



THE QUEEN'S COMMONWEALTH ESSAY COMPETITION 2017

PRESS RELEASE: The Queen's Commonwealth Essay Competition draws winners from four corners of the Commonwealth

Four young writers have been named as the Winners and Runners-Up of The Queen's Commonwealth Essay Competition 2017. The winning essays were selected from approximately 12,300 entries spanning the five regions of the Commonwealth. The competition is the world's oldest international schools' writing competition.

Representing nearly every Commonwealth country, entrants wrote about topical issues including social cohesion, finding peace in places of conflict, and peace-building on an individual, national and international level.

Senior Winner Annika Turon-Semmens, 16, is from Adelaide, Australia. Senior Runner-up Hiya Chowdhury, 15, comes from Uttar Pradesh, India.

The Junior Winner Ariadna Sullivan, 13, is from British Columbia, Canada, and Junior Runner-up Ry Galloway, 10, is from London, United Kingdom.

Entries were assessed by a pan-Commonwealth body of judges, drawn from more than 30 different countries across the globe. Judges described the entries as 'diverse', 'creative', 'hopeful', and added that 'the Commonwealth will be in good hands as these young people grow up'.

The four pan-Commonwealth Winners and Runners-up will attend the traditional 'Winners Week' in London in November of this year. Winners' Week is a special programme consisting of cultural and educational activities. The week includes an Awards Ceremony at Buckingham Palace where HRH The Duchess of Cornwall will present the Winners and Runners-up with their certificates on behalf of Her Majesty The Queen. This will be the fourth time that the Duchess of Cornwall has taken part in the Awards Ceremony.

Director of The Royal Commonwealth Society, Michael Lake CBE, said: "The winners' pieces are creative and dynamic, using rich and colourful language to explore the broadest interpretations of peace. This year's theme of *A Commonwealth for Peace* could not have come at a more pertinent time and The Royal Commonwealth Society is inspired by the thousands of entries received this year. The competition proves that the young Commonwealth is ready and able to build a peaceful future together.'

Rod Smith, Managing Director of Education, Cambridge University Press, said: 'We're delighted to be sponsoring The Queen's Commonwealth Essay Competition again this year. The Royal Commonwealth Society shares our vision of empowerment through education, and it's an honour to be involved in this celebration of talented young writers from all over

the world. We were astounded by the exceptional standard of the entries, and all of us at Cambridge University Press would like to extend our congratulations to the winners.'

Anne Fine OBE FRSL, author and former British Children's Laureate, said: 'It's fascinating to see the sheer range of response to any competition theme, but what varied pieces we have here! The entries come from places in the world that could not be more different – or more colourfully described. But all our young winners show boundless imagination, along with impressive control. It was a pleasure to read these poems and stories, and my warmest congratulations go to all.'

--ENDS--

NOTES TO EDITORS:

More information about the Competition, including the Winners and Runners-up, can be found here: <https://thercs.org/youth-and-education/the-queens-commonwealth-essay-competition/>

Senior Winner: *Human Nature*, Annika Turon-Semmens, Australia, age 16
<https://thercs.org/assets/Essay-Competition/Senior-Winner-Annika-Turon-Semmens.pdf>

Senior Runner-up: *The Smallest of Things*, Hiya Chowdhury, India, age 15
<https://thercs.org/assets/Essay-Competition/Senior-Runner-Up-Hiya-Chowdhury.pdf>

Junior Winner: *What is in Your Toolbox for Peace? A New Perspective*, Ariadna Sullivan, Canada, age 13
<https://thercs.org/assets/Essay-Competition/Junior-Winner-Ariadna-Sullivan.pdf>

Junior Runner up: *My peaceful place is on a lilo in a pool*, Ry Galloway, age 10
<https://thercs.org/assets/Essay-Competition/Junior-Runner-Up-Ry-Galloway.pdf>

The Queen's Commonwealth Essay Competition was founded in 1883 and is the world's oldest international schools' writing contest. The competition is sponsored by Cambridge University Press and received approximately 12,300 entries from across the Commonwealth. The competition in the modern day gives creative young writers the opportunity to explore contemporary themes through the written word.

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

The overarching theme for 2017 was 'A Commonwealth for Peace', which mirrors the 2017 Commonwealth Year theme of 'A Peace-building Commonwealth', and is an important theme for today's youth. Both Senior and Junior topics gave young people the opportunity to think about aspects of the theme such as: the means and costs of achieving peace, the link between education and peace, the role of young people in promoting peace, and peace and conflict in the world today. The topics provided an opportunity to develop critical thinking and to express views on difficult issues in a creative manner.

The Royal Commonwealth Society (RCS), founded in 1868, is a network of individuals and organisations committed to improving the lives and prospects of Commonwealth citizens across the world. Through youth empowerment, education and advocacy, the Society promotes the value and values of the Commonwealth. www.thercs.org

Partners:

Cambridge University Press is the publishing business of the University of Cambridge. Granted letters patent by Henry VIII in 1534, it is the world's oldest publishing house and the second-largest university press in the world. Cambridge University Press has been a sponsor of The Queen's Commonwealth Essay Competition since 2013. www.cambridge.org

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