FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 12, 2014

New Jersey Students Get Ready for “The Choice Bus”
State Farm® Fueling “Stay in School” Message

PATERNON, NJ – Thanks to a partnership between State Farm® and The Mattie C. Stewart Foundation, nearly 800 students will board The Choice Bus. Asbury Park, John F. Kennedy, Garrett Morgan Academy, International and Eastside high school 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, December 16 through Friday, December 19. 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, December 16**
Asbury Park High School  
1003 Sunset Avenue  
Asbury Park, NJ 07712  
8:00 a.m. – 2:20 p.m.

**Wednesday, December 17**
John F. Kennedy High School  
61-127 Preakness Avenue  
Paterson, NJ 07522  
8:25 a.m. – 3:05 p.m.

**Thursday, December 18**
Garrett Morgan Academy and International High School  
200 Grand Street  
Paterson, NJ 07502  
7:35 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.

**Friday, December 19**
Eastside High School  
150 Park Avenue  
Paterson, NJ 07501  
9:00 a.m. – 1:34 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 literary 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 Dave Phillips, 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 partnered 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 New Jersey. 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.mattiecstewart.org.

**About State Farm®**
State Farm and its affiliates are the largest provider of car insurance in the U.S. and is a leading insurer in Canada. In addition to providing auto insurance quotes, their 18,000 agents and more than 65,000 employees serve 81 million policies and accounts – more than 79 million auto, home, life and health policies in the United States and Canada, and nearly 2 million bank accounts. Commercial auto insurance, along with coverage for renters, business owners, boats and motorcycles, is also 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 or in Canada http://www.statefarm.ca.

**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.mattiecstewart.org.

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