



## **Nelnet Supports National Scholarship Month; Awards More Than \$1 Million in Scholarships to Students Nationwide**

LINCOLN, Neb., May 19, 2006 /PRNewswire-FirstCall via COMTEX News Network/ -- In conjunction with National Scholarship Month, Nelnet announced scholarship awards totaling more than \$200,000 for national and state sweepstakes, Junior Achievement, and the National College Access Network. These scholarships are part of more than \$1 million funded annually by Nelnet and the Nelnet Foundation.

As a leading education finance company, Nelnet recognizes the predicament of families who struggle to pay for college tuition and considers charitable giving its corporate responsibility. Nelnet funds scholarships each year to help students realize their academic goals, supporting its vision of making educational dreams possible.

Nelnet's College Planning Center recently awarded scholarships to 103 high school students through its national online and state-based regional programs. These awards, totaling more than \$120,000, are offered through the company's Web site, [www.nelnet.net/collegeplanning](http://www.nelnet.net/collegeplanning). The site also provides access to a database of other scholarships worth more than \$6 billion.

The Nelnet Foundation funds scholarships and supports charities to facilitate college access and promote philanthropy. In addition to those awarded during National Scholarship Month, the Nelnet Foundation has awarded scholarships through United Negro College Fund and Nelnet Scholars, a program available to children of Nelnet associates.

This spring, the Nelnet Foundation established the Big Mama-Nelnet Scholarship Fund. Nelnet teamed with ABC television for the March 31, 2006 Extreme Makeover: Home Edition broadcast to the delight of Essie "Big Mama" Reed, a celebrated Fort Lauderdale, Fla. resident. The \$75,000 fund was established to help the neighborhood mentor provide opportunities for local children to pursue higher education.

"Nelnet demonstrates its commitment to growth in learning by awarding millions of dollars to further students' access to higher education," said Cheryl Watson, Nelnet's Chief Communications Officer. "Nelnet's online scholarship programs and other awards provide the additional funds some families desperately need to afford college, helping students reach the valuable goal of completing their college education, enriching their lives and our communities."

The Nelnet College Planning Center is a free, comprehensive resource for families and students preparing for college. By exploring the College Planning Web site at [www.nelnet.net/collegeplanning](http://www.nelnet.net/collegeplanning), students can benefit from scholarship searches, online practice tests for the SAT and ACT, and general college planning information. The College Planning Web site includes a college search based on individual needs, financial aid questions and answers, a financial planning calculator, and even comments from other students regarding their college planning experiences. Families may also call toll-free 1.866.866.7372 to speak with a knowledgeable College Planning Counselor who can answer questions and explain the necessary steps for applying for college or financial aid.

Nelnet (NYSE: NNI) is one of the leading education finance companies in the United States and is focused on providing quality products and services to students and schools nationwide. Nelnet ranks among the nation's leaders in terms of total net student loan assets with \$21.3 billion as of March 31, 2006. Headquartered in Lincoln, Nebraska, Nelnet originates, consolidates, securitizes, holds, and services student loans, principally loans originated under the Federal Family Education Loan Program of the U.S. Department of Education.

Additional information is available at [www.nelnet.net](http://www.nelnet.net).

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