

Students' project hits winning note

SJI team bags inaugural S'pore ArtScience Prize with headphones idea



ST PHOTO: TED CHEN

The ecstatic SJI team members (from left) Christopher Low, Jeremy Luke Soh, Jonah Tan, Hubert Yeo and Edwin Lim, all 15, celebrating their win.

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A pair of headphones that can help cure addictions – that was the idea that won the first-ever Singapore ArtScience Prize yesterday.

The annual competition, organised by St Joseph's Institution (SJI), encourages secondary school students to combine art and science to solve problems.

It is the local edition of a global competition held in other countries, including the United States and France.

Yesterday's six finalists were

chosen from 13 teams that had students from other schools such as CHIJ Toa Payoh, Unity Secondary and Anderson Secondary.

The competition, themed "Virtual Worlds", was held at the SJI campus in Bukit Timah.

The winning team from SJI based its project on a type of sound wave called binaural beats, which some scientists claim can induce calmness and relaxation in people.

SJI Secondary 3 student Christopher Low, 15, said the team spoke to audio specialists and neurology scientists as part of research.

The students' prize is a trip to

Paris later this month to meet winners from other countries, and to further develop their idea.

Professor David Edwards, a Harvard University teacher who founded the prize and was one of the judges yesterday, said the SJI students won because their project addressed a major health-care need and was at the "frontier of science".

He said: "One of the things we're trying to reward is thinking that has a global impact."

The eight-member judging panel included Professor Steve Dixon, president of the Laselle College of the Arts; and Dr Shawn Hoon, a research engineer at the Agency for Science, Technology and Research.

An SJI spokesman said the school decided to introduce the competition here after hearing about it being held in other countries.

It started a weekly after-school course in January which was attended by students from seven other secondary schools. The students' mentors included designers, artists, scientists, researchers and museum curators.

Some ideas that have come up in the competition held in other countries include a biodegradable glucose-based water bottle, perfume bottles that capture pollutive gases and eco-friendly paints made from plants.

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