



PRESS RELEASE: 28 August 2013

Canadian teenager named Runner-Up in world's oldest and largest essay competition

Sixteen year old Abby Wells has been named the Senior Runner-Up in the Royal Commonwealth Society's 2013 Commonwealth Essay Competition.

Abby's winning entry, entitled *The Little Girl in Me*, was chosen by a panel of Commonwealth judges from more than 4,500 Senior entries.

Writing on the topic 'Are we too risk-conscious these days?', Abby examines the topic from a personal perspective, recalling her own childhood and coming of age.

The judging panel said: *"Abby's essay is a genuine, personal entry offering an original approach to the topic 'Are we too risk-conscious these days?'. The structure and focus which Abby maintains throughout is a skilful, smart and sophisticated treatment of childhood. The writing has a simplicity in the way it deals with a complex subject and it displays a light touch. This was a very serious contender for the first prize."*

Abby said: *"I feel ecstatic and honoured to be Senior Runner-Up in this year's Commonwealth Essay Competition."*

About to enter her final year of high school at Southridge School in Surrey, British Columbia, Canada, Abby is passionate about literature and enjoys reading, writing, public speaking, and theatre performance. Her other interests include playing soccer and spending time with family and friends.

As the Senior Runner-Up, Abby will be invited to attend a special awards ceremony in Canada.

The Essay Competition was founded in 1883 and is the world's oldest and largest international schools' writing contest. For 2013 the competition was sponsored by Cambridge University Press and more than 11,000 entries from over 830 schools in 55 Commonwealth countries and territories were received across the Junior and Senior categories – a record for the competition.

Mike Lake, Director of the Royal Commonwealth Society said: *"As the Commonwealth Essay Competition celebrates its 130th anniversary I am delighted that the contest remains an important outlet for expression in the association. Having received a record number of entries this year, it is fantastic to see so many talented and bright young Commonwealth citizens expressing their opinions and engaging in the international community. I am grateful to our sponsors, Cambridge University Press, and to the participants for helping to make the contest the vibrant and exciting competition that it is today."*

Notes to Editors

Senior Prize winner: *“To boldy go”*: a letter to the lost girls, Katherine McIndoe, New Zealand, age 19

http://www.thercs.org/youth/Filestore/Competitions_2013/Senior_Winner_2013_Essay.pdf

Senior Runner up: *The little girl in me*, Abby Wells, Canada, age 16

http://www.thercs.org/youth/Filestore/Competitions_2013/Senior_Runner-Up_2013_Essay.pdf

Junior Prize winner: *Is change a good thing*, Tabitha Carr, Guernsey, age 13

http://www.thercs.org/youth/Filestore/Competitions_2013/Junior_Winner_2013_Essay.pdf

Junior Runner up: *The clothes of sleeping giant mountain*, Catherine Yu, Hong Kong, age 9

http://www.thercs.org/youth/Filestore/Competitions_2013/Junior_Runner-Up_2013_Essay.pdf

The Royal Commonwealth Society is the oldest and largest civil society organisation devoted to the Commonwealth. Founded in 1868, it conducts a range of events, research and activities aimed at promoting international understanding. The RCS has a global membership and a presence in over 40 Commonwealth countries through a network of branches and Commonwealth societies. The RCS is a registered charity in England and Wales. (226748). www.thercs.org

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