



Press Release – For Immediate Release (07.04.14)

INSPIRATIONAL NOTTINGHAM PUPIL WINS COMMUNICATION AWARD

Aidan Baker, aged 18 from Derbyshire, is celebrating after being crowned **Young Person of the Year** at the **2013/2014 Shine a Light Awards** for the difference he has made to the lives of children and young people with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN).

The Awards, held in London on Thursday 3rd April and hosted by Broadcaster and Health Campaigner, Anne Diamond, are run by Pearson Assessment in partnership with The Communication Trust to honour individuals, teams, campaigns, communication friendly settings and communities that have excelled in their support of children and young people's communication.

Aidan, who attends I CAN's Dawn House School for children and young people aged 5-19 with a severe or complex communication difficulty in Nottinghamshire, inspired judges for his work writing and delivering training to others about SLCN, despite previously struggling to communicate with others.

Judges were impressed with Aidan's journey from an individual who struggled to keep calm in his interactions with others to one that now acts as a source of support and inspiration for other students in his school. Aidan has been a student governor, an active member of the school rock band as the lead vocalist and a keen participant in the school's mentoring programme.

Aidan has played a key role in the Raising Your Game project, led by Mencap in partnership with I CAN and Nacro, for young people aged between 14 and 25 with a learning disability or communication difficulty, who have been in trouble with the police or are at risk of getting into trouble.

As part of this, Aidan starred in a short film to demonstrate the impact of SLCN on young people and the talents they possess giving him the chance to showcase his competition standard wrestling skills.

Aidan Baker said: "It was such an amazing feeling to actually receive the Young Person of the Year Award. I feel more inspired to help a lot more people outside and in the community. It is important to learn, live and overcome difficulties and meet challenges along the way."

Jack Fradgley, aged 19 who won the Young Person of the Year Award in 2012, said: "Aidan is a worthy winner and serves as a testament to the great things you can achieve through determination and hard work.

“His work in numerous projects has been fantastic for raising awareness of SLCN and helping others. It was a great pleasure to be asked to help judge this award, especially as I was so surprised to receive it in 2012/13. The attributes and achievements of all of the shortlisted applicants were astonishing.”

Chris Hall, Managing Director of Pearson Assessment and Shine a Light Award Judge, says: “It gives me great pleasure to congratulate Aidan for winning this award. Aidan is an incredible role model who has overcome obstacles and shown tremendous resiliency. His journey from a young boy who couldn’t talk to becoming a trainer for others about SLCN deserves to be celebrated.

“We have been blown away by this year’s nominations and seen some truly inspiring examples of work being carried out to support children and young people with SLCN. With the awards now in their third year, we are excited to have helped over 90 individuals and teams shout about their work and go on to inspire others.”

For the full list of Shine a Light winners and highly commended finalists, visit www.shinealightawards.co.uk

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For Further Information

For more information, or to arrange an interview with Aidan Baker, please contact Laura Smith or Charlotte Hussey at Consilium Communications by emailing lsmith@consiliumcommunications.co.uk / chussey@consiliumcommunications.co.uk or call 07766651366.

Notes to editors

About the Shine a Light Awards

- The Shine a Light Awards are sponsored and organised by Pearson Assessment in partnership with The Communication Trust.
- The Awards are designed to promote and celebrate good practice in speech, language and communication for individuals, groups and settings which work with children and young people, particularly those with SLCN.
- The awards form part of the legacy of the National Year of Communication (*Hello* campaign) and have become a key event in the speech, language and communication community’s calendar.
- Nearly 80 applications were received with 16 winners and 13 highly commended finalists picking up coveted awards at a glittering ceremony hosted by Anne Diamond.
- 17 judges were involved in the Shine a Light Awards including Janet Cooper, Founder of Stoke Speaks Out, Peter Sutcliffe, Editor of SEN Magazine, Virginia Beardshaw, Chief Executive of I CAN, Sean Stockdale, Editor of Special Magazine, Kamini Gadhok, Chief Executive of the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists (RCSLT), Diz Minnitt, Milton Keynes Youth Offending Team and Hilary Berry, Headteacher at Over Hall Community School.
- For further information and to view the film of the ceremony and the full list of judges, visit www.shinealightawards.co.uk

About Pearson Assessment

- Pearson Assessment is the world’s largest commercial developer and distributor of educational assessments and psychological testing materials with over 90 years history of commitment to researching and developing products to a reliable high standard.
- Pearson Assessment is dedicated to the pursuit of professional excellence, leadership, and growth through acquisition, development, publication, and the maintenance of quality assessment tools in order to anticipate and meet the needs of its customers.
- Pearson Assessment have sponsored the Shine a Light Awards since their launch in 2011, as part of the *Hello* campaign (National Year of Communication).
- For more information, visit www.pearsonclinical.co.uk or follow @PsychCorpUK #SAL2014

About The Communication Trust

- The Communication Trust is a coalition of nearly 50 leading voluntary sector organisations, which raises awareness, influences policy, promotes best practice among the children's workforce and commissions work from its members.
- It has an extensive advisory group, which includes the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists, Association of Educational Psychologists and the General Teaching Council.
- For more information about the Trust visit www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk or follow @Comm_nTrust #SAL2014

About Raising Your Game

- Raising Your Game aims to improve the lives of young people with a learning or communication disability who have offended, or are at risk of offending, by helping them turn their lives around.
- Raising Your Game is funded by the Big Lottery Fund and delivered by Mencap, in partnership with I CAN and Nacro.
- For more information visit <http://raisingyourgame.mencap.org.uk>