



Houston Public Media

TV 8 News 88.7 Classical 91.7

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Spring and Pearland co-champions emerge from Houston Public Media Spelling Bee to compete at national bee

HOUSTON – (March 28, 2015) – After competing in 15 rounds with 55 total spellers from 42 Texas counties, co-champions Shobha Dasari, a Spring resident and eighth grader at McCullough Jr. High in Conroe ISD, and Siddharth Krishnakumar, a seventh grader at Pearland Jr. High West in Pearland ISD, were awarded co-champion titles from the 2015 Houston Public Media Spelling Bee. The two spellers will advance to the Scripps National Spelling Bee, May 24-29, 2015 in Washington, D.C., with an all-expenses-paid trip to “Bee Week.”

“Boutonniere” was the winning word for Dasari and “fomites” was the winning word for Krishnakumar in the competition that went on for more than four hours in the Houston bee, the nation’s second largest local spelling bee. The bee was broadcast live on Houston Public Media’s TV 8 and streamed live online.

“Each year is very nerve-racking. I am so excited and exhausted after this competition,” said Dasari. “I knew everyone competing this year was a really good speller, so even if I lost I knew I would lose to amazing competitors.”

This is Dasari’s fifth year to compete at the Houston Public Media Spelling Bee and third time as co-champion. She was a semifinalist at Scripps National Spelling Bee in 2013 and 2014.

I am really happy and shocked – I did not think I was going to win so I am very proud,” said Krishnakumar. “It proves that all my hard work and dedication paid off.”

This is Krishnakumar’s first year at the Houston Public Media Spelling Bee and will be his first time to compete at Scripps National Spelling Bee.

Dasari will be speller No. 237 at the national bee and Krishnakumar, No. 238. They will join more than 250 contestant spellers from across the country at the 88th national bee, aiming for the victory and prizes worth more than \$30,000. The bee will broadcast live nationally on ESPN during “Bee Week.”

Participating spellers in the 2015 Houston Public Media Spelling Bee included 27 girls and 28 boys ranging in age from 7 to 14 and in grades second through eighth, representing 1,094 schools in Texas.

As part of the organization's commitment to education, Houston Public Media conducts, hosts and broadcasts this major spelling bee competition annually. Houston Public Media's TV 8 is the first public broadcast television station in the nation to conduct and broadcast a Scripps-affiliated local spelling bee and this marks the seventh year that they have staged this prestigious academic competition.

"The students who make it to our studios have spent countless hours of preparation and their families have been right there with them," said Lisa Trapani Shumate executive director and general manager of Houston Public Media. "They deserve the recognition that comes with the spelling bee broadcast and we hope it will be an experience that propels them to continue to aim high."

For more information on the Houston Public Media Spelling Bee, visit www.houstonpublicmedia.org/spellingbee.

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About Houston Public Media

Houston Public Media is home to TV 8 and radio stations News 88.7 and Classical 91.7. Its broadcast and digital resources bring the residents of Southeast Texas a specially curated mix of trusted local news and entertainment along with exceptional national programming from NPR and PBS. Houston Public Media is a public service from the University of Houston, its license holder, and is supported with financial gifts to the Houston Public Media Foundation. With a combined weekly audience of more than 1.5 million, Houston Public Media is committed to delivering content that expands minds and possibilities with trusted information. Connect on Facebook at facebook.com/houstonpublicmedia and Twitter at twitter.com/HoustonPubMedia

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