



**PRESS RELEASE: 09 September 2014**

## **In its 131<sup>st</sup> year, the Commonwealth Essay Competition proves yet again to be a stunning success**

The Royal Commonwealth Society is proud to announce that the Commonwealth Essay Competition, which began in 1883, experienced another year of extraordinary achievement.

The competition, which is sponsored by [Cambridge University Press](#), received a total of 9,933 entries, made up of 6,074 Junior-level entries and 3,859 Senior-level entries from over 500 schools in 44 countries and territories across the Commonwealth.

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 judging process began in June and was completed by 56 judges who ultimately selected the top winners and made more than 2,000 Gold, Silver, and Bronze Awards.

Fifteen year old Raniya Hosain from Pakistan was named as the Senior Winner. Her winning entry, *Describe what your country has to offer other members of the [Commonwealth] team*, is the heart-warming tale of an elderly and impoverished Pakistani fruit seller who inspires generosity and laughter in those he meets.

Sixteen year old Selina Xu from Singapore was named as the Senior Runner-up. Her entry, *What part does competition play in people's daily lives?* is a skilful exploration of the culture of competition in her own community.

Ten year old Max de Bourcier from Jersey was named as the Junior Winner. His entry, *Being a Team Player*, is an honest and humorous account of his experiences of trying to be a team player. His story culminates a visit to the Large Hadron Collider at CERN.

Thirteen year old Leah Annia Plante-Wiener from Canada was named as the Junior Runner-up. Her entry, *United We Stand*, is an honest account of living with anxiety, the stigma associated with it, and the fight to overcome it.

**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.

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**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)

**Media Enquiries:**

Louise Guillaume, Royal Commonwealth Society  
T: +44 (0)20 3727 4306 | E: [louise.guillaume@thercs.org](mailto:louise.guillaume@thercs.org)