

## Media Release – 16 July 2009

**Embargo: 11h00 Thursday 16 July 2009.**

Following this FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### WINNERS OF THE 2009 DE BEERS ENGLISH OLYMPIAD ANNOUNCED

The Grahamstown Foundation has announced the rank order of the top 100 De Beers English Olympiad winners at an official prize giving ceremony held in Grahamstown on Thursday 16 July.

The De Beers English Olympiad is an annual national English competition that attracts more than 5 300 entries from high schools throughout the country. The competition is organised jointly by the Grahamstown Foundation and the South African Council for English Education (SACEE).

The 2009 candidates between grades 10 and 12 from South Africa and neighbouring states sat a three-hour long examination in March. The theme this year was **“The conundrums of ambition”** and the anthology, entitled **“Dreams, Pipedreams, Ambitions and Disillusionments”** was made up of extracts of poetry and song lyrics. The anthology was compiled by the South African Council of English Education (SACEE).

Several of the poems in the anthology were taken from **English Alive** which is another SACEE project organised by the Cape Town Branch. **English Alive** features poetry written by South African learners and it is published annually

In 1976 the Eastern Cape branch of SACEE implemented the first English Olympiad. The competition was open only to candidates in the Eastern Cape and drew 119 entrants, with a first prize of R50. In 1977 the English Olympiad was opened to the whole of the Cape Province and by 1978 it went national. De Beers came on board as the main sponsor in 1985.

*De Beers Consolidated Mines managing director David Noko commented: “South Africa has progressed and evolved these past 30 years, as has the work associated with the English Olympiad. Once the preserve of first language English speakers, the Olympiad is now a vehicle for spreading the love of the language, and the promotion of its better use to all parts of the sub continent[D5] English, as with our other 10 official languages, has been liberated! De Beers is keen that this Olympiad helps improve the quality of life of all South Africans by improving their access to information and recognising excellent language skills, thereby enhancing the quality of communication and, no doubt, the productivity of many young South Africans, today and forever.*

*Noko continued: “Communication in the international arena is an important part of making our sub continent more competitive. As a productivity award-winning company De Beers recognises the value The De Beers English Olympiad brings to the students who participate, to their schools and importantly, to their communities throughout the country.”*

The aim of the Olympiad is to enrich learners through the study of English and to encourage critical thinking and creative writing.

*This year's Olympiad gave entrants the opportunity to write about their dreams and ambitions. It was wonderful to read the ideas of all the candidates, both strong and weak. It is apparent that the youth of Southern Africa have a strong sense of direction. Many of them are very goal-orientated, yet their ambitions are not necessarily selfish. One of the more popular topics in this year's exam was ‘My Education Has Failed Me’. It was eye-opening to read the profound*

*thoughts so many candidates had on this topic. Our pupils are more aware of what constitutes a good education than we give them credit for. A common thread that ran through many of the responses was that English is their favourite subject and English teachers are the best teachers in their school. If only we could encourage these perceptive pupils to join the profession. – Andrew Renard, Chief Examiner*

Prizes awarded in rank order are as follows:

- a. The top three candidates are treated to a literary tour of the United Kingdom in December 2009
- b. The top 15 candidates are invited to attend the National Schools Festival in Grahamstown free of charge. The De Beers English Olympiad prize-giving ceremony is held during this Festival, and the top 100 winners is announced in order
- c. Learners who are ranked between the fourth and 20th positions will receive cash prizes or book vouchers
- d. The Top 50 candidates receive free-tuition scholarships for their first year of study at Rhodes University immediately upon successful completion of the matriculation examinations and subject to the university's entry requirements, and
- e. All candidates who complete the paper will receive certificates indicating a classified evaluation.

#### **2009 De Beers Top 20 Rank Order**

<b>Name</b>	<b>School</b>
1 Lauren Midgley	Redhill School
2 Jonathan Stein	Grace College
3 Ignus Van Zyl	Felixton College
4 Judith Engela	St Martin's School
5 Emma Johannes	Roedean
6 Danielle Khoury	St Mary's School, Waverley
7 Lisa Dondashe	Riebeeck College
8 Elizabeth Van Der Merwe	Rhenish Girls High School
9 Aisha Mia	Parktown Girls High School
10 Arushi Raina	Crawford College, Sandton
11 Wesley Gush	Kingswood College
12 Samantha Deeb	St Peters College
13 Klyne Maharaj	Hilton College
14 Lara Williams	The Wykeham Collegiate
15 Chloë Immelman	St Mary's DSG, Kloof
16 Jessica Hitchens	Springfield Convent
17 Cameron Wilson	Michaelhouse
18 Amy Crankshaw	De La Salle Holy Cross
19 Shirley Ward	St Mary's School, Waverley
20 Christopher Peter Bradshaw	Kingswood College

**-ENDS-**

16 July 2009

Media Contacts:

Niki Searle, Olympiad Officer: 046 603 1145 or 046 603 1107

Louisa Clayton, Chairman of the English Olympiad Executive Committee: 046 603 1107 / 082 5503 795

*A Complete list of the top 100 in alphabetical order is available on the following website:*

<http://schoolfest.foundation.org.za>