



NEWS

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School District 64 Announces 2011 Spelling Bee Winners; Record 259 Students Participate

The Park Ridge-Niles School District 64 Spelling Bee created quite a buzz this year, attracting a record 259 students, almost 100 more than last year. The bee was offered as an extracurricular activity for students in grades 3-8, according to Meghan Keefer, District 64 Language Arts Curriculum Specialist. "We are very pleased with this surge in student participation, as the bee is a fun way for students to improve spelling skills, increase vocabulary and develop correct English usage," Ms. Keefer noted.

To accommodate this growing popularity, each school conducted its own spelling bee earlier this month to select three representatives at large to participate at the District 64 competition. The 21 winners of the individual school bees were: **Carpenter** – Jack Anderson and Will Harter, grade 3, Melanie Kavanaugh, grade 5; **Emerson** – Keanan Bender, Anna Benuzzi and Darragh Dolan, grade 7; **Field** – Gabrielle Galiciano, grade 3, Rachel Hans, grade 5, and Daniel Tinaglia, grade 4; **Franklin** – Will Brendza and John Conradi, grade 5, and Stephen Pontikes, grade 4; **Lincoln** – Julia Araneta, grade 7, Abigail Ekstrom, grade 6, and Isabella Goldman, grade 7; **Roosevelt** – Paige Keller, grade 4, Anne Longman and Shea Walters, grade 5; and, **Washington** – Zoe Berthold, grade 3, Elisa Marr, grade 5, and Mohammed Rasheed, grade 4.

The District 64 Spelling Bee with these 21 students was held January 25 at Washington School. It lasted 18 rounds in total, at times with only one or two spellers eliminated each round. The top two students dueled during the final six rounds. In the end, Emerson grade 7 student Anna Benuzzi, spelled "xenophobic" correctly to capture the championship after eliminating Gabrielle Galiciano, a grade 3 student at Field. Third place went to Julia Araneta, grade 7 at Lincoln.

The District 64 winner now moves on to regional competition on February 1 at Sears School in Kenilworth, as part of the Scripps National Spelling Bee for 2011. Regional sponsor ComEd underwrote a portion of each school's materials and enrollment fee; the individual school PTO/As donated the remainder.

Franklin School speech pathologist Jane Tufts was the pronouncer for the District Bee; judges were Franklin School Principal Dan Walsh, Roosevelt School Assistant Principal Andy Petrolina, and Field School teacher Anne Ham.

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