

There's a little Picasso in all of us

EASE announces the winners to its fourth annual 'My Life with Eczema' art contest

TORONTO, March 19, 2013: Picking the winner for an artistic competition is rarely easy, but when the applicants are children, illustrating their own stories, it can be even harder. This past year was no different, as the fourth annual 'My Life with Eczema' art contest, presented by the Eczema Awareness, Support and Education (EASE) Program, received 15 colourful and touching entries from across the country. Kids as young as 4 to the age of 12 picked up their crayons, pencils and paint to create art that told their stories of dealing and living with eczema.

The winning artwork was chosen by an esteemed panel of judges that included: Art therapist Janice Leblanc, dermatologists Dr. Joseph Lam and Dr. Marc Bourcier and celebrity judge, Marc Brown. Brown is a bestselling children's author and illustrator, and is best-known as the creator of *Arthur*.

"I was astonished by these young artists' exceptionally creative use of artwork space. It was also evident how much thought went into their personal stories, all of which were a heartwarming and touching to read," said Marc Brown.

The grand prize winner was Andrew Feng, 9, for his drawing of an imaginary brother named 'Cool-Doo' who sucks his eczema into his gun and shoots evil aliens. Feng hails from Mississauga, Ontario, and was celebrated for his creative use of space and his visual creativity that was found even in his writing.

The second runner-up was Giorgio Manasseri for his drawing of himself as a super hero, with the power to fly away and escape the itches. At 7 years of age, Giorgio lives in Ottawa, Ontario.

The third runner-up was Cheryl Cheung for her drawing of her 'World of Eczema' and the struggles she has faced dealing with this disease. At 12 years of age, Cheryl lives in Toronto, Ontario.

"Each year we're so impressed with the calibre of artwork that comes in," said Dr. Joseph Lam, MD, Department of Paediatrics, University of British Columbia. "These kids may be young, but their art is so insightful and creative. We applaud their effort and commend them for having the courage to share their stories."

Entries were judged on their use of space, their creativity, and their personal story. Andrew Feng received a grand prize of a \$1,500 Canada Savings Bond to put towards his future education, and both runner-ups were awarded a cash prize of \$250. For more information, visit www.eczemaCanada.ca.

The EASE Program would also like to thank the Eczema Society of Canada for their support of the 'My Life with Eczema' art contest. The Eczema Society of Canada is a registered charity dedicated to meeting the needs of those suffering with eczema, through patient support, education, awareness, and research. For more information, visit www.eczemahelp.ca.

About Eczema

Between four to six million children and adults in Canada suffer from eczema, a common, chronic, life-altering skin condition. Eczema (atopic dermatitis) is characterized by painful red, swollen, itchy and

flaky skin. The constant itch that goes along with eczema makes it very different from any other skin condition. Eczema is often called the 'itch that rashes' rather than the 'rash that itches' because the itch starts long before the rash appears. The itch leads to a lot of scratching and that's when the red, raw rash appears. The majority of eczema cases are diagnosed in early childhood, and it is estimated that while some children may eventually outgrow eczema, about 80 per cent will have dry irritable skin throughout their lives.

About the Eczema Awareness, Support and Education (EASE®) Program

The Eczema Awareness, Support and Education (EASE) Program is a national and fully bilingual patient education program developed with the assistance of leading Canadian dermatologists to provide access to useful and accurate information about eczema. Supported by Astellas Pharma Canada, Inc., the EASE Program has been recognized with five Public Education Awards from the Canadian Dermatology Association.

The EASE Program website, www.eczemaCanada.ca, offers information on eczema including tips on speaking to a child's teacher about the condition, managing childhood triggers and how to control the itch. Parents, teachers and young children can also visit www.pennysworld.ca - a fun, child-friendly website that aims to help children understand eczema.



Caption: "My Life with Eczema" Grand Prize Winner Andrew Feng, 9, from Mississauga, Ontario