

Your Health First Poster Competition inspires middle school students to get healthy

Doha – April 30, 2017: Students from middle schools across Qatar learned vital messages about protecting their health when they took part in a poster competition organized by Weill Cornell Medicine-Qatar’s Sahtak Awalan – Your Health First campaign.

More than 350 students from 35 middle schools participated in the Sahtak Awalan Poster Competition, which challenged them to research a pressing public health issue and then present their findings in poster form. In total, more than 420 posters were submitted to the contest.

After the posters were judged by a panel of Weill Cornell Medicine-Qatar (WCM-Q) physicians and faculty members, 25 students from eight schools were awarded trophies and mountain bikes for the exceptionally high standards of their posters. Certificates of Achievement were presented to all participating students and student coordinators in acknowledgement of the very high standard of all entries.

Nesreen Al-Rifai, Chief Communications Officer for WCM-Q, said: “We were extremely impressed by the hard work the students put into researching their posters and the artistic flair and invention they showed with their designs. Not only did the students demonstrate that they have learned the important messages about following healthy lifestyles, they also showed they have been inspired and energized to care for their health, which is a key goal of the Sahtak Awalan – Your Health First campaign.”

The eight schools with students that were awarded trophies and mountain bikes were Salah Eddine Al Ayoubi Independent Preparatory School for Boys, Al Ahnaf Bin Qais Independent Preparatory School for Boys, Audio Complexe Center for Boys, Audio Complexe Center for Girls, Al Hammad International Developed School, Al Manar International School, Qatar Leadership Academy, and English Modern School Al Khor.

Dr. Mohamud Verjee, Associate Professor of Family Medicine at WCM-Q, presented the trophies and mountain bikes to the winning schools and students at an awards ceremony held at WCM-Q.

Students presented posters on a wide range of health topics, including road safety, the dangers of smoking, obesity, the health risks associated with poor diet, the increasing prevalence of type-2 diabetes, and the negative impact on health of excessive consumption of refined sugar, among many others.

Student Abdulla Bandar, 15, of Salah Eddine Al Ayoubi Independent Preparatory School for Boys said: “We presented a poster about traffic accidents because we got some data from a government website that said this is one the leading causes of death in Qatar. We wanted to create something to tell everyone to slow down and take care on the roads so that everyone can be safe. It was good fun and we learned a lot.”

Lydia Elija, 15, of Al Manar International School, created a poster about the benefits of exercise and how it can protect people from becoming obese. She said: “I put my own experiences into my poster to



explain that exercise strengthens the circulatory system, the respiratory system and your muscles, as well as making you feel happier and fighting obesity. My favorite ways to exercise are playing football, basketball and volleyball but it doesn't matter what you do as long as you find something you love."

Sahtak Awalan – Your Health First is WCM-Q's innovative public health campaign that aims to promote and facilitate healthy lifestyles across the whole of the community, with a special emphasis on young people.

Hoda Al-Siblani , science teacher at Al Manar International School said: "The research the students did for the posters enhanced their scientific knowledge about health issues and made them think deeply and analytically about the impact diet and exercise has on their own lives. They gained very valuable learning experiences from taking part."

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Photo Captions

Photo1: Dr. Mohamud Verjee, Associate Professor of Family Medicine at WCM-Q, gave an inspiring speech to encourage the middle school students to live healthy lifestyles.

Photo2: More than 350 students from 35 middle schools across Qatar participated in the Sahtak Awalan Poster Competition. The winners attended an awards ceremony at WCM-Q.

Photo3: Middle school students won trophies and mountain bikes, presented by WCM-Q's Dr. Mohamud Verjee, for creating outstanding posters on the theme of health and wellness.

Photo4: Students of Qatar Leadership Academy celebrate winning a trophy in the poster competition run by WCM-Q's Sahtak Awalan – Your Health First campaign.

About Weill Cornell Medicine - Qatar

Weill Cornell Medicine - Qatar is a partnership between Cornell University and Qatar Foundation. It offers a comprehensive six-year medical program leading to the Cornell University M.D. degree with teaching by Cornell and Weill Cornell faculty and by physicians at Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC), Aspetar Orthopedic and Sports Medicine Hospital, the Primary Health Care Corporation, the Feto Maternal Center, and the Sidra Medical and Research Center who hold Weill Cornell appointments. Through its biomedical research program, WCM-Q is building a sustainable research community in Qatar while advancing basic science and clinical research. Through its medical college, WCM-Q seeks to provide the finest education possible for medical students, to improve health care both now and for future generations, and to provide high quality health care to the Qatari population.

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