



The 2009 MetLife South Asian Spelling Bee Champion Announced

August 17, 2009 – AKSHAT SHEKHAR of Roxbury, MA, spelled the word 'osphresis' to clinch the title of the National Champion. At an event on August 15, that was taped LIVE for broadcast on Sony Entertainment Television, Akshat Shekhar along with 15 other finalists competed for the title. The national first runner-up was Arvind Mahankali from Forest Hills NY and the national second runner-up was Aakash Gupta from Lake Mary, FL.

The event was organized by leading South Asian advertising firm, Touchdown Media Inc. and sponsored by MetLife, a leader in the insurance and financial services industry. Sony Entertainment Television is the exclusive rights holder and will be broadcasting the event across the globe in over 150 countries.

"We are very pleased with the event this year and congratulate Akshat Shekhar for becoming the best South Asian speller across the country. This is a great platform that helps children showcase their talent, hone their skill and inculcate a sense of discipline that will help in their overall development. I urge parents to take advantage of this unique contest next year", said Rahul Walia, CEO, Touchdown Media Inc. and founder of the South Asian Spelling Bee.

The champion received a \$5000 grand prize from MetLife along with the South Asian Spelling Bee trophy.

"We congratulate all of the families who participated in the 2009 South Asian Spelling Bee," says Laurel Daring, assistant vice president, National Sales Organization, MetLife. "As the title sponsor of this year's event, we are proud to not only help families come together for a fun, educational event, but also to raise awareness about the importance of planning for the rising costs of education."

The event was open to children up to 14 years of age and was held in 8 regional centers across the United States. These areas included, New Jersey, DC metro area, Dallas, Houston, Chicago, New York, Los Angeles and the Bay Area. The contest was conducted in written and oral format at the regional levels which served as the elimination as well as selection process for the finalists.

After registering their child online at www.southasianspellingbee.com, parents brought them to the designated center and a 25 word written test was administered. Children had to spell 15 or more words correctly to qualify for the afternoon oral round and from there the top three were awarded prize money and the top two qualified for the Finals.

From each of these centers, the finalists along with a parent were invited on an all expenses paid trip to the finals in NJ. Overall about 500 children registered to spell amongst all the centers.



The contest will be conducted annually in June and July months and the 2010 schedule will be announced in October this year. For more information and to keep abreast with the upcoming events, log onto www.southasianspellingbee.com.

About MetLife:

MetLife, Inc. is a leading provider of insurance, employee benefits and financial services with operations throughout the United States and the Latin America, Europe and Asia Pacific regions. Through its subsidiaries and affiliates, MetLife, Inc. reaches more than 70 million customers around the world and MetLife is the largest life insurer in the United States (based on life insurance in-force). The MetLife companies offer life insurance, annuities, auto and home insurance, retail banking and other financial services to individuals, as well as group insurance and retirement & savings products and services to corporations and other institutions. For more information, visit www.metlife.com.
About Sony Entertainment TV Asia:

About Sony Entertainment Television:

Since its launch on the Indian subcontinent in 1995, Sony Entertainment Television (SET) has enjoyed rapid success, leading to the establishment of European, North American and African feeds known as SET Asia. SET and SET Asia are now available in over 150 countries. The channels offer their viewers a distinctive blend of entertainment programs twenty-four hours a day, including, soap operas, dramas, sitcoms, concerts, movies, and game shows. For more information, visit www.setasia.tv.
About Touchdown Media Inc.:

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Touchdown Media Inc., is a specialized South Asian advertising and promotions firm based in New Jersey. Now in its 6th successful year, Touchdown has helped clients - both mainstream and otherwise, to reach out to the lucrative South Asian market, Touchdown Media represents more than 25 years of collective experience in this niche market. As a full service ad firm, Touchdown has helped many clients achieve their media and marketing goals within the South Asian Diaspora in the US.

Press Contact:
NITEKA MOKAL
848-248-4199
niteka@touchdown-media.com