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Georgia Students Learn the Importance of Education through “The Choice Bus” State Farm® Fueling “Stay in School” Tour

GEORGIA – Nearly 1,000 students from Hancock Central Middle, Hancock Central High, Putnam County Middle and Warren County High schools will board **The Choice Bus** thanks to collaboration between State Farm® and The Mattie C. Stewart Foundation. Students will receive a firsthand look at what education can bring – at least \$1 million over a person’s lifetime if they graduate from college. The half-prison cell, half-classroom converted school bus, which visually portrays two different life perspectives, will visit students Tuesday, October 10 through Friday, October 13. The bus is one of six tools created by The Mattie C. Stewart Foundation devoted to helping reduce the dropout rate in the United States. Since 2008, **The Choice Bus** has visited more than 2,000,000 students in 21 states. The bus tour schedule includes:

Tuesday, October 10

Hancock Central Middle School
11311 Highway 15 North
Sparta, GA 31087
8:30 a.m. – 1:45 p.m.

Thursday, October 12

Putnam County Middle School
140 Sparta Highway
Eatonton, GA 31024
8:00 a.m. – 3:10 p.m.

Wednesday, October 11

Hancock Central High School
11311 Highway 15 North
Sparta, GA 31087
8:00 a.m. – 2:35 p.m.

Friday, October 13

Warren County High School
1857 Mitchell Rd.
Warrenton, GA 30828
8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

“When students board **The Choice Bus**, they get to experience what life is actually like from two different points of view. It helps students dig deep into thinking about their futures based on the decisions they will make. Connecting education to future lifetime earning potential and career goals is what we strive to encourage,” said Sherri Stewart, executive director of The Mattie C. Stewart Foundation.

Through a grant provided by State Farm, **The Choice Bus** visits schools along with the **Learn2Earn** Booklet and the **InsideOut** Toolkit. **Learn2Earn**, a financial literacy curriculum, was created by the foundation to help educators teach students about the importance of understanding the world of finance, such as budgeting, taxes, credit cards, loans, etc.

The **InsideOut** Toolkit consists of a Teacher's Guide, a Stay in School Pledge Card and the **InsideOut** documentary – a 26-minute DVD that exposes the true-life story of prison inmates and the long-term consequences that dropping out of school has caused. The documentary and companion Teacher's Guide have been used in classrooms and community centers in 49 states and Canada and viewed by an estimated 15,000,000 students, parents and community leaders.

"**The Choice Bus** has impacted thousands of lives," said Julie Smith, State Farm Insurance public affairs specialist. "It has been an honor to be proud partners with The Mattie C. Stewart Foundation and see a difference in the way our schools and communities feel about education. We believe that students now understand that their futures are based on the consequences of every decision they make."

State Farm and MCSF have teamed up for the last four years to proudly bring **The Choice Bus** to Alabama, Delaware, Georgia, Indiana, Mississippi, New York, South Carolina, Texas and additional State Farm territories. State Farm is determined to strive higher in all areas of helping students to stay connected to education and helping to build more education-focused environments.

Dr. Shelley Stewart, founder and president of The Mattie C. Stewart Foundation, said, "We are proud to work with State Farm to spread the message of education to Georgia. Illustrating to students the uncut vision of what poor choices leads to can help them think about their actions. Our mission is to continue spreading the power of education to our youth across the nation."

To learn more about The Mattie C. Stewart Foundation and **The Choice Bus**, visit www.mattiestewart.org.

About State Farm®

State Farm and its affiliates are the largest provider of car insurance in the U.S. In addition to providing auto insurance quotes, their 18,000 agents and more than 65,000 employees serve over 82 million policies and accounts – nearly 80 million auto, home, life, health and commercial policies, and nearly 2 million bank accounts. Commercial auto insurance, along with coverage for renters, business owners, boats and motorcycles, is available. State Farm Mutual Automobile Insurance Company is the parent of the State Farm family of companies. State Farm is ranked No. 41 on the 2014 Fortune 500 list of largest companies. For more information, please visit <http://www.statefarm.com>.

About The Mattie C. Stewart Foundation

The Mattie C. Stewart Foundation is a national nonprofit organization dedicated to reducing the dropout rate. The foundation was established in honor of Dr. Shelley Stewart's late mother, Mattie C. Stewart, in the summer of 2007 and is headquartered in Birmingham, Alabama. Its primary corporate partner is o2ideas, Inc., an advertising and public relations company also based in Birmingham. The mission of the foundation is to create tools and resources to help educators, community leaders and parents effectively address the dropout rate and increase the graduation rate. The foundation also partners with America's Promise Alliance, Communities In Schools, Jobs for Alabama's Graduates, the National Dropout Prevention Center, PepsiCo, Shelby County, State Farm and Verizon. For more information, visit www.mattiestewart.org.

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