7th Grade Kenyan student wins Cool Science Award in Lowell

Family appreciations: Sam Mwea Ngare, the overall winner of the Cool Science Award flanked by some members of his family excited at the young Kenyan's achievements in the area of scientific thinking at the early age of 13. L to R: Joyce Wanjiru Ngare, the mother, Sara Wanjiku Ngare, elder sister (a sixth grader at Wang Middle School) and Staisy Wangare Ngare (Umass Amherst).

By Harrison Maina, Posted Thur, April 4, 2013

Sam Mwea Ngare, a 13 year old Kenyan American boy in Lowell Massachusetts is among 4 students who have won the 2013 Cool Science Award for his amazing drawing depicting the effects of science on our future life.

The 7th grade student at the Wang Middle school will be awarded the prize Friday April 5 at the Umass Lowell on 61 Wilder, and his drawing will run as a promotional advertisement on all Lowell transit buses for the entire month of April 2013.

The cool science award is a collaborative effort between the University of Massachusetts Lowell’s Graduate School of Education and the University of Massachusetts Boston's Department of Environmental, Earth, and Ocean Sciences. The Cool Science team brings an inter-disciplinary approach to the challenge of improving public understanding of climate change science. Cool Science aims to engage students, teachers, parents, and the general public with the science of climate change.
The award is presented on a monthly basis to top winners, runner ups, and honorable mentions for various art projects presented by 10th grade students from all over the state of Massachusetts.

"I felt surprised that I won. I really did not think my drawing was that good to win," said Sam while speaking to AjabuAfrica.com during an interview at his home on Mill street apartments in Lowell.

According to the young Kenyan, when her teacher, Ms. Magnus, came into the classroom one day and announced that a competition on climate change was going on, he immediately got curious and decided to take part.

"I thought about how our activities are changing the weather patterns these days." It's like we are supposed to be in spring now and we just had a big snow storm several days ago. Ice is melting in the Artic and disrupting life for everything including penguins. Last year, Halloween was postponed to a Sunday because there was a storm," he said.

The young man said that if human beings can start using electric cars more often, use solar panel to generate electricity for our houses instead generating it from coal gas or water, then we can make a big strides towards restoring and conserving the regular weather patterns.

"We can also use windmills more," he quipped.

Sam was then able to translate his exact thoughts into a beautiful drawing that won the April contest. It was fittingly titled "We can change".

An entry titled "Be a Hero - Plant a Tree" by Reybekah, an eighth grader in Ms. Piekos' class at the Bartlett Community Partnership School in Lowell, Mass. took the runners up position. (View all April Award winners here >>)

3 Tips to Stop Climate Change" by Leonardo, eighth grader in Ms. Glaser's class at the North Central Charter Essential School in Fitchburg, Mass. earned a honorable mention while a second honorable mention went to "Ocean is Rising ", an entry by Caitlin, a ninth grader in Ms. Marcoux' Wilmington High School class.

For his exemplary effort, Sam said he will receive a $200 gift card from Amazon that he plans to put towards purchasing a laptop.

Born in Lowell on October 4, 1999, the young Kenyan said math is his favorite subject and he
plans to be a Zoologist when he grows up.

He indicated that he longs to visit his motherland of Kenya in the very near future to see how climate change has affected way of life there.

"I should go sometimes and see my grandparents and do those things that they do in the farms."

Without any surprise, Sam's family was beaming with pride when AjabuAfrica.com visited for the interview.

"We are all very happy that Sam's artwork won in the competition. I am particularly very proud of him," said Joyce Wanjiru Ngare, Sam's mother accompanied by his elder sisters, Sara Wanjiku Ngare, a sixth grader at Wang Middle School and Staisy Wangare Ngare of Umass Amherst. Another sister, Suelynn Wairimu Ngare who was at work at the time of interview, who is graduating from Salem State University this May also sent her congratulations to her younger brother.

Sam hopes his award and recognition will help inspire other Kenyan students to take part in activities that can lead to improving the climate change as well as take more interest in science subjects in school.

The family invites friends and other Kenyan school children interested in science and climate change to join them for the award ceremony this Friday.