



Press Release – For Immediate Release (30.09.15)

## INSPIRATIONAL 17-YEAR-OLD WINS COVETED ACCOLADE AT SHINE A LIGHT AWARDS FOR HIS COURAGOUS COMMUNICATION

Jonathan Middleditch, aged 17 from Sudbury in Essex, has been awarded the *Young Person of the Year Award* at a glittering awards ceremony in London, hosted by comedian, David Baddiel, for his courage and determination to achieve incredible heights despite having severe and complex speech, language and communication difficulties.

The **2015 Shine a Light Awards** are a national awards scheme organised by Pearson, in partnership with The Communication Trust, to celebrate innovative work, inspirational individuals and excellent practice in supporting children and young people’s communication development.

Jonathan, a student at Moor House School & College was diagnosed with a severe and complex speech and language impairment, including dyspraxia<sup>1</sup>, dyslexia<sup>2</sup> and dyscalculia,<sup>3</sup> resulting in unintelligible speech. After years of specialist education and therapy at Moor House, Jonathan has made significant progress with his communication abilities.

He achieved a number of nationally recognised qualifications at the end of Year 11. Subsequent to this, Jonathan has achieved a Level 1 Qualification in Land Based Studies and functional skills qualifications in English and maths. He is now working towards a Level 2 Qualification through his specialist placement at Moor House School & College.

Additionally, Jonathan became an integral part of Moor House School & College’s successful bid for a substantial grant from the Wisley Foundation to develop a specialist therapy, called electropalotography (EPG). The outcome of this has been to enable other students with speech impairment to access support. He also has a tractor and trailer licence. Jonathan is incredibly proud of his achievements, justifiably so, having achieved more than he ever dreamt was possible.

Jonathan Middleditch, winner of the *Young Person of the Year Award*, said: “Thank you to everyone who has helped me over the last few years with improving the quality of my speech. Thank you also for helping me to achieve things I never thought I could, like getting into a college.

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<sup>1</sup> Developmental co-ordination disorder (DCD), also known as dyspraxia, is a condition affecting physical co-ordination that causes a child to perform less well than expected for his or her age in daily activities and appear to move clumsily. (NHS)

<sup>2</sup> Dyslexia is a common learning difficulty that mainly affects the way people read and spell words. (NHS)

<sup>3</sup> Dyscalculia is usually perceived of as a specific learning difficulty for mathematics, or, more appropriately, arithmetic. (British Dyslexia Association)

“I am thrilled to have won the Young Person of the Year Award for my achievements. Over the last year I worked with staff to get new EPG equipment, which will benefit every student at my school. Thank you Pearson and The Communication Trust for this award! It means so much to me and I am very proud right now.”

David Baddiel, Host of the 2015 Shine a Light Awards, said: “Because of the important work that the Shine a Light 2015 winners and highly commended finalists have achieved, children and young people’s language and communication development, especially for those with SLCN, has been supported.”

“Speech and language problems too often go under the radar, so everyone should not only be congratulated for their work but for bringing this important issue to the attention of others. I would like to say well done to all those shortlisted who have shown true grit and determination to better themselves and others. They are all a true inspiration - keep up the good work.”

Malcolm Reeve, Executive Director for SEND & Inclusion at the Academies Enterprise Trust (AET) and category judge said: “Congratulations Jonathan for winning *Young Person of the Year*. After starting Moor House School and College at Key Stage 2 with severe speech and language disorder resulting in unintelligible speech, Jonathan has with unwavering determination developed his skills to the best of his ability. Jonathan has achieved success in all areas of his life and is now seen as a role model to others in the school. Jonathan has shown that with the right access to speech and language therapy mixed with motivation and a good sense of humour, anything is possible.”

Chris Hall, Director of Clinical Assessment at Pearson, says: “Congratulations to Jonathan for winning the *Young Person of the Year Award* at the 2015 Shine a Light Awards for his remarkable achievements. Each year the applications get stronger and more inspiring. We have seen examples of children and young people with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) like Jonathan achieving far beyond what professionals could have imagined thanks to true grit and determination.

“The Shine a Light Awards, now in their fourth year, continue to grow and we have been delighted to welcome an incredible judging panel who represent the very best of the education and special educational needs (SEN) sector. To once again partner with The Communication Trust and celebrate these inspiring people and organisations is a real privilege.”

Anne Fox, Director of The Communication Trust, says: “Congratulations to the winners and highly commended finalists whose work will help inspire and motivate people right across the country. Jonathan is a wonderful example of this inspiration in practice and he has shown what can be achieved with persistence and support from skilled professionals and a courageous spirit. We’re delighted to have this partnership with Pearson, which allows Shine a Light to be a true celebration of the amazing work up and down the country and for helping the Trust to reach more children and young people and the professionals who work with them.

“The Shine a Light Awards are a key fixture for the speech and language sector as they reflect a range of best practice and innovative work taking place across the country. At a time when early years, health, education and SEN services are going through significant reforms, Shine a Light focuses attention on what can be achieved through expertise, sheer determination and never giving up on children and young people’s potential.”

The Shine A Light awards are designed to honour individuals, teams, campaigns, communication-friendly settings and communities that have excelled in their support of children and young people's communication, particularly for those with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN).

The full list of winners and highly commended finalists include:

|   | <b>Winner/s</b>  | <b>Highly Commended</b>  | <b>Highly Commended</b>  |
|---|--|--|--|
| <b>Pearson Outstanding Achievement Award</b>                  | Lord David Ramsbotham<br>GCB CBE   | N/A  | N/A  |
| <b>Early Years Setting of the Year Award</b>                  | Robert Mellors Primary and Nursery School Foundation Unit, Nottingham          | Bambini Childcare Ltd, Bedworth, Warwickshire                            | N/A  |
| <b>Primary School of the Year</b>                             | Aerodrome Primary Academy, Croydon   | John Ruskin Language Unit, John Ruskin Primary School, Southwark, London | Lark Hall Primary School, Clapham, London                                      |
| <b>Secondary School/ College of the Year Award</b>            | Hampstead School, London   | St Marylebone CE Bridge School, Westminster, London                      | Peace haven Community School, Peacehaven, East Sussex                          |
| <b>Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) Award</b> | Woodlands School, Leatherhead, Surrey  | N/A  | N/A  |
| <b>Community Friendly Award</b>                               | Talk About Team, Norfolk Community Health and Care NHS Trust, Norwich, Norfolk | N/A  | N/A  |
| <b>SLCN Innovation Award</b>                                  | I CAN's Talk about Talk programme, London                                      | County Durham Youth Offending Service, Durham                            | Talk About Team, Norfolk Community Health and Care NHS Trust, Norwich, Norfolk |
| <b>Communication Champion Award</b>                           | Bev Crisp, Whitby & Moors Children Centre, North Yorkshire                     | Cordula Hastings, Charles Warren Academy, Milton Keynes                  |  |
| <b>Young Person of the Year</b>                               | Jonathan Middleditch, Moor House School and College (Suffolk)                  | James Curtis, London – AVUK  |  |
| <b>Communication Commitment School of the Year Award</b>      | Holy Trinity Primary School, Halifax, Yorkshire                                | Longmoor Community Primary School, Liverpool                             | Fonthill Primary, Bristol  |

For further information about the Shine a Light winners and highly commended finalists, visit [www.shinealightawards.co.uk](http://www.shinealightawards.co.uk) and follow us on Twitter #SAL2015.

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## For further information

For more information, or to arrange interviews, please contact Laura Smith and Lisa Church at Consilium Communications by contacting [lchurch@consiliumcommunications.co.uk](mailto:lchurch@consiliumcommunications.co.uk) / 07467 945661 *or* [lsmith@consiliumcommunications.co.uk](mailto:lsmith@consiliumcommunications.co.uk) / 07467 945848.

## Notes to editors

### About the Shine a Light Awards

- The Shine a Light Awards are sponsored and organised by Pearson in partnership with The Communication Trust, a coalition of over 50 organisations dedicated to supporting children and young people's speech, language and communication.
- The Awards are designed to promote and celebrate good practice in speech, language and communication for individuals, groups and settings that 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 10 winners and 11 highly commended finalists picking up coveted awards at a glittering ceremony hosted by comedian, David Baddiel.
- The award categories were Early Years Setting of the Year Award, Primary School of the Year Award, Secondary School/College of the Year Award, Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) Award, Community Friendly Award, SLCN Innovation Award, Community Champion Award, Young Person of the Year Award and Communication Commitment School of the Year Award.
- 25 judges were involved in the Shine a Light Awards including Anne Fox, Director of The Communication Trust; Kamini Gadhok, CEO and Derek Munn, **Director of Policy and Public Affairs** of Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists (RCSLT); Virginia Beardshaw, CEO of I CAN; Norbert Lieckfeldt, Chief Executive of British Stammering Association; Peter Sutcliffe, Editor of SEN Magazine; Jonathan Douglas, Director of National Literacy Trust; Chris Hall, Managing Director at Pearson; Lesley Munro, Education & Speech and Language Therapy Manager at Pearson; Jill Duffy, Managing Director for Schools, Pearson; Hilary Berry, Chair of Cheshire West and Chester Primary Heads' Association; Clare O'Rourke, Specialist Speech, Language and Communication Teacher at Peacehaven Community School and past winner; Michael Beakhouse, Adults & Children's Commissioner at Reading Borough Council and past winner; Shane Dangar, Communication Champion 2013/14; Anna Reeves, Manager of ACE Centre; Malcolm Reeve, Executive Director for SEND & Inclusion at Academies Enterprise Trust; Janet Cooper, Programme Manager of Stoke Speaks Out and Past Shine a Light Award winner; Liz Bayram, Chief Executive of PACEY; Zoë Peden, Co-founder of Insane Logic; Laura Steuart-Fotheringham, Programme Manager for The Communication Trust; Shona Crichton, Professional Advisor for The Communication Trust; Jack Williams, Project Officer for The Communication Trust; Joy Rutter, SEN Governor at Linton Colliery First School; Julie Steele, Specialist Speech and Language HLTA; Helen Fiddler, ESCAL Interim Strategic Lead and Programme Manager at Sheffield City Council; Aidan Baker, Young Person of the Year 2013/14.
- For further information, visit [www.shinealightawards.co.uk](http://www.shinealightawards.co.uk).

### About Pearson

- Pearson is the world's leading learning company, with 40,000 employees in more than 70 countries working to help people of all ages to make measurable progress in their lives through learning.
- Pearson 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 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 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](http://www.pearsonclinical.co.uk) or follow @PsychCorpUK #SAL2015

#### **About The Communication Trust**

- The Communication Trust is a coalition of over 50 leading voluntary sector organisations, which raises awareness, influences policy, promotes best practice among the children's workforce and commissions work from its members.
- The Trust's mission is to ensure that every child and young person is supported to communicate to the very best of their ability.
- The Trust works towards its mission by working in partnership to build, skills, knowledge and confidence in the children's workforce, based on a foundation of good practice, robust evidence and effective policy and legislation.
- For more information about the Trust visit [www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk](http://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk) or follow @Comm\_nTrust #SAL2015.