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**62ND TEXACO CHILDREN’S ART COMPETITION WINNERS ANNOUNCED**

**Limerick student is chosen overall 2016 Competition winner**

**Dublin, 19th April 2016**: Marta Turalska, a 17-year old student from Newcastle West, Co. Limerick, has taken first prize in the senior 16-18 age category of this year's 62nd Texaco Children's Art Competition – her first time entering the competition.

Described by competition adjudicators as a ‘wonderfully composed and superbly finished portrait study’, her winning entry – entitled ‘My Grandma With Grape’ – is an exceptionally detailed work carefully executed with paint, colouring pencils and white pen.

A pupil at Scoil Mhuire agus Íde in Newcastle West, Marta attributes much of her artistic achievements to the encouragement and guidance she receives from her art teacher Ciaran O’Sullivan.

Inspired by a photograph of her grandmother taken in her native Poland, the work – which took almost one month to complete – was said by Professor Declan McGonagle, Chairman of the judging panel to have been “executed with skill and maturity overlain by a playful humorous quality that gives it an added visual impact.”

Asked how she felt upon hearing of her success, Marta said, “I just couldn’t believe it! I never thought it would be me! My mum collected me from school and told me in the car that I had won. I just screamed, I was so happy.”

Ambitious to develop a career using her artistic ability, Marta will receive a first-prize cheque for €1,500. When asked how she might spend her prize, she said, “I don’t know, there’s just so many things I want.”

In winning the coveted first prize, Marta fought off competition from thousands of young students from across Ireland who took part in the Competition. She will be presented with her prize at the prize-giving ceremony in the Royal Hospital Kilmainham next month, when all of the 126 winners will be in attendance.

Also in **Category A**, second prize (€1,000) was won by Wiktoria Anna Witkowska (age 16), a student at Loreto Secondary School, Balbriggan, for her work entitled ‘The Face,’ while third prize (€750) was won by Jack McKeon (age 17) from Ard Scoil Rís, Limerick City, for his entry entitled ‘Other People’s Success Isn’t Your Failure’.

In **Category B** (14-15 years), the €450 first prize was won by Waterford student Aoife Casey (age 14), a pupil at Our Lady of Mercy, for her self-portrait, while second prize (€350) was won by Harry Mathers (age 15), from Ballyclare High School, Co. Antrim, for his painting entitled ‘Alex’. Third prize (€250) went to Jack Lynch (age 15), from St. Patrick’s Classical School, Navan, for his work entitled ‘Remembering Eoin MacNeill 1916’.

In **Category C** (12-13 years), first prize of €350 went to Tara Watson (age 13), a pupil at St. Joseph of Cluny Secondary School, for her painting entitled ‘Hook Lighthouse’. Second prize (€250) was won by 13-year old student Atia Chowdhury, from St. Louis High School, Rathmines, for her entry entitled ‘Riha’. Third prize (€200) went to Nicole Halpin (age 13), from Malahide Community School, for her pencil sketch entitled ‘Love Is...’.

In **Category D** (9-11 years), first prize (€250 Art & Hobby gift voucher) was won by 11-year old Hannah Fanning, a student at Newtown Dunleckney National School, Bagenalstown, Co. Carlow for her work entitled ‘In A Pensive Mood’. Second prize (€200 Art & Hobby gift voucher) was won by Ava Henson (age 10), from The Harold School, Glasthule, for her delightful entry entitled ‘Skipper’. No stranger to the competition, Ava won first prize in the 7 to 8 years age category in the 2014 Competition. Third prize (€150 Art & Hobby gift voucher) went to Jennifer White (age 11), from Crawford Art Gallery, Cork, for a study entitled ‘PPML Fruits’.

In **Category E** (7-8 years), the first prize of a €200 Art & Hobby gift voucher was won by 7-year old Eimear Donovan, from Caherline National School, Co. Limerick, for a colourful piece entitled ‘Portrait Of A Boy’. Second prize (€150 Art & Hobby gift voucher) was won by Ryan Bouakkaz (age 8), from St. Cronan’s Junior National School, Swords, whose work is entitled ‘Spring Flowers’, while third prize (€125 Art & Hobby gift voucher) went to Louth student Déaghlan McGovern (age 7), from St. Malachy’s Boys National School, Dundalk, for his entry entitled ‘Parrot In The Trees’.

In **Category F** (6 years and younger), the youngest age group in the Competition, first prize winner of a €150 Art & Hobby gift voucher was 5-year old Ellie Giblin, a pupil at Scoil Mobhí, Glasnevin, for her artwork entitled ‘Ellie’s Drawing Of A Vase Of Flowers’. Second prize (€125 Art & Hobby gift voucher) was won by Bonnie Sheppard (age 6), from St. Josephs Primary School, Crumlin, Co. Antrim, for her entry entitled ‘A Winter Tree’. Third prize (€100 Art & Hobby gift voucher) was won by Arran Smyth (age 6), from St. Mary’s National School, Ballsbridge, for a pencil sketch entitled ‘Gary’.

In **Category G**, reserved for entries from children with special needs, first prize of a €400 Art & Hobby gift voucher was won by 16-year old James Wellwood, a student at Coláiste Mhuire, Johnstown, Co. Kilkenny, for his painting entitled ‘Fish’. Second prize (€300 Art & Hobby gift voucher) went to Belfast student Martin Finn (age 14), from St. Gerard’s School and Support Services, for his entry entitled ‘Ethnic Mask’, while third prize (€200 Art & Hobby gift voucher) went to Lauren Murphy (age 13), from St. Peter’s Special School, Rathgar, for her work entitled ‘Steven’.

Final judging was carried out by the Chairman of the judging panel, Professor Declan McGonagle, retired Director of the National College of Art & Design, assisted by preliminary judges Dr. Denise Ferran (President of the Royal Ulster Academy, Artist and Art Historian), Eoin Butler (Artist & Lecturer in Visual Arts), Seán Kissane (Curator: Exhibitions, IMMA), Aoife Ruane (Director, Highlanes Municipal Art Gallery, Drogheda) and Colleen Watters (Head of Learning & Partnership, Ulster Museum, Belfast).

Announcing the awards at a reception held in the Dublin City Gallery The Hugh Lane at Parnell Square, Dublin today (Tuesday, 19th April 2015), James Twohig, Director of Ireland Operations for Valero, who market fuel in Ireland under the Texaco brand, paid tribute to the winners, praising their skill and enthusiasm. He also thanked the many teachers from schools throughout Ireland who have given their support to the Competition throughout its 62 years history.

This year, the top 21 winning works will remain on exhibition in the Education Gallery at the Dublin City Gallery The Hugh Lane until Sunday, 22nd May. The Gallery is open Tuesday to Sunday each week and admission is free.

The Texaco Children’s Art Competition is the longest running sponsorship in the history of arts sponsoring in Ireland – and popularly regarded as Ireland’s longest-running sponsorship of any kind. It has an unbroken history that dates back to the very first Competition held in 1955. This year, as has been the case throughout its life, it has been a platform on which young artists have had their talents recognised and a springboard on which many have risen to national prominence. Aside from giving students the space to give expression to their talent and skill, the Competition has focused a spotlight on the quality of art teaching in Irish schools and the importance that the educational establishment attaches to the subject of art education.

Past winners whose early interest in art and the arts may well have been encouraged by their participation in the Competition include artists Graham Knuttel, Robert Ballagh, Bernadette Madden, Dorothy Cross, fashion designer Paul Costello and former broadcaster and artist Thelma Mansfield. Other notable past winners include former Minister Ruairi Quinn (a four-times winner), communications consultant and broadcaster Terry Prone, Chairman of the Pension Authority David Begg, actress Jean Anne Crowley, musician Ethna Tinney, Trinity College Professor of Contemporary Irish History Eunan O’Halpin and the late novelist Clare Boylan.

ENDS.

**Editor’s Notes:**

1. The Texaco Children’s Art Competition celebrates its 62nd anniversary this year. For further information about the Competition, contact Don Hall (mobile 087-2552699), Ashley Hall (mobile 086-3127774) or Maximilien McKenna (mobile 086-7848464) at Hall PR on 01-660 9377 (office) or email pr@hall.ie. For more information on Valero Energy (Ireland) Limited, contact Bronagh Carron on (+353) 01 6258208 or email bronagh.carron@valero.com
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