**Sample Op-ed**

The role of grandparents in the life of a grandchild is invaluable. Not only does a grandparent get to spoil little ones with ice cream trips and gifts, but they provide additional adult role models that children can look up to and emulate for the rest of their lives.

While the occasional shopping trip or ballpark adventure are core memories every child should get to experience with their grandparents, their role can be far greater in setting that child up for professional and financial success. If they have the financial means, setting aside money for the future education of a grandchild can impact them for many years to come.

The best way to save for those future education expenses is with a 529 account. A 529 plan is a tax-advantaged investment plan designed to help families to save for a grandchild’s future education expenses. Savings in a 529 plan grow free from federal income tax, and withdrawals remain tax-free when used for qualified expenses. Additionally, many states mirror the federal 529 plan tax advantages by offering state tax-deferred growth and tax-free withdrawals for qualified expenses. So not only will the grandchild benefit from the savings in the account, but the contributor can reap tax benefits as well.

A good idea could be to set aside a little money for each holiday or birthday to contribute into a 529 account. While large amounts of money would go a long way in education expenses, so does a steady contribution over years.

Contributions can easily become part of an estate planning process for many grandparents if that is desired. A grandparent may contribute up to $19,000 annually without paying gift taxes or filing a gift tax return. Grandparents may accelerate up to five years’ worth of the annual exclusion amount and reduce the value of your estate by contributing up to $95,000 per grandchild.

Regardless of the amount of money, having a grandchild know that their grandparent, a role model, believes in them enough to invest in their education is invaluable. Just a couple dollars a month can set that child up to achieve their goals in life. To learn more about how to open an account visit {INSERT STATE INFORMATION HERE}.