

IPEI Spelling Bee Needs Your Participation!



Think you've got what it takes to dethrone the four-time champions of the Ithaca Public Education Initiative (IPEI) annual Adult Spelling Bee on Sunday, March 3?

You'll have to start studying your dictionaries to beat the Spellicans, Russ Charif, Beth Howard and Melissa Smith, who won IPEI's signature fundraising event last year, too.

This is no easy task, with brain-strainers like "energumen," "chouette," "bougainvillea," "miscellanea," "vorlage," "bobadil" and "umfaan" deciding past Bee winners. Four first round contests with six teams in each (24 total) included less strenuous words; the final round words necessarily increase in difficulty!

It's all in good fun, of course, and for a very good cause. Our 13th Adult Spelling Bee raised more than \$10,000 for IPEI's grant programs for teachers. Thanks to corporate sponsors, all proceeds directly fund Teacher Grants. *Last year in classrooms throughout the Ithaca City School District (ICSD), students were inspired by remarkable learning experiences made possible by IPEI grants.*

One IPEI grant gave kindergarteners the opportunity to explore the beauty of trees through mixed-media art projects, yoga and movement exercises, poetry writing, and math. Another allowed high school and middle school music students to learn about the Baroque period from a Cornell professor of musicology and then perform Vivaldi's "Four Seasons" in a concert with professional string performers. And another brought an Iroquois educator to seventh and eighth grade social studies classes to explore Iroquois culture and history and the Native American experience.

Enhanced educational opportunities *like these* are made possible by IPEI's grants programs. They are funded by individual, corporate and foundation donors and also through the annual Adult Spelling Bee.

Although the Spelling Bee has had great community support in past years, we hope to get more participation from those who make up our school communities—teachers, parents, principals, and PTAs. We often have heard from teachers about how our grants have enhanced their efforts to give all students the very best *educational* experiences possible. We were inspired to encourage more school participation in the Spelling Bee by the Fall Creek community. Their spelling team in 2011–12 was formed by three elementary school parents, one of whom was the PTA president; the team raised their own sponsorship from Fall Creek businesses and the Fall Creek PTA; and just before the Spelling Bee the Fall Creek had an assembly promoting the event, bee costumes and all! This assembly was recorded on video and can be seen on IPEI's web site <http://www.ipei.org>.

So whether you're a teacher, parent, principal, or PTA leader, we hope you will be a part of this year's Spelling Bee—as a team member, sponsor, or attendee! We need your support.

IPEI's 14th Annual Adult Spelling Bee Sunday, March 3, at 2:00 p.m. in Ithaca High School's Bliss Gym

This popular community event is run like an official spelling bee, with rules, a pronouncer, an MC, a timekeeper, and three judges. There are 24 spelling teams—three team members each—and the team entry fee is \$375, or \$125 per speller. Some teams pay the entry fee themselves. We match those not able to raise the entry fee with local businesses that are willing to sponsor a team.

Because our corporate sponsors cover all the expenses for the event, the 24 spelling team sponsorships go directly toward supporting IPEI's teacher grants program.

For entry forms and more information, see www.ipei.org, or contact Judy Stewart, ics6@cornell.edu, 272-7924.