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Our girl wins award

THE *Star* journalist Tan Shiow Chin is the recipient of the second IDRC-SciDev.Net Science Journalism Award. The US\$58,500 (RM194,337) award consists of a six-month internship with SciDev.Net (Science and Development Network – a science news website), which will allow Tan to develop her professional skills as a science journalist.

Tan, who is with *Star Education*, has a Bachelor of Science (Medical Science) from Universiti Putra Malaysia and writes about a wide range of topics, many of which are science- and health-related.

During the internship, she will spend time working both in the network's main office in London and reporting from a number of developing countries.

She will also take part in the Global Ministerial Forum on Research for Health in Bamako, Mali, in November.

The award is one of four granted this year by IDRC (International Development Research Centre). Applications were invited by SciDev.Net from journalists involved in science and health reporting from developing countries.

"This is a fantastic opportunity and I will make use of it to the fullest," said an excited Tan.

"I can't think of a better place than SciDev.Net to gain an insight and valuable skills in science reporting," she added.

Its director David Dickson said that the network was looking forward to having Tan on the team during the period.

"This internship will provide her with the necessary skills to pursue her goals in science journalism and in return, we will benefit from Tan's insights and experience as a journalist in Malaysia."

The 2008 Science Journalism Award attracted 156 applications from 39 developing countries from Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East.

Tan was selected from a group of four finalists. The other shortlisted finalists were Caroline Roatta (Colombia), Joseph Othieno (Kenya) and Abiose Adelaja (Nigeria).

"We wish to thank all applicants for handing in their submissions. We were delighted



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with the number and quality of the applications received," Dickson added.

"The level of interest generated by the award highlights the need to build capacity in science communication in the developing world, and the network is committed to helping fulfil that need," he said.

The Canadian-based IDRC works closely with researchers in developing countries to find ways to build a healthier, more equitable, and more prosperous society.

IDRC has created these awards to "foster a vibrant culture of science journalism" and to "promote a field-based understanding of developing countries' scientific realities", said Rita Bowry, an IDRC senior programme officer.

"These awards will enable them to use their professional skills to report the work of scientists in the region more effectively and thus, influence decision makers in their respective countries," she added.