

Press release: County Durham student awarded Lord Glenamara memorial prize

A talented County Durham student has been recognised for her academic success and voluntary work with a prize given to commemorate a politician who championed education in the North East.

Courteney Ayre, a pupil at Apollo Studio Academy, Peterlee, was announced as the fifth winner of the annual Lord Glenamara Memorial Prize, given in memory of former Deputy Prime Minister and North-East MP Ted Short.

Education Secretary Justine Greening presented Courteney with the award at a reception held at Imperial College London on Thursday 9 February, and confirmed that the year 12 student will now undertake a 2-day work experience programme at the Department for Education's offices in London.

After hearing that she had been selected as the stand-out candidate from entrants in years 11 and 12 across the North East, aspiring primary school teacher Courteney paid tribute to the work of local organisations such as the Durham-based Bridge Young Carers project.

Courteney impressed judges with her academic and extra-curricular achievements, which include:

- academic excellence in gaining 11 GCSEs at A and B grade
- involvement in induction and mentoring of new students by assisting Apollo staff and attending promotional events to share positive opportunities and experiences
- supporting students and teachers by delivering, to a high standard, lessons in a peer-to-peer teaching programme
- being involved with the Bridge Young Carers project to provide support for young carers in the north-east of England
- using her experience to work with local charity Northern Rights to help set up a website offering support for people with health problems and disabilities.

Education Secretary Justine Greening said:

There were so many excellent entrants put forward for this year's prize and they should all be celebrated. However, having read Courteney's nomination, it is clear why she stood out – Courteney should be proud of her many achievements.

Getting good grades is vital and it is equally important that pupils leave school with the skills and confidence needed to get on in life. Courteney has demonstrated these qualities in abundance and used them to have a hugely positive impact on her school and the local community. I'm sure she will be a fantastic teacher and I wish her all the best for the future

Reacting to her award, Courteney said:

I feel highly honoured to be nominated for, and subsequently chosen, to receive this outstanding award. If it wasn't for the tireless effort put in by my teachers, family and friends I would still be shy, and therefore unable to even be considered for an award like this.

I feel very grateful that I was introduced to The Bridge Young Carers Project and would like to use this award to highlight how important services like these are to young people that are living in a caring role. It relieves them of a lot of extra stress, thus allowing them to pursue their education to a higher and more beneficial standard.

I hope to continue supporting the links between education and supportive groups once I become an educator myself.

The runners-up, listed in alphabetical order, are:

- Lily Clarke, Heaton Manor School
- Grace Copeland, St Anthony's Girls' Catholic Academy
- Thomas James, Belmont Community School
- Martha Laundry-Blair, Carmel College
- Jack McDermott, Ian Ramsey CoE Academy
- Annalise Murray, Harton Technology College
- Aaron Rowell, St Thomas More RC Academy
- Georgia Topping, Castle View Enterprise Academy
- Niamh Waters, St Thomas More RC Sixth Form

About the Lord Glenamara Prize

The prize is open to school pupils in years 11 and 12 across the North East of England who have shown:

- strong academic performance across a range of subjects
- a civic contribution, particularly volunteering personal time for activities such as:
 - mentoring younger pupils
 - helping with extracurricular events
 - working with a youth group or a charity outside school hours
- an interest in government, education, history or public service

About Lord Glenamara

Lord Glenamara – Ted Short – qualified as a teacher in Durham before becoming MP for Newcastle central in 1951 and the first Chancellor of Northumbria in 1992.

In 1968 he was appointed Education Secretary in Harold Wilson's government, a post he continued to shadow in opposition.

The Lord Glenamara memorial prize was established to reward academic performance, citizenship and an interest in history, politics, or public service from young people in the North East.