WINNERS FROM EVERY STATE

By CHRISTINA CHIN

BURSTING into tears when her name was called out, Avril Yong Zhi Ying, 16, couldn’t hide her joy and disbelief.

The elegant SSM Kolej Raja Mirza student from Keningau, Sabah, was aiming at the academy when young essayists who made their schools proud at the Sunway-Oxford Essay Competition prize-giving ceremony on July 27.

“This is a big hug for me and my family. I’m the only Sabahan in this competition,” said Avril.

Winning is beyond my imagination.”

Avril and Asfa Nisha Basheer Ali from SSM Sekolah Bandar Kinta, Perak, were joint third prize winners for Category B of the competition.

Both walked away with RM3,000 and a Sunway bursary valued at RM15,000.

Third prize winner Muhammad Luqman Mohd Nawar from Raja Mekuya Kuala Kangsar, Perak, won RM4,000 and a RM14,000 Sunway bursary.

Although he has participated in debates, this is Avril’s first time joining an essay-writing competition.

“I could not hold back the tears because I felt an overwhelming sense of joy,” she said.

“To make my school and clan proud is above any other grace I could ever ask for.”

All the participants in the national writing competition took part in the ceremony were sponsored by the Sunway Education Group, Jeffrey Cheah Foundation, and Sunway Education Group CEO Elizabeth Lee said a total of 260 schools took part in the competition.

A total of 2,772 submissions were received this year.

“The Sunway-Oxford Essay Competition is a content-rich competition because all the finalists must write second essays on new topics,” said Hall.

“We are very open to ideas as to how we can continue to involve more and more students.”

The Education Ministry’s English Language Teaching Centre director Farish Marty Byam, who was present, said the competition has expanded the horizons of participants by enabling them to think critically, write persuasively, and speaking confidently in English.

“With the competitive exams, they would have worked with their teachers and parents, but self-belief is the key,” she said, adding that the competition could be expanded to include primary schools.

“Winners, I am proud of your accomplishments. However, do not be complacent just yet, as your potential is tremendous.”

Commenting Sunway for enhancing the standard of English through this “successful and sustainable” initiative, she called on more corporations to do the same in helping our young become globally competitive and holistic individuals.

All six top winners chose to write essays on their dream for Malaysia when competing in the second round of the competition.

She said the main thing is to think about the competition and that the winners were all from big, urban centres.

“They are from every state and even from small towns. The strong students are everywhere and competitions like these help us to find them.”

According student leaders to the 26 winners present, said the competition has

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“Therefore, I congratulate not just the 26 winners present, but all those who took the time to participate.”

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