

November 2015

Emotive tale of devastation, 'After the Storm,' wins ASG award'

Eleven year old Monica Rallabhandi has been winning creative writing competitions since she was in grade three, and there's no wonder why.

Her latest piece of writing 'After the Storm,' is filled with raw emotion as she describes Sophia's harrowing hours of distress and battle for survival, and being surrounded by wreckage and a sea of glutinous water, which swept away many life forms like dust particles.

Sophia's quest to find her parents ends tragically with a gruesome discovery, which Monica describes as 'nature's malicious smile'.

Monica who is in grade six at Rossmoyne Primary School was presented with an ASG Literary Award for her story on 28 November 2015, in an award ceremony held in Melbourne.

It is one of five award categories sponsored by ASG as part of the Young Australian Art and Writers' Awards.

The awards are an initiative of the Children's Charity Network (CCN), an organisation that helps build confidence and self-esteem in children. ASG has been supporting CCN since 2003.

ASG Chief Executive Officer, John Velegrinis said he was blown away by Monica's writing, which was real, mature and thought provoking.

"I congratulate Monica and all the ASG students who are very deserving of these awards. ASG's core mission is about supporting children's education and by fostering young talent and encouraging creativity, this allows them to express themselves freely through art and literature and perhaps aspire to a career in these disciplines.

"These awards aren't just about the students but how the parents get involved too. We recently launched the 2015 ASG Parents Report Card which looked at parents' perceptions of the state of education in Australia. One of the key findings is that parents' aspirations are the most important driver for their children's educational success. When children know how their parents value their education and the high aspirations they have, this encourages them to want to do better. So a huge congratulations to all the parents who have supported their children in this journey," added Mr Velegrinis.

CCN Executive Director Rob Leonard says the awards showcase incredible talent.

"You only have to read these stories or see the artwork, to understand how much talent we really have in our young people. Their imagination is just incredible and some of their stories still bring a tear to my eye."

Monica's mum, Sowmya said her daughter started taking writing seriously when she first entered the ASG Literary and Art Awards several years ago.

"I wouldn't say inspired but Monica connected to the devastation caused by the earthquake recently in Nepal while writing 'After the Storm'. There was a mixed feeling of shock and exuberance when she won the award."

Other ASG award recipients were:

Art Award-painting (Prep-grade 4): Himani, Maroubra, NSW

Art Award-drawing (Prep-grade 4): Shanghavi Rathanthas, Strathfield, NSW

Literary Award (poetry): Ben Cullen, Westleigh, NSW

Indigenous Art Award: Shianne Kynuna, QLD.

Ends.

Media contact:

To arrange an interview with ASG CEO John Velegrinis or Monica Rallabhandi please contact:

Nicole Gundi

Media and Communications Adviser

(03) 9276 7250 / 0448 167 578

publicrelations@asg.com.au

Editors notes:

The Australian Scholarships Group (ASG) is a member owned organisation, helping to create educational opportunities for children. ASG has been helping families and their children for more than 40 years. During this time, more than 520,000 children have been enrolled with ASG and more than \$2.3 billion in education benefits and scholarship payments returned to members. For more information visit: www.asg.com.au.