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Media Release

C. E. Williams' Keerthana Samuel wins regional spelling bee

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Charleston, SC – Keerthana Samuel took home the Spellbound! trophy after correctly spelling the word “nictitate,” another word for blink.

It was one of the words she had been studying and she was quite familiar with the word.

Sponsored by The Post and Courier, the SpellBound! competition at Charleston Southern University’s Lightsey Chapel in North Charleston featured the top spellers from across the Lowcountry.

In order to qualify, the students first had to win their school spelling bee, then either win or finish near the top of their district spelling bees. More than 40,000 students competed in the local bees to qualify for 50 spots on the SpellBound! stage.

Samuel will now go on to attend the Scripps National Spelling Bee in May.

“At first, I was real nervous,” said Samuel. “That day I stayed home and mom quizzed me on the words so wouldn’t have to ask too many questions during the competition.”

Keerthana defeated first runner-up Braeden LaRoche, a student from Daniel Island School in Berkeley County, after he incorrectly spelled “coterie.”

“I got used to all of the words on our study sheet so the competition was not too hard for me,” said Samuel. I knew if I was presented with a word I did not know I could simply ask for the definition.”

Despite the number of competitors on stage with her, Samuel was able to relax and focus on the competition.

“The other kids were really nice and competition was good,” Samuel added.

Samuel said she was drawn to participating in spelling bees after giving it a try last year. She came in 7th place at the regional competition.

"I thought if memorizing some words was something I could do and be good at, why not?" said Samuel. "Thinking about the payoff made me sign up to participate this year as well."

That's not to say she didn't work hard.

"I would like to thank my mom for helping me and quizzing me. Without her, I would not be in this position," said Samuel. I can't believe I made it."

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About the Charleston County School District

Charleston County School District (CCSD) is the second largest school system in South Carolina representing a unique blend of urban, suburban, and rural schools that spans 1,000 square miles along the coast. CCSD serves more than 50,000 students in 87 schools and specialized programs. With approximately 6,100 employees district-wide, CCSD is the fourth largest employer in the region.

CCSD offers a diverse, expanding portfolio of options and specialized programs, delivered through neighborhood, charter, magnet, IB (international baccalaureate), and Montessori schools, and is divided into three Learning Communities. Options include specialized programs in science, engineering and mathematics; liberal arts; music and other creative and performing arts; career and technical preparation programs; and military and other public service enterprises.