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The 2009 MetLife South Asian Spelling Bee announced

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(From L to R) Joseph W. Jordan, Senior Vice President, National Sales Organization, MetLife; Rahul Walia, CEO of Touchdown Media Inc. and founder of the South Asian Spelling Bee; Ginger Jones, Advertising Consultant, MetLife; John Derbick, Assistant Vice President of Advertising, MetLife and Neeraj Arora, Senior Vice President, Sony Entertainment Television Asia, posing with the MetLife brand icon, Snoopy.

New York (SATimes): Touchdown Media Inc., a leading South Asian advertising firm, announced Wednesday plans for the 2009 South Asian Spelling Bee. MetLife, the No. 1 life insurer in the US, will be the title sponsor of the 2009 contest.

The event is open to children of South Asian descent up to 14 years of age. It will give them a chance to test their spelling skills in their core peer group. Interested spellers need their parent or guardian to register them online at www.southasianspellingbee.com.

Organized by Touchdown Media Inc., the events will be conducted in eight locations across the country starting June 20. Called the regional centers, these locations are New York, New Jersey, Chicago, Dallas, Houston, San Francisco Bay area, Los Angeles and the Washington DC metro area. All events will be free and open to the public.

"This is a family oriented event that engages the entire household for a fun and educative activity while providing children with the thrill of being on television," said Rahul Walia, CEO of Touch-

down Media Inc. and founder of the South Asian Spelling Bee.

Each competition will begin with a written test of 25 words. The participants must spell 15 or more words correctly to advance to the afternoon oral round, which will be conducted by experienced pronouncers and judges. The top three in the oral round will receive prize money.

The top two spellers of each regional competition will advance to the finals to be held in New Jersey in August. MetLife will present a \$5000 scholarship to the champion at the final event.

Joseph W. Jordan, Senior Vice President, National Sales Organization, MetLife, said "MetLife's long history of serving the South Asian community has helped us to understand what matters most to families. We know the significance of education, as well as the need for a plan to cover the rising costs of tuition. We're proud to sponsor this year's South Asian Spelling Bee."

The 2009 MetLife South Asian Spelling Bee will be telecast on Sony Entertainment Television, Asia.