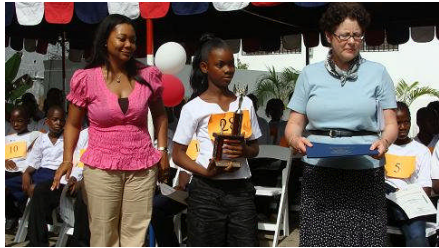


Who Wins Liberia's Spelling Bee? Winner Will Compete in U.S. Competition: 04/22/2010 - FPA STAFF REPORT



Last year's winner Sandra Tamba, 11 of the R.B. Richardson High School in Grand Gedeh County out-spelled sixty-five finalists to win the coveted crown. Tamba's winning word Saturday was S.A.T.E.L.L.I.T.E. Sandra, center, shows winning trophy as Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. Embassy, right and Wade Powell, representing Firestone look on. 4/22/2010 - FPA STAFF REPORT
Sandra Tamba 11, of the R.B. Richardson High School in Grand Gedeh County walked away with the national title after spelling S.A.T.E.L.L.I.T.E. to clinch the first American Library Liberian National Spelling Bee, the third edition is set to take place on Saturday at the PDS Compound at Mamba Point.

Prior to the finals, students from around Liberia contested in the Bee with regional libraries and the county superintendents to host school, county and now the national competition.

The American Library partnered with regional libraries, county education officers, superintendents, principals and teachers to conduct preliminary spelling competitions. Schools in all 15 counties of Liberia were encouraged to participate and hundreds of students in grades 5 and 6 took part in the competition. Forty-five students from across Liberia have qualified to come to Monrovia to participate in the National Spelling Bee competition.

The top three winners will receive scholarships through a trust fund with Ecobank Monrovia, to cover the cost of the students' high school education. The first prize winner will receive \$1,500 and also get travel to Washington, D.C. together with the Ghanaian winner to participate in the Scripps Howard Spelling Bee Program. Ghana and Liberia are the only two countries in the continent that are currently participating in the international competition. The cost of the project is about \$15,000 and several private and public organizations have made contributions.

Liberian students who participate in the project are all winners," according to a news release from the U.S. Embassy in Monrovia. "They are joining a long-held American tradition. Historic record cites the first official American spelling bee to have taken place in 1925, though it is thought to have begun earlier. Spelling Bee competitions typically start at the local level and work their way up to the national level. In the U.S., the National Spelling Bee is called the "Scripps National Spelling Bee". Spelling is the foundation of a language and mastering words and understanding their meaning are vital to establishing—and maintaining—the correct usage of English. Serious spelling bee competitors study root words, etymologies, and sometimes foreign languages. Their participation in this spelling bee, though the first of its kind in Liberia, is a long-held American tradition. Historic records cite the first American spelling bee to have taken place in 1925, though it is thought to have begun earlier. National spelling bees are typically held from the local level up to the national level, the last of which is supported by the Scripps National Spelling Bee.



To participate in the County Regional Spelling Bee the speller must have won their School Spelling Bee. To participate in the National Spelling Bee the speller must have placed in the top ranks of their county. All words on American Library Spelling Bee word lists are entries in Webster's Third New International Dictionary. A Spelling Bee is conducted in rounds where each speller is orally given a word to spell. Each speller remaining in the Spelling Bee at the start of a round spells one word in each round. Regular rounds: Upon incorrectly spelling a word, the speller immediately drops out of the competition. The next speller DOES NOT spell the previously missed word. Out of fairness, the next speller gets their own new word free from the confusion of the previous word. Final round: When two spellers remain final round rules are in effect. Upon incorrectly spelling a word remaining spelling must first spell the missed word and then spell a different word to win. If all spellers in a round misspell: If none of the spellers remaining in the Spelling Bee at the start of a round spells a word correctly during that round, all remain in the competition and a new round begins. All spellers eliminated in the same round are tied for the same place. After the champion has been determined, Spelling Bee officials may opt to conduct tiebreakers (of their own design) if tiebreakers are necessary for the awarding of prizes or the determination of qualifying spellers for the next level of competition.

If only one speller spells correctly in a round, a new one-word round begins and the speller is given an opportunity to spell the next word on the list (anticipated championship word). If the speller succeeds in correctly spelling the anticipated championship word in this one-word round, the speller is declared the champion.

If a speller misspells the anticipated championship word in a one-word round: A new round begins with ALL the spellers who spelled (correctly and incorrectly) in the previous round. These spellers spell in their original order.

The American Library Spelling Bee may disqualify prior to or during competition any speller who is not in compliance with any of its eligibility requirements; and it may—at any time between the conclusion of the 2008 American Library Spelling Bee and March 30, 2009— require any speller who is found to have not been in compliance with any of the eligibility requirements to forfeit the prizes, rank, and other benefits accorded to the speller as a result of participation in the 2008 American Library Spelling Bee.

To expand the American Library programs beyond Monrovia, the U.S. has funded four new libraries in Buchanan, Kakata, Virginia, and Zwedru. The Spelling Bee Competition, the first of the series, targets our youngest audience – fifth and sixth graders –to deepen their understanding of the English language. The skills gained through the spelling bee will carry over to the Science Fair for seventh and eighth graders, the essay contest for ninth graders and tenth graders, and finally the model policy debates for eleventh and twelfth graders