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**PRESS RELEASE**  
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**Rhode Island Medical Society**  
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**RHODE ISLAND STUDENT WINS NATIONAL TOBACCO EDUCATION CONTEST AND DONATES HER PRIZE**

Alana McGuinness, a fifth-grader from Bristol, RI, is the 2011 winner of a nationwide poster contest sponsored by the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP). Alana and her family were present for the announcement, which was made in Washington, D.C., on July 11 at the annual Tar Wars National Conference, where the winners from thirty-eight states competed for the national title.

Alana said she wants to give away the entire value of her prize, which is a family trip worth two thousand dollars. She plans to donate half to her school, St. Mary's Academy Bay View, and half to the Rhode Island Tar Wars program so that other Rhode Island children can have the same opportunity she had.

Tar Wars® is a tobacco education program administered locally by the Rhode Island Medical Society in collaboration with the Rhode Island chapters of the AAFP and the American Academy of Pediatrics, along with the Rhode Island State Nurses Association. The program provides information on the short- and long-term consequences of tobacco use and teaches young people to think critically about tobacco advertising. Local physicians, physician assistants, nurses and medical students volunteer each year to present the program in dozens of middle schools across Rhode Island. In the eighteen-year history of the Rhode Island Tar Wars program, many thousands of fifth-graders have benefited, and on a few occasions Rhode Island's state winner has finished among the top ten nationally. However, Alana McGuinness is the first Rhode Islander to be the overall national winner.

McGuinness' winning poster is done in colored pencil and carries the simple message "Reflect a positive image: Live tobacco free." Drawn with exquisite care, the poster appears to be a playful self-portrait of the artist emerging from a mirror. Tar Wars® posters are judged on their artistry, creativity and originality, and on their success in conveying a clear and positive message about being tobacco-free.

While in Washington, Tar Wars® National Conference participants are encouraged to visit their Congressional representatives and discuss public policy issues relating to tobacco. McGuinness and her family made a visit to Capitol Hill and sat down with Rhode Island's U.S. Senator Jack Reed.

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