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Think Green for College Savings

Invest in Virginia529's Socially Targeted Fund

RICHMOND, VA—American investors are increasingly seeking investment choices that complement their environmental and social consciences. According to the latest Report on Sustainable and Responsible Investing Trends in the United States, U.S. investments in funds that favor environmental, social and governance (ESG) criteria grew to \$3.3 trillion in 2011, an increase of nearly 30 percent from 2009.

Families saving for college can incorporate this focus into their college savings investing approach through the Socially Targeted Investment Portfolio offered by Virginia529 College Savings Plan (Virginia529). An option in the Virginia529 inVEST program, the portfolio currently invests exclusively in the Parnassus Equity Income Fund (symbol PRILX). Parnassus Investments, the investment management company responsible for the Fund, seeks to invest in businesses with sustainable competitive advantages that also respect the environment, have quality management teams and have ethical business practices.

“The goal in creating the Socially Targeted Investment Portfolio was to offer an investment option whose investment strategy seeks to consider both financial return and social good,” said Mary Morris, Virginia529 CEO. “With this Fund, you can save for college in a portfolio focused on environmental stewardship and corporate governance.”

The Virginia529 Socially Targeted Investment Portfolio returned 20.83 percent for the one-year period ending March 31, 2013; its three-year return is 11.92 percent. As with any investment, past performance is not an indicator of future performance and returns will fluctuate. More information on the Socially Targeted Investment Portfolio, which opened in November 2009, and other investment options in Virginia529 inVEST, is available at Virginia529.com.

Current Parnassus Equity Income Fund holdings include Iron Mountain Inc (NYSE: IRM), the largest provider of shredded recycled paper in North America; recycling and waste disposal firm Waste Management Inc (NYSE: WM); and Applied Material (NYSE: AMAT), a major supplier of the global solar industry. The fund also invests in United Parcel Service, Inc. (NYSE: UPS), recognized by the Environmental Protection Agency in 2012 for comprehensive greenhouse gas inventories and aggressive emissions reduction goals; Google, Inc. (NYSE: GOOG) which purchases carbon credits and energy from renewable sources; and several natural gas suppliers.

Parnassus also avoids investing in companies that derive significant revenues from the manufacture of alcohol, tobacco, or weapons; operate gambling facilities; generate nuclear power; or have business involvement with Sudan.

About the Virginia529 College Savings Plan:

Virginia529 is a 529 college savings plan that offers flexible, affordable, tax-advantaged savings programs for qualified higher education expenses through its four programs – Virginia529 prePAIDSM (prePAIDSM), Virginia529 inVESTSM (inVESTSM), CollegeAmerica[®] and CollegeWealth[®]. With over 2.2 million accounts and \$39 billion in assets under management as of December 31, 2012, Virginia529 is the largest 529 plan in the country. For more information on Virginia529's college savings options, visit Virginia529.com.