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Sutton student wins big in national physics competition

A Sutton schoolboy has been announced as a runner-up in a national competition from the Institute of Physics – scooping £250 for equipment for Sutton Grammar School, Manor Lane, Sutton.

Stefan Cuitac (12), has been named a runner-up in the first annual *Eurekas* – a competition that saw students aged 11-16 across the UK and Ireland take up the challenge to answer the question: what's the point of physics?

Designing and building a mechanical generator, Stefan impressed the expert judges by delving into the science behind power, scoring top marks for originality and creativity, quality, relevance and spirit. The judging panel included journalist, broadcaster and physicist Shivani Dave, author and physicist Femi Fadugba and Rachel Youngman, Deputy Chief Executive at the IOP.

Whether arty, sporty, musical or into literature, languages or sciences, the judges were looking for submissions from students with a range of interests – not just those already interested in physics. *The Eurekas* is an initiative by Limit Less – an Institute of Physics campaign designed to broaden and diversify the range of young people going on to study physics after the age of 16 by getting students to see physics differently.

Rachel Youngman, Deputy Chief Executive, Institute of Physics, said: "We were all incredibly impressed by the quality of entries submitted for this first year of *The Eurekas*. It was amazing to see how the young people tapped into their passions and produced such thoughtful work. We wanted this competition to be a celebration of creativity, culture, collaboration, diversity and activity – all underpinned by physics themes – and it has certainly achieved this. Our thanks go to every single young person that took part, and I'm already excited to see what next year's competition brings!"

Shivani Dave, said: "The standard of entries was incredibly high, it was wonderful to see so many people find their interpretation of the starting question 'what's the point of physics' and really let their creativity flow. If these entries are anything to go by, the next generation of physicists are going to achieve some incredible things. I was so honoured to a judge, everyone should be incredibly proud of what they submitted."

Femi Fadugba, said: "The incredible quality of each submission made the selection process as painful as it was rewarding! Ambitious, imaginative, and beautiful, this stuff - the future of physics is bright."

The Eurekas was launched after it was revealed parents who did not enjoy physics at school may be unwittingly putting their children off the subject and could be contributing to the diversity problem faced by the profession. 46% of parents describe physics at school as 'complicated', a third say it's 'difficult' and only 17% say it's 'creative', according to results of a survey* of 3,000 parents, commissioned by the Institute of Physics (IOP).

With nearly 9,000 physics-related job vacancies in the UK in mid-2021†, there are significant skills gaps at all levels. Women are particularly underrepresented in the physics community – but their talent, insights and perspectives are badly needed if society is to solve the challenges facing healthcare, the environment and the economy.

-ENDS-

Notes to editors

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*Censuswide survey of 3,007 parents of children aged 5-16, June-July 2020
† IOP Workforce Skills Project, 2021

About Limit Less and The Eurekas

The physics community does not look like the wider society it is in. There are too few women; too few Black physicists, especially of Black Caribbean descent; too few people with disabilities; too few LGBTQ+ people; and too few people from less well off or disadvantaged backgrounds. The Limit Less campaign is the IOP's commitment to make a generational change by removing the barriers to young people seeing physics as not for everyone – and not for them. More information about the campaign can be found at www.iop.org/LimitLess.

The Eurekas competition is part of Limit Less and is designed to broaden and diversify the range of young people going on to study physics after the age of 16, by appealing to young people who tend to view physics as not for them. You can read more about the competition here.