



PRESS RELEASE: 09 September 2014

## Canadian student named Junior Runner-up in 2014 Commonwealth Essay Competition

Thirteen year old Leah Annia Plante-Wiener has been named the Junior Runner-up in the Royal Commonwealth Society's 2014 Commonwealth Essay Competition. Her winning entry was chosen by a panel of Commonwealth judges from more than 6,000 Junior entries.

Writing on the essay topic: 'United We Stand', Leah's entry to the competition – which is sponsored by [Cambridge University Press](#) – is an honest account of living with anxiety, the stigma associated with it, and the fight to overcome it.

**An excerpt from Leah's entry:** *"United we must stand, those with and without anxiety issues hand in hand, to conquer it. We must be brave and accept anxiety as a fact of life, but do it with the support of others. I want to live in a world where one day, my children will speak of their fears without being afraid."*

**The judging panel said:** *"The judges were impressed with her mature and sensitive handling of a difficult issue which deserves more exposure, anxiety."*

**Leah said:** *"I am so honoured to have been chosen as the runner-up for the Junior category!"*

**Explaining why she entered the competition, she said:** *"When I was in grade 5, my school told us about the Commonwealth writing competition. Now, I enter it every year. "*

A student at The Study School, Westmount, Canada, Leah has been passionate about reading and writing since she was a young girl. She also enjoys playing the tuba in her school band, singing in her school choir, drawing, photography, participating in school plays, and staying updated on world politics.

As the Junior Runner-up, Leah's entry will be published in the launch of the new RCS magazine and she will receive a commemorative pen, symbolic of her achievement.

**Mike Lake CBE, Director of the Royal Commonwealth Society said:** *"The Commonwealth Essay Competition is an annual opportunity for young people to have their voices heard. Year after year I continue to be amazed by the creativity and talent of the entrants and this year is no exception. The winning entries, although diverse in subject-matter, are alike in their ability to grab the reader's attention. At times witty, at times thought-provoking, the winning entries are original throughout and a true joy to read."*

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### Notes to Editors

**Senior Winner:** *Team Commonwealth! How would you describe what your country has to offer other members of the team?* Raniya Hosain, Pakistan, age 15 <https://www.thercs.org/assets/Essay-Competition/2014-Senior-Winner-Raniya-Hosain.pdf>

**Senior Runner-up:** *What part does competition play in people's daily lives?* Selina Xu, Singapore, age 16 <https://www.thercs.org/assets/Essay-Competition/2014-Senior-Runner-up-Selina-Xu.pdf>

**Junior Winner:** *Being a Team Player*, Max de Bourcier, Jersey UK, age 10  
<https://www.thercs.org/assets/Essay-Competition/2014-Junior-Winner-Max-de-Bourcier.pdf>

**Junior Runner up:** *United We Stand*, Leah Annia Plante-Wiener, age 13  
<https://www.thercs.org/assets/Essay-Competition/2014-Junior-Runner-up-Leah-Annia-Plante-Wiener.pdf>

**The Commonwealth Essay Competition** was founded in 1883 and is the world's oldest and largest international schools' writing contest. For 2014 the competition was sponsored by Cambridge University Press and received more than 9,500 entries from over 500 schools in 44 Commonwealth countries and territories.

The Junior category is open to entrants aged 13 years and under, and the Senior category is open to entrants aged 14 – 18 years.

The theme of the 2014 competition was, 'Team Commonwealth', which is also this year's Commonwealth theme. It touches upon the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games and the spirit of friendship between Commonwealth nations.

**The Royal Commonwealth Society** is a network of individuals and organisations committed to improving the lives and prospects of Commonwealth citizens across the world. Founded in 1868, the Society is constituted by Royal Charter (amended 2013) and is a charity in England and Wales (226748). The Society engages with its youth, civil society, business and governmental networks to address issues that matter to the citizens of the Commonwealth. Its primary focus is the promotion of young people throughout the Commonwealth. [www.thercs.org](http://www.thercs.org)

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