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**PRIZES PRESENTED TO 63RD TEXACO CHILDREN’S ART COMPETITION WINNERS**

**DUBLIN, 25TH MAY 2017:** One hundred and twenty-six young artists from all parts of Ireland – all winners in this year's 63rd Texaco Children's Art Competition – were today presented with their awards at a prize-giving ceremony held in the Royal Hospital, Kilmainham.

Welcomed by James Twohig, Director Ireland Operations for Valero Energy (Ireland) Limited – the company that markets fuel in Ireland under the Texaco brand – those present included the three top 1st, 2nd and 3rd prizewinners and 15 Special Merit Award recipients from each of seven categories, including one reserved for special needs children. All were accompanied by parents, teachers and guardians.

Leading the list of winners was Lucy Deegan, a 17-year old student from Luggacurren, Co. Laois, and a pupil at Gaelcholáiste Cheatharlach in Co. Carlow, who took first prize in the senior 16-18 age category.

Well known to GAA fans as a midfielder with the Laois county ladies minor football team, Lucy is no stranger to the Competition having featured amongst the prize-winners on five occasions to date. Daughter of well-known tourist industry figure Jim Deegan and his wife Fionnuala – herself an accomplished animator – Lucy hails from an artistic family, her brother Tom and sisters Annie Rose and Juliet all having won prizes in previous years.

Her prize winning piece entitled ‘Tom – Summer’ is a detailed portrait study of her brother, carefully executed with colouring pencils and white gel pen and described by competition adjudicators as a ‘beautifully composed and exquisitely finished’ work.

Her prize includes a cheque for €1,500 plus an invitation to visit Tokyo in August at the request of the International Foundation for Arts and Culture. There she will be a guest at the 18th International High School Arts Festival in which her winning artwork will be one of the exhibits on display at the National Arts Center.

Also in **Category A**, second prize (€1,000) was won by Joel Smyth (17), a student at Bangor Academy & Sixth Form College, Co. Down, for his work entitled ‘Lone Tree’, while third prize (€750) was won by Grace Carson (17), from Cookstown High School, Co. Tyrone, for her untitled winter landscape.

In **Category B** (14-15 years), the €450 first prize was won by Dublin student Méabh Scahill (14), from Sutton Park School, for her self-portrait, while second prize (€350) was won by Amy Boylan (14), from Gorey Community School, Co. Wexford, for her artwork entitled ‘My Best Friend, Halle’. Third prize (€250) went to Nicole Forster (15), from Wilson's Hospital School, Multyfarnham, Co. Westmeath, for her work entitled ‘Portrait Of My Dad’.

In **Category C** (12-13 years), first prize of €350 went to Amy Zhao (12), a pupil at Scoil Na gCeithre Máistrí, Athlone, for her self-portrait pencil sketch. Second prize (€250) was won by Ciarán Leonard (13) from St. Mary's CBS, Portlaoise, for his portrait study entitled ‘Weathered Wisdom’. Third prize (€200) went to Emer Leahy (13), from St. Joseph's Of Cluny Killiney, for her entry entitled ‘Sun, Sea, Sisters’.

In **Category D** (9-11 years), first prize (€250 Art & Hobby gift voucher) was won by Ava Henson (11), a student at The Harold School, Glasthule, for her self portrait. No stranger to the competition, Ava won second prize in the same category last year and first prize in the 7-8 years age category in the 2014 Competition. Second prize (€200 Art & Hobby gift voucher) was won by Rachel Glynn (11), from Scoil Bhríde, Four Mile House, Co. Roscommon, for her pencil-sketch entitled ‘My Grandad’. Third prize (€150 Art & Hobby gift voucher) went to Ruth Donoghue (11), from Tarmonbarry, Co. Roscommon for a study entitled ‘Tiger Lily’.

In **Category E** (7-8 years), first prize of a €200 Art & Hobby gift voucher was won by Noah James Flynn (7), from Scoil Bhríde, Menlough, Co. Galway, for a piece entitled ‘Ruby May’. Second prize (€150 Art & Hobby gift voucher) was won by Niall Dalton (7), from St. Columba's National School, Co. Longford, whose colourful work is entitled ‘Anne's Dog, Molly’, while third prize (€125 Art & Hobby gift voucher) went to Westmeath student Xier Lin (7), from St. Mary's Primary School, Mullingar, for a composition entitled ‘Sweet Cherries’.

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 Eibhlín Murphy (6), a pupil at St. Joseph's Girls National School, Clonakilty, for her plant study entitled ‘Daisies’. Second prize (€125 Art & Hobby gift voucher) was won by Eve Aherne (6), from St. Marnock's National School, Portmarnock, Co. Dublin, for her colourful entry entitled ‘Fluttering Feathers’. Third prize (€100 Art & Hobby gift voucher) was won by Agnes Mae McCaubrey (5), from Dundonald Primary School, Belfast, for an imaginative work entitled ‘Fairy Garden’.

In **Category G**, reserved for entries from children with special needs, first prize of a €400 Art & Hobby gift voucher was won by James Wellwood, (17) a student at Coláiste Mhuire, Johnstown, Co. Kilkenny, for his painting entitled ‘Peafowl In The Forest’. No stranger to the prizewinner’s enclosure, James won the same prize in last year’s competition. Second prize (€300 Art & Hobby gift voucher) went to Antrim student Rhys Newbronner (15), from Jordanstown School, Newtownabbey, for his entry entitled ‘Frog’, while third prize (€200 Art & Hobby gift voucher) went to Dylan Carroll (17), from St. Peter’s Special School, Rathgar, for his work entitled ‘Peppers On A Plate’.

**30 counties feature on winners' list – Dublin is most successful county overall**

This year, 30 counties were represented in the overall list of 126 winners thereby underlining the appeal that the Competition has for students across Ireland. Amongst the 21 top prize winners, Dublin was the most successful county taking five top prizes. Other top awards in the seven age categories went to three students from Westmeath, two from both Roscommon and Down, followed by Antrim, Carlow, Cork, Galway, Kilkenny, Laois, Longford, Tyrone and Wexford (1 each).

When Special Merit award winners were included, Dublin held its ‘most successful county’ status with 30 winners overall. Following it was Cork (10); Antrim and Louth (7 each); Limerick (6); Kildare, Down, Meath, Tyrone and  Westmeath (5 each); Galway, Kerry and Laois (4 each); Derry and Roscommon (3 each); Armagh, Carlow, Clare, Donegal, Kilkenny, Longford, Monaghan, Tipperary, Wexford and Wicklow (2 each); and Cavan, Mayo, Offaly, Sligo and Waterford receiving one each.

Final judging was carried out by the Chairman of the judging panel, Professor Declan McGonagle, former 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).

Addressing prizewinners, parents and teachers present at the awards ceremony, James Twohig, Director Ireland Operations of Valero, praised all of the winners for their skill and enthusiasm and thanked the many teachers from schools throughout Ireland who have given their support to the Competition throughout its 63 year history.

The Texaco Children’s Art Competition is the longest running sponsorship in the history of arts sponsoring in Ireland – and is 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 and international 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 on the importance that the educational establishment attaches to the subject of art education.

Notable past winners whose early interest in art and the arts may well have been encouraged by their participation in the Competition include batik artist Bernadette Madden, fellow artists Graham Knuttel, Robert Ballagh and Dorothy Cross, fashion designer Paul Costello and former broadcaster and artist Thelma Mansfield. Other notable past winners include former Government Minister Ruairi Quinn (a four-times winner), communications consultant and broadcaster Terry Prone, Pension Authority Chairman 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 63rd 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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