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9-year-old Nia helps to spread the light by winning a national recycling/organ donation Diwali arts competition

9-year-old Nia Shah has won a national arts competition – ‘Bringing Light Into Life’ helping to raise awareness of organ donation.

The innovative competition was run by The Jain and Hindu Organ Donation Steering Group (JHOD) in partnership with NHS Blood and Transplant (NHSBT). The competition invited youngsters between the ages of 4 and 18 across the UK to enter using vision and creative imagination to transform discarded plastic waste, such as milk bottles and sweet wrappers, into a sculpture or mural depicting organs or tissue that can be donated.

Nia’s outstanding entry impressed the judges. It was a 3D sculpture entry depicting lungs that came to life and was made with different recycling materials. Nia's focus of on organ donation and recycling was truly impressive.

Winners were chosen in the three age group categories, as follows: More information on winners’/runner ups can be found at: <https://jhod.org.uk/competition/>

Status	Name, age	Category	Description
Overall winner	Nia Shah, aged 9	-	3d sculpture - lungs
Winner	Ma Taylor, aged 7	4-7 years	Fluttering heart
Winner	Aarna Jain, aged 8	8-11 years	Kidneys
Winner	Ria Shah, aged 12	12-18 years	Mural of lungs

The JHOD Diwali Competition theme and was chosen to demonstrate the importance of organ donation as a form of recycling and reminding young people the need to live sustainability. The aim of the Diwali competition was to spark life-saving conversations about organ donation amongst South Asian communities. Especially important given there is an urgent shortage of organ donors from ethnic minorities in the UK, and sadly, of the 7,000 people waiting for an organ transplant, **725** are from South Asian backgrounds*. (**NHSBT Black and Asian Transplant Report, August 2021*)

Kirit Modi, Chair of JHOD and of the judging panel, said: “The judges were delighted by the quality and level of creativity of all entries in our competition this year. It is heartening to see young people are thinking about organ donation as a form of recycling and helping others. It is important to raise awareness of organ donation from an early age in order to help as many people as possible from our communities waiting for a transplant.”

9- year old Nia said: “I'm overwhelmed that my 3D sculpture was chosen as an overall winner in the Jain and Hindu Organ Donation Steering Group's competition. I hope my art reaches many people and they think of donating their organs which will bring light and colours in the life of those in need. We've been learning about organ donation recently at school. I am extremely proud that I took part and whilst making the model it gave me a chance to learn about organ donation and recycling and their importance. Thank you so much for this opportunity.”

Deepa, the mother of Mia, the youngest winner of the competition, said, “It was an amazing competition and a great way to create awareness about organ donation in the younger generation. Mia really enjoyed making her creation of the heart. It's very close to our hearts as my father received a liver transplant. It was a great way to explain to Mia about the importance of organ donation in saving lives.”

8 year old Aarna Jain's entry depicted and she also recorded a video and explained: “I choose to reuse and recycle – whether it is organs or plastics we use every day. Donating your organs – including some whilst you are alive – helps save and transform lives of desperately ill people. It really is the ultimate in recycling. My Lung donation sculpture gave me the opportunity to learn more about both recycling and organ donation – I support both.”

12 year old Riya's piece was about and she said: “I am very grateful for this opportunity to help raise awareness of organ donation and its importance using plastic and other recycled materials. I also learnt a lot of new things by taking part and has given me immense happiness that I have made the sculpture from the plastic.”

Figures from NHS Blood and Transplant's annual report into organ donation and transplantation in Asian communities, reveal promising increases in consent rates and an increase in those from BAME backgrounds being eligible to donate. Family refusal continues to be the biggest obstacle to organ donation amongst the communities.

Find out more and register your decision by visiting NHS Organ Donor Register at www.organdonation.nhs.uk and share your decision with your family.

Ends

Notes to Editors:

- For more information about the Jain and Hindu Organ Donation Steering Group and to register, visit: www.jhod.org.uk
- It is quick and easy to join the NHS Organ Donor Register. Call 0300 123 23 23 or visit www.organdonation.nhs.uk
- Families are always involved in organ donation discussions. You can make things easier for your family by having the conversation with them about your organ donation wishes.
- Every day across the UK around three people who could have benefited from a transplant die because there aren't enough organ donors.
- One donor can save or transform up to nine lives through organ donation and save and transforms even more by donating tissue.