

## FHS Regent's Park Pupil Wins National Evening Standard Stories Competition

Farrah Said, a Year 9 pupil at Francis Holland, Regent's Park, has won the Evening Standard Stories Competition in the Young Adult category for her story - an incredible achievement.



13-year-old Farrah has loved reading and creative writing since a young age and often uses writing as a means to express and process her emotions. Her story, *Cooked Sushi*, was originally a school assignment where she was tasked with writing a piece related to food but she wove this into a beautifully written and poignant story about her brother's struggle with Leukaemia. The judges, including BBC Radio 1 host Greg James, singer Will Young, author Rabina Khan and Evening Standard editor Phoebe Luckhurst, deemed Farrah's story the winner with prizes including workshop sessions with leading screenwriters and editors, publication of her winning story, and VIP access to the Evening Standard Stories Festival.

Farrah is over the moon to have received this prestigious award and has commented:

"This past year, dealing with COVID and living in isolation for months of end, has allowed me to reflect on this difficult period when my brother was fighting cancer. Putting pen to paper has giving me the opportunity to express my feelings, something I did in my piece *Cooked Sushi*. When my parents and I attended the prize giving ceremony, I felt rather overwhelmed being in such a crowded room at a formal event. They called out the two runners up first and this is when I realised I had won. I felt overjoyed but also rather nervous walking on stage in front of so many people. The nerves kicked in again when I was asked to read out my piece to the cameras but once this was over, a wonderful sense of pride filled me. I would like to thank my parents for supporting me, my wonderful English teacher Mr Anderson for pushing to enter this competition and my grandmother for always believing in me."

The Stories Competition have commented on the magnitude of Farrah's achievement:

"Over 500 people entered the inaugural competition and the judging panel was hugely impressed with the range and quality of both the Young Adult and Adult entries. After an exhaustive judging process, twenty shortlisted entrants were invited to the Stories Festival Launch Party (23rd September 2021) where the winners and two runners-up per category were announced to a room full of illustrious guests and industry insiders including Emily Sheffield (Editor, Evening Standard), and head judges Bea Carvalho (Head Fiction Buyer, Waterstones) and Sam Parker (Editor-in-Chief, Penguin.co.uk)."

Farrah's family and teachers couldn't be more proud of her and hope to see more of her brilliant writing published in years to come.

