



Press Release – For Immediate Release (07.04.14)

SOMERSET STUDENT IS CROWNED COMMUNICATION CHAMPION

Student Shane Dangar, aged 20 from Somerset is celebrating after winning the **Communication Champion Award** at the **2013/2014 Shine a Light Awards** for his selfless volunteering to raise awareness of 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.

Shane, who has Asperger's Syndrome and ADHD and is in his first year of a media course at university, inspired judges for his work on the Raising Your Game project led by Mencap in partnership with I CAN and Nacro.

The Raising Your Game project is 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. After becoming involved in the project, Shane has delivered 10 communication awareness-training workshops on a completely voluntary basis to a range of groups including Housing Associations, youth services, Job Centre and The National Trust.

Shane Dangar said: "I am grateful for the recognition received at the Shine a Light Awards by winning the Communication Champion Award. I didn't expect it and I am just doing my bit to help. I am lucky enough to have the confidence and words to speak out for all those with communication difficulties who struggle to be heard. I see myself as providing a service to people who don't understand SLCN. I'm trying to spread my message to as many people as possible, I'm currently studying media at university and this summer will be working with local youth groups to create disability awareness films."

Anne Fox, Director of The Communication Trust and a Shine a Light judge, said: "Congratulations to Shane for winning this award. He is an incredible role model who has overcome obstacles to make a big difference to other children and young people with SLCN. Shane uses humour and honesty to explain his difficulties to others and is overcoming his fears of new situations and uncertainties. His voluntary work is challenging perceptions of SLCN and helping people to look at communication difficulties in a different way."

Chris Hall, Managing Director of Pearson Assessment and Shine a Light Award Judge, said: "It gives me great pleasure to congratulate Shane for winning this award. 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."

In addition to the work Shane is undertaking with the Raising Your Game project, he is also a long-term member of a local youth group that supports young people with learning disabilities and SLCN.

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 Shane Dangar, 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>