



**PRESS RELEASE: 09 September 2014**

## **Jersey student named Junior Winner of 2014 Commonwealth Essay Competition**

Ten year old Max de Bourcier has been named the Junior Winner in the Royal Commonwealth Society's 2014 Commonwealth Essay Competition. His winning entry was chosen by a panel of Commonwealth judges from more than 6,000 Junior entries.

The theme of the competition – which is sponsored by [Cambridge University Press](#) – was 'Team Commonwealth' and Max's entry is an honest and humorous account of his experiences of trying to be a team player. His story culminates in a visit to the Large Hadron Collider at CERN.

**Max's prize-winning entry concludes:** *"Cern was full of people who work together on big projects like looking for the Higgs Boson so I suppose you could say that they are a type of team. I wonder how many of them were on the school football team?"*

The story doesn't end there though. A judge forwarded Max's entry to CERN and it unexpectedly elicited [a letter from CERN Physicist - Dr Tom Whyntie](#), Particle Physics Research Centre, Queen Mary University of London, who writes: *"I was not on the school football team, but I did once play for the basketball team – I was, and still am, very tall...When we announced the discovery of the Higgs boson on the 4<sup>th</sup> July 2012...It was a win for everyone, everywhere, and a testament to what we can achieve when we unite behind a common goal."*

**The judging panel said:** *"Max wrote a beautifully crafted, amusing and original piece about being part of a team."*

**Max said:** *"When my mum told me she said I had won a competition, I thought she meant a competition I had entered from one of my comics. Then it dawned on me what had happened and I realised it was a much bigger deal."*

Max, who has dyslexia and dysgraphia, is a student at St Michael's Preparatory School, Jersey. Max loves Lego and has just finished the 2,500 piece Simpson's House. When he is not playing with Lego he is either taking bicycles apart and fixing them, or riding his bicycle. He also enjoys driving games on his Xbox360. Max loves finding out about the latest technology and is teaching himself to write computer code. He loves his pet Labrador and looks after her.

As the Junior Winner, Max will be invited to attend a special award ceremony at Buckingham Palace, London in November. The ceremony will form part of a week of cultural and educational activities for both the Junior and Senior Winners.

**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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