

PRESS RELEASE: 24 AUGUST 2015

Record number of entries submitted to The Queen's Commonwealth Essay Competition 2015

The Royal Commonwealth Society is delighted to announce that The Queen's Commonwealth Essay Competition experienced its most successful year since its creation in 1883.

The competition, which is sponsored by [Cambridge University Press](#), received a total of 13,101 entries, made up of 7,288 Junior-level entries and 5,813 Senior-level entries from over 600 schools in 49 countries and territories across the Commonwealth.

The four overall winners will be invited to attend a special programme entitled 'Winners Week' in London. Held in October, the week will consist of a series of cultural and educational activities which will culminate in a special awards ceremony at Buckingham Palace where HRH The Duchess of Cornwall will present the winners with their prizes.

The Duchess of Cornwall will be presenting the prizes on behalf of HM The Queen, Patron of the competition. The Duchess is a keen supporter of promoting literacy amongst young people and adults.

The theme of this year's competition was, 'A Young Commonwealth', which is also this year's Commonwealth theme. The theme underlines the fact that young people account for the majority of the Commonwealth's population, and recognises their capacity, contribution and potential to shape the future.

The judging process began in June and was completed by 96 judges from all across the Commonwealth who ultimately selected the top winners and made more than 3,000 Gold, Silver, and Bronze Awards.

Sixteen year old Paraschos Cant from Cyprus was named as the Senior Winner. His winning entry, *Youth versus experience*, is a beautifully structured letter to the leaders of the world. Its strong critical voice cleverly compares countries and citizens to classrooms and classmates with light-hearted humour and youthful naivety.

Eighteen year old Tawanda Mulalu from Botswana was named as the Senior Runner-up. His entry, *What do you hope to achieve in your lifetime?* is a sophisticated and informed essay with great ambitions for the future of Botswana - and for Africa more broadly.

Eleven year old Nathan Swain from Tristan da Cunha was named as the Junior Winner. His entry, *I am the future*, is a specific, succinct and clearly articulated account of the importance of generational exchange through the skills and lessons inherited from his father.

Thirteen year old Martina Watler from Cayman Islands was named as the Junior Runner-up. Her entry, inspired by the theme 'A Young Commonwealth', is a vulnerable but brave examination of a young girl's inner world, her anxieties and her dreams.

Michael Lake CBE, Director of the Royal Commonwealth Society said: *"The Royal Commonwealth Society is delighted that in its 132nd year, the Essay Competition has received a record number of entries and that submissions came through from all across the Commonwealth. I am particularly impressed by the way in which those young people are able to articulate thoughts of great maturity and insight that will be important to the world in which they will grow up. Their inspirational pieces of writing testify to their strong desire to make a difference."*

Notes to Editors

Senior Winner: *Youth versus experience* Paraschos Cant, Cyprus, age 16,
<https://thercs.org/assets/Downloads/Paraschos-Cants-entry.pdf>

Senior Runner-up: *What do you hope to achieve in your lifetime?* Tawanda Mulalu, Botswana, age 18,
<https://thercs.org/assets/Downloads/Tawanda-Mulalus-entry.pdf>

Junior Winner: *I am the future* Nathan Swain, Tristan da Cunha UK, age 11,
<https://thercs.org/assets/Downloads/Nathan-Swains-entry.pdf>

Junior Runner up: *A Young Commonwealth* Martina Watler, Cayman Islands UK, age 13,
<https://thercs.org/assets/Downloads/Martina-Watlers-entry.pdf>

The Queen's Commonwealth Essay Competition was founded in 1883 and is the world's oldest international schools' writing contest. For 2015 the competition was sponsored by Cambridge University Press and received more than 13,000 entries from over 600 schools in 49 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

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