

Media Release – 12 July 2012

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WINNERS OF THE 2012 DE BEERS ENGLISH OLYMPIAD ANNOUNCED

The Grahamstown Foundation and the South African Council of English Education (SACEE) has announced the rank order of the top 100 De Beers English Olympiad winners at an official prize giving ceremony held in Grahamstown on Thursday 12 July.

The De Beers English Olympiad is an annual English competition that drew more than 7300 entries this year from high schools throughout South Africa, Namibia, Botswana and Mozambique. This prestigious competition has run since 1976 and is organised jointly by the Grahamstown Foundation and the South African Council for English Education (SACEE). It has been sponsored by De Beers since 1985.

On 6 March this year, entrants from Grades 10 to 12, wrote the three-hour examination. The theme this year was **“When Urban meets Rural”** and the anthology, compiled by the South African Council of English Education, was entitled **“Small Town, Big Voice”** and featured three South African poets.

Speaking at the prize-giving event, De Beers Consolidated Mines Enterprise Development Manager, Peace Ntuli commented that:

“Although English is equal among the eleven official languages of South Africa, it holds a special place in business, as it is the medium in which the global conversation takes place. De Beers is proud of its association, since 1985, with the English Olympiad, and is firmly of the belief that communication is a key to African development.

The theme of this year’s competition was ‘When Urban meets Rural’. But to me the two interesting words in this year’s topic are not ‘urban’ and ‘rural’, but ‘when’ and ‘meets’. Because ‘when’ speaks to the inevitability of crossroads, the inevitability of encounters leading to conversations across divisions. It is at these meetings, at the threshold between states, at the meetings between conflicting viewpoints, that real learning and creativity take place.”

Alison Immelman, Co-Examiner, commented on this year’s examination:

*“This year’s anthology, **“Small Town, Big Voice,”** proved to be a moving tribute by Andrew Renard (the previous examiner) to the town and the university that he loves. Three “big voices” were included: those of Chris Mann, Harry Owen and Don MacLennan (and a fourth, by implication, Guy Butler). Each of these great poets has contributed something important to the dialogue about what it means to be a South African.*

Although poetry is a difficult genre for many children, the top scripts yet again took our breath away, showing an astounding insight and an ability to be creative and scholastic all at the same time (and in a mere three hours). And once again, this proved the concept true, that the English Olympiad is an indication of amazing potential. We look forward to seeing what these young people achieve as they proceed with their education whether it is at Rhodes University or elsewhere.”

This year also saw a big increase in the number of English First Additional Language (FAL) candidates as part of the English Development Initiative (EDI).

Mr Ntuli commented:

It is heartening to see, once again, an increase in the number of entrants in this year's competition, and especially to see the numbers of First Additional Language students now entering the competition through the Olympiad's English Development Initiative, or EDI. In 2011, 128 EDI candidates entered, but this more than doubled in 2012, which saw a total of 315 EDI candidates taking part.

The EDI is a vital component of the Olympiad, and aims to ensure that schools in communities associated with De Beers enjoy the benefits of the Olympiad, to promote an increased level of confidence in English usage in these communities, and to provide an opportunity for learners to test themselves in new environments.

Overall, 95% of English Development Initiative candidates achieved a merit award or higher. One EDI candidate, Natascha Morris from Danielskuil High School, showed the benefits of persistent self-improvement and repeat exposure to the Olympiad: she achieved a Bronze in 2010, a Silver in 2011 and a Gold award in 2012; being placed 53rd this year.

Prizes awarded against the rank order are as follows:

- a. The top three candidates are treated to a literary tour of the United Kingdom in December 2012.
- b. The top 15 candidates are invited to attend the National Schools Festival in Grahamstown free of charge. The De Beers English Olympiad prize-giving ceremony is held during this Festival, and the top 100 winners are announced in rank order.
- c. Learners who are ranked between the fourth and 20th positions will receive cash prizes, books or book vouchers.
- d. The Top 50 candidates receive free-tuition scholarships for their first year of study at Rhodes University immediately upon successful completion of the matriculation examinations and subject to the university's entry requirements.
- e. All candidates who complete the paper will receive certificates indicating a classified evaluation.

2012 De Beers English Olympiad Top 20 in Rank Order

No	Title	First Name	Surname	School Name
1	Ms	Sarah	Taylor	Merrifield College
2	Mr	Saul	Musker	King David High School Victory Park
3	Ms	Saskia	Kuschke	Hoërskool Garsfontein
4	Ms	Heather	Kirkby	La Rochelle Girls High School
5	Ms	Mia	McCarthy	Maris Stella Convent
6	Ms	Elizabeth	Smith	Collegiate High School for Girls
7	Ms	Okuhle	Tamella	New Forest High School
8	Ms	Megan	Matthews	The Settlers High School
9	Ms	Maya-rose	Torrao	Oakhill School
10	Ms	Donna	Stevens	The King's College
11	Ms	Didi	Tsitsi	Roedean School South Africa
12	Mr	Muhammed-Ismael	Bulbulia	St John's College
13	Ms	Katja	Samouilhan	Oudtshoorn High
14	Mr	Thomas	Hudson	Kearsney College
15	Ms	Andrea	Colombo	Camps Bay High School
16	Mr	Dominic	Daula	Merrifield College

17	Ms	Helena	Milne	Parktown Girls' High School
18	Ms	Candice	Buckle	Our Lady of Fatima Convent
19	Ms	Lerato	Melato	St Andrew's School for Girls
20	Ms	Carmen	Reiff	Deutsche Hohere Privatschule, Windhoek

ENDS

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A complete list of the top 100 in rank order is available on the following websites:

<http://schoolfest.foundation.org.za> and www.SAenglisholympiad.org.za