

2005 EU Descartes Prize for Science Communication Laureates

Winner: Dr. Carl Johan Sundberg – Sweden's Mr Science

Category: Professional scientists engaged in science communication to the public

Country: Sweden

Previous award: Åforsk Prize (2005)

Description: Dr Sundberg's enthusiasm for explaining science in a clear, understandable way is evident in the vast number of projects he has been involved with over the past 20 years. He has held more than 100 lectures on science for students and the public, written dozens of articles about science in the media, created courses on bio-medical science and science communication and helped design several science centre exhibitions. Dr Sundberg also founded the Euroscience Open Forum (ESOF) which was first held in 2004 in Stockholm. Most recently, Dr Sundberg wrote a book about biology for young teenagers. His ability to enthuse a range of audiences from doctoral students to school children has earned him a reputation as a nationally and internationally renowned science communicator. Dr Sundberg is nominated for his lifelong achievements in science communication.

Website: <http://www.ki.se>

Winner: Dr Anja C. Andersen – star of the show

Category: Professional scientists engaged in science communication to the public

Country: Denmark

Previous award: Danish National Research Communication Award (2004)

Description: A young Danish astrophysicist, Dr Andersen rose to fame in her native Denmark as a guest expert on the TV science show *Kosmos*. Since then, she has become a renowned personality following numerous appearances on TV, radio and in newspapers. Along with frequent appearances in the media, she travels around the country presenting popular talks and actively participates in debates about science and technology issues at schools, libraries and colleges. Dr Andersen is committed to raising young people's interest in science, particularly young women, and has an exceptional gift for presenting the complexities of science to a popular audience. The Danish Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation has noted her "remarkable ability to relate difficult topics within physics and technology to ordinary people's lives without compromising the scientific quality". Dr Andersen is nominated for her ongoing dedication to science communication.

Website: <http://www.nordita.dk/~anja>

Winner: Jos Van Hemelrijck – TV show reveals the scientist's struggle

Category: Popularising science through audiovisual and electronic media

Country: Belgium

Previous award: Prijs van de Vlaamse minister voor Wetenschapsbeleid (2003)

Description: Each week, the Belgian science series *OverLeven* highlights a scientist or group of scientists attempting to solve a problem or achieve a breakthrough in a range of fields, from zoology to environmental issues. Committed to cover topics that impact society, the show has built up a broad portfolio of programmes, including episodes that have featured the groundbreaking work of a leading Belgian haematologist and a scientist who has trained rats to work as minesweepers. *OverLeven* focuses on the determination of the scientists as they face their research challenges and presents complex scientific content in a manner that avoids too much technical jargon. By concentrating on the scientists and their successes and challenges, the show adds personality to the story-telling process and creates compelling viewing with a certain amount of dramatic tension.

Website: <http://www.canvas.be/overleven>

Winner: Bill Bryson – a journey through space and time

Category: Popularising science through the written word

Country: United Kingdom

Previous award: AVENTIS (General) Prize for Science Books (2004)

Description: With little more scientific knowledge than the average person, author Bill Bryson set out to answer questions about how the world and the universe developed in his book *A Short History of Nearly Everything*. In this bestseller that tackles topics from the big bang to the rise of civilisation, Bryson collaborated with a host of experts to answer questions such as “How did we end up with a sun in the middle of our planet and how do they know how hot it is?” and “How do they know what goes on inside an atom?” The book aims to explain the world we live in through several distinct topics: the origins of the universe; the discovery of the size and age of the earth; relativity and quantum theory; present and future threats to life and the planet; and the origins and history of life and the evolution of man.

Website: <http://www.randomhouse.com/features/billbryson>

Winner: Michael Seifert -Children’s University proves a huge success

Category: Innovative action for science communication

Country: Germany

Previous award: PR-Fuchs Prize (2003)

The innovative Kinder-Uni (Children’s University), programme at the University of Tübingen in Germany is a series of lectures designed to interest kids in studying science. Each lecture features one question aimed at a target audience of 8-12 year olds. This unique model has inspired other educational institutions and there are now approximately 70 similar programmes across Germany and neighbouring countries and the best lectures have been published in book format. The lectures series has tackled questions such as “Why do volcanoes erupt?” and “Why don’t the stars fall from the sky?” and even attracted a Nobel Prize winner who posed the demanding question “Why is one not allowed to clone human beings?” Children find the lectures fun, interesting and challenging, while at the same time stimulating their interest in disciplines such as astronomy, philosophy and archaeology.

Website: <http://www.uni-tuebingen.de>