

## **SOMALI DELIGHT: SYDRC REVEALS WINNERS OF 2012 EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS**

**The prestigious awards honour academic excellence among young British Somalis at GCSE level, which has reached 53 percent this year.**

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By Mohamed Aden Hassan



Camden Council leader Cllr Nasim Ali handing over the first prize, the new iPad3, to the winner of 2012, Ladan Sulieman achieving 6A\* and 3.5 As

LONDON – The Somali Youth Development Resource Centre (SYDRC) announced the winners of its 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Achievement Awards. An award ceremony that attracted over 400 people was held last night at the Irish Centre in the London Borough of Camden. The awards honour the most gifted and promising students from various schools across Camden. Following trends from past years girls performed exceptionally well scooping the top three prizes. Awards were also extended to those who have contributed to the community thanking them for given up their free time to support others.

Besides the large crowd of young people and their families, the Annual Achievement Awards, which is one of the most inspiring events in the borough, was further attended by Labour MP for Holborn and St Pancras Rt Hon Frank Dobson, the leader of Camden Council Cllr Nasim Ali, leader of Liberal Democrats Cllr Keith Moffitt,

Mayor of Camden Cllr Abdul Quadir, Holborn and Covent Garden Councilor Awale Olad, Camden's Chief Executive Mike Cooke, Camden's Assistant Director Achievement Tim Coulson, Chief Superintendent Borough Commander John Sunderland and Somali comedian Prince Abdi.



Cllr Nasim Ali with second price winner, the new iPhone 4s Amaal Mohamed achieving 6As, 3A\*s and 2Bs

In his opening remarks MC Abdulkadir Ahmed said, "we are here today to celebrate the achievements of over 100 young people in Camden". Andy Coulson noted, "53 percent of 16 year olds achieved their required GCSES levels" and told young attendees "you have decided to achieve and SYDRC is committed to make that visible". Coulson further underscored the remarkable achievements among seven year olds while highlighting the role of parents who are working very hard to support their children to reach their full potential.

Frank Dobson MP remarked, "the efforts of young people doing well should be rewarded with further education and jobs and we need to make sure that young people are not alienated". However, with the economic downturn more young people face limited employment prospects, particularly those who are leaving school. Additionally, high achievers who want to go to top universities in



England will have to come to terms with exceptionally high annual fees of up to £ 9000. How students and their families will respond to this remains to be seen.



Cllr Nasim Ali with third price winner, Blackberry-Playbook, Amina Mukhtar achieving 2A\*, 7As and 2Bs

Besides the encouraging words and celebrations of achievements the event uncovered the bond and connections SYDRC has built over the years with the local council, service providers, the police, MPs and other relevant agencies in what the chair Suber Abdikarim termed as the “special relation”.



Mayor of Camden Cllr Abdul Quadir said, “Camden Council is very proud of your achievements” while Cllr Keith Moffitt indicated, “this is my favorite event”. Camden Council Chief Executive Mike Cooke’s message was “to carry on” and build on the good work that SYDRC is doing.

Borough Commander John Sunderland stressed, “the world out there seems to be more interested in how bad young people are doing but we need to



celebrate the achievements of young people and it is great to be here”.

Young Somali Councillor Cllr Awale Olad encouraged his fellow Somali youth to work hard, be persistent and above all listen to parents. Somali Comedian Prince Abdi stole the show with his fresh jokes often playing on the stereotypical image entertained by the mainstream media, fashion and cultural and intergenerational matters.



Ibrahim Isse the Director of SYDRC concluded with a rather grim prospect suggesting that this might be the end of the Annual Achievement Awards since the organisation is confronted with the facts of austerity measures



aimed at eliminated untenable budgets. But Ibrahim did not stop there. He gave the community a choice saying, “if you want us to continue you need to support us and contribute towards the event”. Ibrahim further highlighted that SYDRC’s employees and volunteers will contribute 3 to 5 percent of their income to support the event and encouraged the community to follow.