



The College of Psychiatry of Ireland  
*Coláiste Síciatrachta na hÉireann*

ÉARLAMH  
Micheál D. Ó hUigín  
UACHTARÁN NA hÉIREANN

PATRON  
Michael D. Higgins  
PRESIDENT OF IRELAND

The College of Psychiatry of Ireland

## Press Statement 2012

### Belfast team, QUB, win CPsychI annual Spike Milligan

### Interschool Public Speaking Competition for the 3rd time.

The College of Psychiatry of Ireland held its annual Spike Milligan Public Speaking Competition recently in the Sugar Club, Dublin. In its 12<sup>th</sup> year, the competition aims to raise awareness of mental health issues among the general public and particularly to foster and promote communication skills around mental health issues among the student doctor community from the seven medical schools in Ireland. Teams of two from UCC, UL, NUIG, TCD, UCD, RCSI & QUB spoke on this year's theme: **“Out of Sight, out of Mind- who are the Bond Holders for our Homeless with Mental Health Problems?”**

Judges Dr Joanne Fenton, Dr Maurice Clancy and Father Peter McVerry awarded Queen's University's Neil Bradley and Charlotte Cosgrove the win, to the delight of their 50- plus supporters who made the journey from Belfast for the evening. As well as winning the perpetual Dick Joynt Trophy, especially sculpted for the competition, they also received a cash prize and a free place at one of the College annual conferences. UCD's Jack Nolan and William Courtney took the runner- up prize.

*“This year, the standard of the teams was extraordinarily high across the board” commented the College President, Dr Anthony McCarthy. “Congratulations to Queen's, UCD, and all involved. It was clear that each of the seven teams had put a huge amount of time, effort, research and their hearts into their speeches, as well as addressing the multi faceted, complex issues involved, making it a tough decision for the judges to come up with a winner. This is the only time when all seven medical schools in the country meet together and it is great forum to highlight mental health issues, particularly the issue of homelessness and mental illness, which is the College focus for 2012”*

Guest judge Father Peter McVerry of the Peter McVerry Trust commented that he was particularly impressed that throughout the evening the main issues homeless people are faced with on a daily basis were highlighted by all teams. He told the audience that when a homeless person is asked what the single most difficult thing they face is, they usually

*say it is that no one cares about them. He observed that each team in their different ways highlighted that as a society we are all the bond holders for our homeless people, that we all share the responsibility of caring for them and striving to give them not just accommodation and support services but opportunities to lead a life with dignity and purpose.*

The award is named in recognition of the late Spike Milligan's work in de-stigmatising mental illness through openly speaking about his experiences of living with bi-polar disorder. Sadly, he passed away before getting an opportunity to judge the competition. Past entrants of the competition have gone on to train as psychiatrists and the full house at the Sugar Club last Wednesday shows how valuable it is to use the award to continue where Spike had left off.

***Pictures attached***

Ends