



FOUNDATION

Press Release

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Fifth Grader Carter Kasarjian Places First in Arizona in the SIFMA Foundation's Spring 2023 National InvestWrite® Competition

*Young Investing Expert Celebrates Teamwork
to Create a Diversified Portfolio and Generate Long-Term Returns*

New York, NY, June 18, 2023 – “Great things in business are never done by one person; they’re done by a team,” Apple Founder Steve Jobs said. Carter Kasarjian couldn’t agree more. Now in 5th grade at Sonoran Sky Elementary School in Scottsdale, Arizona, Kasarjian understands how teamwork can translate into building a diversified portfolio geared for long-term financial success. Kasarjian’s approach led to an extraordinary achievement in the SIFMA Foundation’s Spring InvestWrite competition.

Kasarjian competed among thousands of other students around the country to write the best essay about long-term investing and the capital markets in the elementary school division. Kasarjian and his teacher, Amy Miller, were honored by the SIFMA Foundation and the Arizona Council on Economic Education during a classroom presentation on June 18, 2023.

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 curriculum-based financial education program that challenges students to manage a hypothetical \$100,000 online portfolio of stocks, bonds, mutual funds and cash over a semester or school year.

SIFMA Foundation’s programs are proven to increase participants’ test scores in math and economics, encourage students to think more about budgeting and financial planning, enable them to work in teams to build their interpersonal social-emotional learning and better prepare them for college and careers. The SIFMA Foundation is committed to closing the opportunity gap by fostering greater knowledge of the financial markets for young people of all backgrounds, with a focus on underserved youth.

“I am delighted to congratulate Carter, his teacher and their school,” said Melanie Mortimer, President of the SIFMA Foundation. “The research is clear that social and emotional learning is a critical component to students’ motivation, achievement and wellbeing. By participating in the Stock

Market Game and InvestWrite, Carter has learned how working with a team can offer insights and increase confidence to make informed financial life decisions and achieve better life outcomes.”

The Stock Market Game and InvestWrite are offered in Arizona through the Arizona Council on Economic Education. “We honor and congratulate our InvestWrite winning student and teacher,” said Elena Zee, President & CEO of the Arizona Council on Economic Education, “Helping Arizona 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 Arizona economy.”

Kasarjian says teamwork leads to a well-diversified portfolio: “When it comes to assembling a team of investments, your team members can help you diversify your portfolio. It is important to have a variety of investments. There should be investments in stocks, mutual funds, bonds, and extra cash on hand. If you put all of your money in a single type of investment (e.g., stocks, funds, bonds), that would not be a good “team” portfolio. Instead, spread your money throughout the many different sectors and industries when it comes to stocks, mutual funds, and bonds.”

The Spring 2023 InvestWrite competition presented the following challenge to 4th-12th graders – “What are some benefits of working on a team versus on your own? Give examples from your Stock Market Game team or other examples of teamwork. Teaming up investments in a diversified portfolio also has benefits. If you could invest \$10,000 now for a long-term goal, what team of investments, including stocks, bonds and/or mutual funds, would you choose and why?”

Kasarjian impressed the panel of thousands of expert judges from across the financial services industry with a thoughtful and insightful essay.

Winning Essay by Carter Kasarjian ...

Why You Should Invest in Your Team

As Helen Keller observed, “Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.” Without collaboration and diversity of thought, a person is limited in his knowledge and perspective to guide his decisions. As a team, we can all become experts in areas that interest us and we can come together to influence one another as to which direction we want to go. The more perspectives we have to consider, the more educated our decisions will be and we will increase the likelihood of having a successful portfolio. There are many benefits to working together on a team, numerous ways to work together to make decisions, and many ways to develop a solid portfolio (or team of stocks) based on team input.

Working together as a team brings many benefits. When you work together, everybody can share what they think is the best step forward. You can share ideas and rely upon one another’s expertise in areas where you may not be as strong. For example, one of our team members showed the others how to review the expert opinions on whether a stock is a “strong buy” or even a “sell.” All of these are examples of the benefits of working with a team.

In my group, there are many roles and ways we work together to make decisions. One job is the “director” role, who settles disagreements so everyone is happy in the end. Another person gathers all of the information which they add to a slideshow, and someone else logs everything we sell and buy. If anyone needs help with their job, then they can collaborate with someone else. There are so many ways we can delegate or make decisions with one another based on our varying roles.

When it comes to assembling a team of investments, your team members can help you diversify your portfolio. It is important to have a variety of investments. There should be investments in stocks, mutual funds, bonds, and extra cash on hand. If you put all of your money in a single type of investment (e.g., stocks, funds, bonds), that would not be a good “team” portfolio. Instead, spread your money throughout the many different sectors and industries when it comes to stocks, mutual funds, and bonds. If you have all your money in a certain sector, you are exposing your investments to great risk if that sector collapses. Just as your team members have varying opinions, make sure your investments reflect those so you have a good “team” of investments in the Stock Market Game and real life.

Once you understand the value of “teams,” you can invest in many ways with \$10,000. I would mostly invest in bonds because I will be paid back eventually and get varying amounts of interest about twice a year. They are also less risky, so you won’t be affected by the company doing poorly. I would put the rest of my money in stocks that are expected to do well. I would look at professionals’ opinions and what I think will do well. I have read that some industries are more stable than others, such as utilities or healthcare. If I want to minimize risk, I will invest in those. The same goes with mutual funds where I would look at the sector weighing’s (i.e., how much the fund holds in each sector). I would then buy the funds that hold a lot in sectors that are expected to do well in the future. That is what I would do with my “team” if I had \$10,000 for long-term investments.

There are a few reasons why my group took the actions we did with our portfolio. Our first big decision was buying a lot of Tesla stock (TSLA). Since we expected it to rise and so did many experts, we bought 30 shares. Once it rose by \$15 in only a few days, we bought 15 more shares until we sold it all at \$195. We continued to look for stocks that we thought would increase in value over time. Our biggest mistake was buying shares of the iShares Russell 3000 ETF. We got a lot of it since we thought it would perform well over time, but it ended up losing us over \$500. All of our decisions were agreed upon by the whole team so we shared the risks and rewards.

There are numerous ways to work together, a lot of benefits of collaborating on a team, and there are multiple ways to develop a solid team of investments for your portfolio. Teamwork means so many different things. If you invest your energy in collaborating with others, your investments will succeed.

About the SIFMA Foundation

The SIFMA Foundation is committed to closing the opportunity gap by fostering greater knowledge of the financial markets for young people of all backgrounds. Drawing on the support and expertise of educators and the financial industry, the Foundation provides financial education to strengthen economic opportunity across communities and increase awareness of the benefits of the global marketplace. Since 1977, the Foundation’s most notable program, *The Stock Market Game*, has guided more than 22 million students on their path to financial independence by attaining stronger life skills, improving academic achievement, and boosting their social-emotional learning. For more information on 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. More than 260,000 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 including laptops, classroom pizza parties, trophies, plaques and banners, and certificates. For more information about InvestWrite®, visit www.investwrite.org.

About the Arizona Council on Economic Education

The Arizona Council on Economic Education (ACEE) is a 501(C)3 nonprofit organization dedicated to improving economic and personal financial literacy in Arizona. ACEE is the author of Arizona K-12 Economic Education Academic Standards and the only organization in Arizona which: provides teacher professional development in teaching personal finance and economics; has a strong, affiliated academic base with universities and community colleges; and distributes proven independent economic education curriculum resources to schools free of charge. For more information, visit www.azecon.org.

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