



PRESS RELEASE: 20th November 2013

Girls lead the way as Commonwealth celebrates its brightest young writers

On Tuesday 19th November, nineteen year old New Zealander Katherine McIndoe and twelve year old Guernsey girl Tabitha Carr were the guests of honour at a special awards evening, having beaten 11,000 young writers to be named the Junior and Senior Winners of the 2013 Commonwealth Essay Competition.

Held in the Penthouse on the 18th floor of New Zealand House, the essay competition was taken to new heights – literally and figuratively – as representatives from across the Commonwealth gathered to celebrate Katherine and Tabitha’s achievements.

Both girls are in London as part of a special ‘winners week’ organised by the Royal Commonwealth Society and competition sponsors, Cambridge University Press. Activities so far have included visits to the Shard, Westminster Abbey, Buckingham Palace and the BBC.

At last night’s event, the girls were presented with certificates by High Commissioner the Rt Hon Sir Lockwood Smith KMZM PhD, and a Samsung Galaxy Tab by James Lane, Senior Manager in the Samsung Group.

Assembled guests also heard from Barbara Orridge, Sales Director, International Education, Cambridge University Press; Dr Gerri Kimber, Senior Lecturer in English, University of Northampton; and enjoyed a performance from the Ngati Ranana London Maori Club.

Katherine, a student at the University of Victoria in Wellington, was picked from amongst 4,500 Senior entries to take the top prize with her powerful and eloquent entry “*To boldly go: a letter to the lost girls*”.

Tabitha, a student at Blanchelande College in Guernsey, was picked from amongst 6,500 Junior entries for her entry *Is change a good a thing*; an imaginative entry about family enterprise in Botswana.

Founded in 1883, the Commonwealth Essay Competition is the world’s oldest and largest international schools’ writing contest. For 2013 the competition was sponsored by Cambridge University Press and received more than 11,000 entries from 55 Commonwealth countries and territories – an all-time record!

Commonwealth Affairs Manager at the Royal Commonwealth Society, Verity Sharp, said:
“As the Commonwealth Essay Competition celebrates its 130th anniversary, we are delighted to recognise two of the association’s emerging writers, Katherine McIndoe and Tabitha Carr. In their entries, both young women write with compassion about the bonds – familial and global – that connect citizens across the Commonwealth. It is this sense of connectedness and global citizenship that we hope to foster, and we look forward to watching Tabitha’s and Katherine’s stars continue to rise as young Commonwealth leaders.”

Notes to Editors

Senior Prize winner: *“To boldly go”*: a letter to the lost girls, Katherine McIndoe, New Zealand, age 19

http://www.thercs.org/youth/Filestore/Competitions_2013/Senior_Winner_2013_Essay.pdf

Junior Prize winner: *Is change a good thing*, Tabitha Carr, Guernsey, age 13

http://www.thercs.org/youth/Filestore/Competitions_2013/Junior_Winner_2013_Essay.pdf

The Royal Commonwealth Society founded in 1868, is a network of individuals and organisations committed to improving the lives and prospects of Commonwealth citizens across the world. The RCS is a registered charity in England and Wales. (226748).

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