

Winners of local Monologue competition announced

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Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Streams Community Hub has officially announced the winners of their inaugural Word of Mouth Monologue Competition.

Nine finalists, ranging from ages 8 to 17 years old, gathered at Grace Tipling Hall in Shelburne in early September to compete in a final performance in front of a panel of judges. Streams Community Hub premiered a pre-recorded finale video of the competition on Oct. 9 announcing the winners.

'It's been super rewarding, exciting, and inspiring,' said Andrew James, co-founder of Streams Community Hub. 'It was great seeing them interpret these pieces their own way and they did a great job.'

'From their initial audition to the coaching night, to the final performance, every single one of them improved every time,' added Juli-Anne James.

The competition was divided into two age categories, 8-12 (junior) and 13-17 (senior), with the finalists performing monologues geared toward subjects specific to youth. First place winners were awarded a \$1,000 prize while second place was awarded \$500.

Ashley Robertson, a resident of Melancthon, placed first in the junior category with her performance of Marnie McPhee from 'The Remarkable Flight of Marnie McPhee' by Daniel Karasik.

'I was super excited, I couldn't believe it,' said Robertson in an interview with the Free Press. 'I didn't think I was going to win because all the other people were really good but once I got it inside my head that I actually won, I was so excited about it.'

Robertson has been involved in theatre performances in the past through LP Stage Productions and said she was happy to be on the stage again.

Placing first in the competition, Robertson received a \$1,000 prize, which she has chosen to donate a portion of back to Streams Community Hub.

'I just think what they're doing for the community and everybody is really awesome,' she said.

Mansfield resident, Audrey Hawkins placed second in the junior division with her performance of Jennifer from the play 'The Patron Saint of Stanley Park' by Hiro Kanagawa.

Speaking about her decision to play the role, Hawkins said she chose the piece based on the storyline and it fitting with her age.

'It was more on the sad side and I find that sometimes I like to choose stuff more on the sad side because I feel I can do them pretty well,' said Hawkins, who has been a part of various productions put on by LP Stage Production in the past.

Sixteen-year-old Alexandria Fazekas was the second place winner in the senior category.

'I just remember sitting there and them showing me the plaque - I kind of froze,' recalled Fazekas. 'I thought to myself 'I actually did it' and I was good to the fact that the judges thought I deserved. That in itself is a win, whether it's first or second, even making it to the final was a win.'

Fazekas was recently in the production of Clue put on by the Orangeville Theatre's Youth Company Drama. In the monologue competition she performed the role of Jennifer from 'The Patron Saint of Stanley Park'.

Taking first place in the senior division was local Naomi Cameron with her performance as Jennifer in 'The Patron Saint of Stanley Park'.

Cameron told the Free Press the experience of winning first place was 'overwhelmingly exciting', as she recalled walking to the stage and receiving congratulatory claps from the other performers.

Cameron has performed in various LP Stage Productions including The Wizard of Oz, The Lion King, Singing in the Rain, and the lead role of Alice in Alice In Wonderland.

After the experience of the first Word of Mouth Monologue Competition, Cameron said she encourages other youth to get involved next time.

'It's such a fun thing to do, if that's what you're into,' said Cameron.

Streams Community Hub also presented the award for Fan Favourite, which was given to Ryker Williamson who received 611 votes from the community.

With the success of the competition, both Juli-Anne and Andrew say they are making plans for Word of Mouth 2022.

Julia-Anne added they are expecting to see even more participation next year.

'We hope that we can grow this into something that the whole County can look forward to and that will make our county really proud.'

The complete video of the monologue competition, which was filmed by that Art of Storytelling, can be found on the Streams Community Hub YouTube channel.