

Award Presentation speech at the British School Voorschoten

by Charlie Nourse & Rosie Worster

About 7 million people in over 70 countries across the world have completed the International Award in some shape or form. I don't find that surprising.

Good evening everyone, I am Charlie Nourse and I am Rosie Worster. We would just like to say a few words about the international award. I completed the bronze award last year and am hoping to do the gold next summer.

About this time last year I was sitting on a wet tree stump with six friends, eating luke warm tinned meatballs. It was absolutely freezing. We were in the woods and couldn't start a fire because the logs were too wet. We had only one torch between us, so could barely see. The wind was howling and we'd just walked 18km. But we were having a great time. The bronze award expedition, although cold and wet, was a brilliant experience. We had to work together to triumph in the face of, admittedly, relatively limited adversity.



The award involves doing some community service, of course, and I think that's a very positive aspect of it. The Chinese Philosopher Confucius said 'When you are labouring for others let it be with the same zeal as if it were for yourself.' The international award embodies this sentiment; it isn't only about personal development, it's about helping others.

I spent several months fundraising for the bursary fund, which was very rewarding. I think I speak for all the people who did the bronze award in saying that it was thoroughly enjoyable and character-building too. What's great is that it's not about being told what to do, or following a set program, it's about going out and taking the initiative, making things happen for yourself.

Another great thing about the International Award is that everyone comes away with a slightly different experience, but all with that same sense of achievement that comes with knowing that you've realized a goal, and bettered yourself in doing so. Even with the experience of my Bronze Award expedition behind me, the expectations I had for Silver Award didn't come close to the reality of a trek way over double that distance.

With each stage in the International Award you build on the skills from the first, consolidating them and moving on to learn new things. With our silver expedition route marked along a path through the far more mountainous terrain of the Ardennes, I found it far more of a physical challenge, working our way up hills that seemed almost

vertical at the time only to have to walk all the way back down to the other side and to be faced with yet another steep climb. Even so, the feeling you get when you finally spot the chip shop at the end of the road is not just hunger, or exhaustion, or even relief, but the feeling that you've persevered, worked through what you thought were your boundaries only to realize that you're actually a whole lot tougher than you originally thought you were.



But although many would consider the expedition as the highlight of the trip, for me it was one of many such highlights. The other sections of the award (sport, skill and service), all give you the opportunity to try things other than the long treks that you'd never experienced before; it was the Bronze Award that got me involved with volunteering at the Dierenambulance for the past year, and it'll be my Gold Award that allows me to aid another charity that I first came into contact with when I was thirteen.

During that Easter holiday, I went to visit an orphanage in Njoro, near Nakuru in Kenya, where a charity called the Watoto Trust had been working to improve the lives of the children who lived there. Next doors to the orphanage was a school called Ndege Primary, deserted because all of the kids were off on holiday, with only a single toilet block, ramshackle classrooms and an unstaffed nursery school in a hut at the edge of the plot to boast of. When my family and I decided to bring the project back to the BSN we had no idea that this spark could trigger the amazing project that the Kenya Team, along with Mr Le Heux and Miss Callaby, will be putting into action this coming summer.

Rosie and I will be heading for Njoro in Kenya in July next year for our gold award, as I'm sure many of you are aware. We are all very excited about this, looking forward to the adventure. Personally, I hope to discover a fascinating new culture, and I think we are all eager to do some good. We'll be working with the Watoto Trust, the charity Rosie encountered three years ago with her family, to build a classroom in Njoro, and we are currently working hard to raise the ten thousand Euros which we will need to buy the building materials with which to do this. We will not be the last BSN students to travel to Njoro, however. We hope to establish a long term relationship with the Watoto Trust so that every year the new Year 11s will have a chance to follow in our footsteps.



This trip is a great example of how such an amazing initiative can spread across borders, giving something not only to those who participate in the award themselves, but at the same time benefiting other kids who don't have same opportunities as we do. I know that the trip to Kenya will become one of the defining moments of my school career, and I hope that the other students who go on to Kenya after us will leave with the same sense of excitement that I know I will be.

The International award provides great opportunities, helping young people like ourselves experience adventure and helping out communities all over the world. I have had a great time with it so far and I hope it will bring new challenges and allow me to develop new skills in the future.

Thank you!