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The Student Voice Prize
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DARE TO 'WRITE' RARE Student Voice Prize Returns for its 9th year

Cambridge, UK, 5 October 2022: Beacon and Medics4RareDiseases are proud to announce the return of the 9th annual Student Voice Prize. This prestigious essay competition is open to those studying medicine, nursing and biological sciences, around the world. The winner will receive a cash prize, have their essay published in the Orphanet Journal of Rare Diseases and have the opportunity to speak at two popular, scientific conferences - Beacon's annual 'Rare Disease Showcase' and Medics4RareDiseases' annual symposium, at the Royal Society of Medicine.

There are over 7000 rare diseases. They affect approximately 350 million people, globally. Collectively, rare diseases are not rare at all, in-fact, the prevalence in the UK is 1 in 17. However, dedicated rare disease education is lacking in medical curriculums. Beacon and Medics4RareDiseases are working to tackle this issue head-on. The Student Voice Prize challenges our future doctors, nurses and scientists to think about rare disease now.

This year's topic will focus on the mental health implications of rare diseases. These patients traverse a complex landscape of investigations, diagnosis and management, often passed from one healthcare professional to the next. It is a distinctly challenging journey, often fraught with confusion, exhaustion and feelings of marginalisation. There are unique mental stressors and strains that arise from this which need to be acknowledged and addressed. This topic gives doctors, nurses and scientists, of tomorrow, the opportunity to understand the mental health needs of patients with the most complex conditions. Students can choose to gain a unique insight into the lives of those with rare diseases by being 'paired' with a rare disease patient group. Last year there were 60 such pairings, providing invaluable insight into the patient experience.

Past winners and runners up have gone on to become proud rare ambassadors. The accolade has opened up speaking opportunities and ongoing relationships with the two charities, such as becoming a Rare Diseases Student Ambassador. Since 2014, the winning essays have gained over 20 thousand views and over 100 citations.

"It's no exaggeration when I say that winning the competition was the spark that gave me the confidence to be more open about my MG diagnosis." - Zainab Alani, overall winner of The Student Voice Prize 2021

"As parents, caregivers, researchers, and healthcare professionals, we all have a role to play in finding treatments and cures for patients affected by rare diseases, and there is power in our collective ability to unite around this common purpose." - Meagan Collins, runner-up of The Student Voice Prize 2021

"The Student Voice Prize asks medical students around the world to put themselves in the shoes of their rarest patients. We ask them to consider the impact of their symptoms, but more crucially, the impact of their interactions with doctors. Connecting in this way with the rare disease patient experience can change the way students deal with patients across their career, and open their eyes to the complex world of rare diseases. We can't wait to read this year's entries." - Beacon CEO, Dr. Rick Thompson

About The 2022 Student Voice Prize: The 2022 Student Voice Prize is accepting essay submissions from now until 16 November at 12pm GMT. Students can request to be paired with a patient group and enter up to one essay for each question. Essays must be 1,500 words or less. View the [official Student Voice Prize website](https://www.rarebeacon.org/the-student-voice-prize-2022/) (https://www.rarebeacon.org/the-student-voice-prize-2022/) for more information and check out the list of



Please contact studentvoice@rarebeacon.org
if you'd like to learn more.



2022 prizes and past winners! Email studentvoice@beacon.org.uk with any questions and follow The Student Voice Prize on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook (@RDStudentVoice).

About Medics4RareDiseases

Medics4RareDiseases (M4RD) is a registered charity committed to providing rare disease education for medical professionals, students, and doctors in training, with the primary goal of helping improve the journey through healthcare for people living with rare diseases, in order to achieve an earlier diagnosis.

m4rd.org

About Beacon

Beacon is a UK-based charity that is building a united rare disease community with patient groups at its heart. We envision a world in which no one faces their rare journey alone. They upskill rare disease patient groups through training, guided programmes, community projects and research initiatives.

rarebeacon.org



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