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Contact: Jodi Golden  
317-650-3584  
[jgolden@tos.in.gov](mailto:jgolden@tos.in.gov)

**WABASH COUNTY RESIDENTS RECEIVE “SAGAMORE OF THE WABASH” DISTINCTION**

*Founders of the “Wabash County Promise” receive the state award for educational efforts*

INDIANAPOLIS (11-14-13) – Lieutenant Governor Sue Ellspermann and State Treasurer Richard Mourdock awarded Clint Kugler and Jason Callahan, co-founders of the Wabash County Promise (The Promise), with Indiana’s “Sagamore of the Wabash” distinction for their efforts in a new matching grant and continuing educational initiative for young Hoosier students in Wabash County.

“These two gentlemen are truly life-changers. Studies show that students with a college savings account are 7 times more likely to actually seek post-secondary opportunities,” stated Treasurer Mourdock. “Clint and Jason have changed the trajectory of these children’s lives and should be an example of what’s possible for others students across Indiana.”

The Wabash County Promise is the result of a countywide collaborative, including school, business, church, and community partners, to create a college-going culture. The effort encourages students and their families to obtain the information and tools necessary to increase access to and success in post-secondary education. This includes supporting college and career discovery, academic readiness, and educational savings from an early age. The Promise was developed by the Wabash County YMCA, which now serves as the lead agency.

With the support of presenting sponsor Beauchamp McSpadden, over 1,055 students in kindergarten through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade established a CollegeChoice 529 Direct Savings account during registration for each school district this August. At registration, students received a \$25 initial gift into their new accounts from Parkview Health, enrollment sponsor of The Promise.

“I am proud of the efforts by Indiana Education Savings Authority and Upromise Investments Inc., who partnered with the Wabash County Promise to make this initiative a successful one,” stated Treasurer Mourdock.

Prior to this initiative, only 6% of Wabash County’s kindergarten through third graders had a college savings account. Today, over 70% are now saving thanks to the efforts of the Wabash County Promise.