chef because I want to help people eat healthier. I would like to go to Le Cordon Bleu in Paris to study and train to become a chef. I'm going to need to pay for this so I need to make sure I am financially healthy so I can move on with my dream. Personal and financial health are both important in reaching goals.

My short-term goal is to eat healthier and exercise more. When I was diagnosed with PCOS I had to make a lot of changes for my health. My PCOS causes me to be insulin resistant. By learning healthier ways of eating and exercising I have lost 18 pounds in three months. I have learned to cook and to create new recipes that are healthier. I realized during this time that I enjoy cooking and I would like to become a chef. I know I'm going to need to save up money for school, so during high school I am going to work in the summer. I will take the money I earn and invest it in stocks and mutual funds to help pay for culinary school.

Financial health is as important as personal health. This year in school I learned about the stock market and how to invest money. Companies like Amazon, Google, Apple, and Tesla are good stocks to purchase. They are good long-term stock investments because people need and use their products and services. For example, Amazon stock went up during Covid because people did not want to leave their house and used Amazon to deliver their groceries. This increased the value of Amazon and caused their stock to go up. Tesla stock has also increased in price because people want to use more green energy products, so they are investing in electric cars. Another good investment is in mutual funds. They allow you to put money in different stocks at one time. This helps you diversify your stocks and protect your money. I want to invest my money in a variety of stocks and mutual funds over the next four years so I can pay to attend Le Cordon Bleu. Investing will hopefully allow me to finish culinary school debt-free.

When I finish culinary school I want to start my own restaurant and work as a chef. By continuing to invest in the stock market, I will be able to afford my own restaurant. I would like to inspire children to eat healthier by preparing healthy meals. It's important for me to pass along healthy habits to others.

Investing in my health and my financial goals will help me become successful. Investing in the stock market will help my money grow and allow me to attend the college of my dreams. In turn, this will help me to reach my long-term goal of owning my own restaurant.

About the SIFMA Foundation for Investor Education

The SIFMA Foundation is dedicated to fostering knowledge and understanding of the financial markets for individuals of all backgrounds, with a focus on youth. Drawing on the involvement and expertise of educators and the financial industry, the SIFMA Foundation provides financial education programs and tools that strengthen economic opportunities across communities and increase individuals' access to the benefits of the global marketplace. Notable Foundation programs include The Stock Market Game™, which has enabled more than 20 million students to become financially prepared for life, the InvestWrite® national essay competition, the Capitol Hill Challenge™, and Invest It Forward®. For more information on the work of the SIFMA Foundation, visit www.sifma.org/foundation.

About InvestWrite®

InvestWrite® is a culminating activity for Stock Market Game students extending their classroom learning with a written challenge to address real-world financial issues and situations. Students must analyze, think critically and problem solve about a long-term saving and investing scenario. Nearly 250,000 student essays have been evaluated by their teachers and over 40,000 financial professionals have served as volunteer judges. Essays are judged by financial professionals who volunteer their time each year to ensure young people are exposed to the essentials of personal finance early in life. Judges evaluate students' understanding of long-term investing, diversification, the global capital markets, and factors that drive investments as well as their expression of investment ideas in essay form. Winners locally and nationally rise to the top to earn exciting awards and prizes including laptops, classroom pizza parties, trophies, plaques and banners, and certificates. For more information about InvestWrite®, visit www.investwrite.org.

About the North Carolina Council on Economic Education

The North Carolina Council on Economic Education, a nonprofit organization, provides North Carolina K-12 students with the economic knowledge and financial skills needed to thrive in the dynamic economy. By providing quality training and up-to-date resources, the North Carolina Council on Economic Education partners with teachers and school divisions to help students develop decision-making skills needed to be informed consumers, productive employees or innovative entrepreneurs, thoughtful investors, and reasoned voters. For more information, visit www.nccee.org.

About SIFMA

SIFMA is the leading trade association for broker-dealers, investment banks and asset managers operating in the U.S. and global capital markets. On behalf of our industry's nearly 1 million employees, we advocate on legislation, regulation and business policy, affecting retail and institutional investors, equity and fixed income markets and related products and services. We serve as an industry coordinating body to promote fair and orderly markets, informed regulatory compliance, and efficient market operations and resiliency. We also provide a forum for industry policy and professional development. SIFMA, with offices in New York and Washington, D.C., is the U.S. regional member of the Global Financial Markets Association (GFMA). For more information, visit www.sifma.org.

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