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Streams Community Hub hosts annual Word of Mouth Monologue Competition

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LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

On Saturday, Nov. 15, Shelburne saw the best speakers the area had to offer go head-to-head in a war of words at Streams Community Hub's fifth annual monologue competition.

Juli-Anne James, co-founder and executive director of Streams, said it was a remarkable event featuring young talent from the community.

?This past Saturday, Streams Community Hub proudly hosted the fifth annual Word of Mouth Monologue Competition at Grace Tipling Hall,? she said. ?It was truly an unforgettable evening. A packed house came out to support 19 young performers from schools across the region.?

Among the participants were kids from across the region, including schools such as Centennial Hylands Elementary, St. Peter Catholic Elementary, Highpoint Community School, Primrose Elementary, Arbour Vista Public School, East Garafraxa Public School, Centre Dufferin District High School, Westside Secondary School, and Centennial Collegiate Vocational Institute.

James said that this year, Streams was deeply impressed by the outpouring of support from families and friends for the youth participating. She said it is critical that young minds receive that support, giving them the confidence they need to grow.

?What stood out most this year was the overwhelming support from families, educators, and community members,? she said. ?The atmosphere was filled with pride and encouragement, giving these young performers a moment that will stay with them for years. Events like this demonstrate the power of giving youth a platform to express themselves and be celebrated.?

Finalists delivered exceptional performances across the board, showing great courage for taking the stage and making great use of storytelling skills to deliver their monologues.

Judging their monologues was a panel of talented adjudicators.

Jay Vaidya, who judged the competition, is a Toronto-based television writer and producer whose credits include Odd Squad, Run the Burbs, The Hardy Boys, and the award-winning Beyond Black Beauty.

James Gerus, an actor and writer from Mono, scored the competitors' monologues. His film work has screened at Cannes, and he will soon perform as a lead at Roy Thomson Hall with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra.

Bradley Reid, a film and theatre actor who began his career in the comedy film Dirty Work, now calls Dufferin County home, and also judged the monologues.

However, there can be only one winner in each category of the contest, which was undoubtedly a tough decision for the three judges.

In the Senior Category, Audrey Hawkins earned first place, followed by Maleeha Bashir in second. In the Junior Category, Maya Abhimanu placed first, with Grady Gallaugher taking second. The grand prizes included large rewards for their efforts, with $1,000 for first place and $500 for second place in each category.

The prize money was generously provided by Crewson Insurance Brokers, who have been long-standing supporters of the

competition for four of its five years.

Jennifer Crewson, director of client experience at Crewson Insurance Brokers, said that they are proud to be supporters of the Word of Mouth competition and praised Streams for its ongoing support of creativity and development.

?It is an honour and a privilege for Crewson Insurance to have been the presenting sponsor of the Word of Mouth Monologue Competition for the fourth year in a row,? she said. ?Juli-Ann and Andrew James are an inspiration and true leaders in our community. Streams Community Hub offers a safe and welcoming place where the young people in Shelburne can explore arts, music, singing, baking and more.?

Crewson continued by saying that speaking is a passion for the group, and she encourages everyone to find their own voice, which remains an important tool in everyday life.

She added that Crewsons is proud of every contestant who participated and looks forward to future events.

?Crewson Insurance is passionate about speaking, we believe that it is important to use your voice, speaking is a powerful tool that can captivate audiences and influence people,? Crewson said. ?It takes courage, hard work and bravery to stand up on stage and recite a monologue in front of a crowd. Crewson Insurance is proud to be a part of this event and hopes it will continue for many years to come.?

For those interested in learning more about the competition or Streams Community Hub, visit their website at https://streamshub.org.