

Surfing all the way to Jamaica

Belfast kids win international internet competition

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FOUR teenagers from the North of Ireland have won a trip to Jamaica after creating a website which aims to help divided communities settle their differences.

Lagan College students, Jamine Armstrong, Rachel Bellamy, Lisa McMillan and Chris Fulton, have beaten off stiff international competition to 'net' themselves a place at the Cable & Wireless Childnet Academy in Jamaica. Childnet International is a worldwide children's internet charity that aims to help make the internet a safer place for children.

The students won the place after entering Childnet's International Web Development Competition, part of the Cable & Wireless Childnet Academy 2005.

The competition was aimed at recognising the outstanding creativity of children and young people who are developing exciting online projects that bring positive benefits to other young people worldwide.

Lagan College won in the New To The Net category, which focused on young people

with limited access to internet technology but who have a new idea for the web.

The students created *It's All In The Mix*, a website designed to allow young people living in divided communities to share their experience and demonstrate the benefits of tackling division and conflict.

During their time at the Childnet Academy, the students will receive specialist web support, leadership training and technical advice, as well as exclusive access to a team of internet experts and mentors drawn from the world of education, business and the public and voluntary sectors.

Child poverty, famine, the Asian tsunami, cultural integration, teen pregnancy and global terrorism are just some of the global issues tackled by the children and young people who entered from 49 countries.

Jamine said yesterday, "The day that the decision was going to be made we were so excited. We kept annoying our teachers wanting to know if they had heard anything yet.

"When we finally heard the news we were so excited, we couldn't stop bouncing around with joy, it was a like a dream come true to get a trip to Jamaica.

"The project is very close to all our hearts as we have all witnessed divided communities. We hope that *It's All In The Mix*

website will allow people to share their experiences and help them understand that the future must be a shared future."

Noreen O'Hare, the Irish director of Cable & Wireless, said the company is delighted to support the very important

work of Childnet International in encouraging young people to use the internet safely and positively.

"This year's winners offer an excellent example of how young people are using the web to express their own creativity."





CARIBBEAN BOUND: Cable & Wireless director Noreen O'Hare with the Lagan College winners