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Indiana Girl Awarded Grand Prize in Lions International Essay Contest

OAK BROOK, IL, USA, (Feb. 23, 2012) – Mikaela Smith, a 12-year-old girl from Valparaiso, Indiana, USA has been named the grand prize winner in the 2011-12 Lions International Essay Contest for visually impaired youth.

Smith's essay was selected for her ability to convey this year's theme "Children Know Peace." Smith said, "I believe watching a child is the best example that shows children know peace. ... Our imaginations are endless as the sea. We should be watched and listened to, because, after all, children really do know peace."

The Lions International Essay Contest, sponsored by Lions Clubs International, provides an outlet for visually impaired children ages 11, 12 and 13 to express what peace means to them.

Lions International President Wing-Kun Tam said he was impressed by the expression and creativity of the essay, "It is obvious that Mikaela has strong ideas about what peace means to her."

Tam will present Smith with the international grand prize award and US\$5,000 during Lions Day with the United Nations in New York City on March 16.

Lions Clubs International is the world's largest service club organization with more than 1.35 million members in more than 46,000 clubs in 207 countries and geographical areas around the world. Since 1917, Lions clubs have aided the blind and visually impaired and made a strong commitment to community service and serving youth throughout the world. Learn more about the Lions International Essay Contest at lionsclubs.org.