**Limerick Students Win Prize at National Student Enterprise Award**

**Enterprising students from Desmond College, Newcastle West, Co. Limerick won the prize for best display in their category at the National Student Enterprise Awards in Croke Park on 20th April.**

Operating under the trading name of Centurians, the 5-student team of Alice Duffy, Hannah McMahon, Katie Hallinan, Dylan Moloney and Thomas Curtin, have developed and created a wallet that will protect your contactless credit cards keeping them safe from fraud and skimming. Having already won the Intermediate category in the Limerick Student Enterprise Awards the group are already selling their product and looking to develop the business further.

Co-ordinated by all 31 Local Enterprise Offices across Ireland, the 14th Annual Student Enterprise Awards National Final in Croke Park saw 201 student entrepreneurs from 69 schools showcase 76 different student enterprises, across Junior, Intermediate and Senior Categories.  A record-breaking 22,000 students from 620 schools took part in the programme this year.

A teenage entrepreneur from Wicklow has won the top award at this year’s Student Enterprise Awards National Finals, organised by the Local Enterprise Offices.

16-year-old Luke Byrne took the overall Senior Category prize for 'Headphone Helpers', a patent-pending silicone band to stop earphones from getting tangled.

The Intermediate Category, which is open to second and third year students, was won by ‘Inish Wood Working’ from Scoil Mhuire Buncrana from County Donegal for their hand-crafted giftware. The top prize in the Junior Category, for first year students, went to 'Amor' from St. Oliver Post Primary School in Oldcastle in County Meath, for their modified stirrup tread for horse-riding.

Awards for Innovation, Best Display, Intellectual Property Awareness and Social Media were also presented during the ceremony, as part of the overall €10,000 prize fund.

The Minister for Skills, Research and Innovation, Mr.  Damien English T.D., presented the awards on stage in Croke Park, saying: “It is extremely encouraging to see the level of ingenuity and entrepreneurship in action throughout classrooms in Ireland today.  Through the Student Enterprise Awards, the Local Enterprise Offices are supporting more young people to develop practical business experience and it provides students with the opportunity to learn first-hand skills that are vital for securing future growth within the Irish economy.”

 Sean O’Sullivan, Chair of Enterprise Education Committee with the Local Enterprise Offices, praised the work of the students and schools, adding: “What these winning student entrepreneurs have in common is the ability to identify a problem and develop a solution that has real commercial potential. The Student Enterprise Programme was set up to encourage more young people to start a business and to foster a more enterprising culture for start-ups. A record number of students and schools took part in this year’s programme, showing a growing interest in enterprise in the classroom.”

Tomás Hayes from the Network of Local Enterprise Offices delivered the opening address at the ceremony in the Hogan Suite. Last year's Senior Category Winner, Shíofra Ryan of 'An Tionchar’ in Offaly, told guests about her busy year and her negotiations with a potential investor for her new hurling boot.

The Social Media Awards were supported by Essential French and the Intellectual Property Awareness Awards were supported by the Irish Patents Office. Twenty students with the highest marks in the Senior Category were also offered a place at the week-long ‘Winners Business Bootcamp’, which is running in University College Cork from May 30th to June 4th.

The 2016/2017 Student Enterprise Awards programme starts in September.

**FULL LIST OF WINNERS**

**2016 STUDENT ENTERPRISE AWARDS NATIONAL FINAL**

**SENIOR CATEGORY**

* First Place: Headphone Helpers, Colaiste Chraobh Abhann Kilcoole in Wicklow.
* Second Place: Meachan, Colaiste Ris, Dundalk, Co. Louth
* Third Place: Make a Mark, Jesus and Mary Secondary School, Gortnor Abbey Co Mayo.
* Innovation Award: Caballis Equine Ltd, Colaiste Choilm, Tullamore, Co Offaly.
* Best Display: Kitchen Kouture, Royal and Prior Comprehensive School, Raphoe Co. Donegal.
* Special Merit 1: Citosc, Maria Immaculuta Community College, Dunmanway, West Cork.
* Special Merit 2: Ultimate Universal Steriliser, Colaiste Phobal, Roscrea, Co. Tipperary.
* Special Merit 3: Cut Cost Coupons, Carrigallen Vocational School, Co Leitrim.

**INTERMEDIATE CATEGORY**

* First Place: Inish Woodworking, Scoil Mhuire Buncrana, Co. Donegal.
* Second Place: Pet Health Living, CBS Wexford, Co. Wexford.
* Third Place: Shockets, Colaiste Chu Chulainn, Dundalk, Co. Louth.
* Innovation Award: Farm Friendly Feeder, Gallen Community School, Co. Offaly.
* Best Display: Centurions, Desmond College, Co Limerick.

**JUNIOR CATEGORY**

* First Place: Amor, St Oliver Post Primary School, Oldcastle, Co. Meath.
* Second Place: Dainty Doors, St Dominic’s College, Cabra, Dublin City.
* Third Place: The Boring Postcard Co, Dundalk Grammar School, Co Louth.
* Innovation Award: The Claw Bag, Our Lady’s Secondary School, Co Tipperary.
* Best Display: Genie, St Mary’s Secondary School, Charleville, North Cork.

**IP Awards (sponsored by the Patents Office)**

**IP Award Junior Category**

The Story of My Life, Ballyhaunis Community School, Co. Mayo.

**IP Award Intermediate Category**

Melting Moments, Our Lady’s Secondary School, Belmullet Co. Mayo.

**IP Award Senior Category**

Kids Code, De La Salle College, Waterford

 **Social Media Awards (sponsored by Essential French)**

The Irish Codaithe Competition, Killorglin Community College, Kerry (Intermediate Category)

Light Bulb Ideas, St Leo’s College in Carlow (Senior Category)

P.E.N, Scoil Mhuire, Cork City (Senior Category)