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RSVBEE INVITATIONAL RETURNS FOR 2020 SCRIPPS NATIONAL SPELLING BEE

PROGRAM NARROWS FIELD OF COMPETITORS AND PROVIDES FINANCIAL AID

CINCINNATI – The Scripps National Spelling Bee is introducing new features to its popular invitational program, RSVBee, to enhance the annual “Bee Week” experience for more champion spellers and their families.

RSVBee is a participation pathway that qualifies more spellers for the national finals. It is the only way students living in unsponsored regions can advance and is an additional opportunity for the best spellers in the country to compete on the national stage.

“We’ve known for many years that large numbers of excellent spellers have had limited access to the national finals or no pathway at all,” said Paige Kimble, executive director of the Scripps National Spelling Bee. “We created RSVBee to address this very issue and make our iconic competition accessible to a wider population of children who love words and language and enjoy competitive spelling.

“We continue to improve and refine the RSVBee invitational part of our program, now in its third year, with a focus on fairness, accessibility, maintaining the integrity of the competition and delivering a quality Bee Week experience for all,” Kimble said.

The Bee will now offer financial aid packages to spellers who qualify for RSVBee but whose families might not be able to afford the entry fee and cost of traveling to National Harbor, Maryland.

The narrowed field of about 400 spellers for 2020, down from last year’s 562, is a direct response to survey feedback from spellers, parents and sponsors of local spelling bee programs who favored a smaller cohort of spellers.

“The Bee is always striving to improve the competition and camaraderie for the spellers who attend Bee Week,” Kimble said. “We’re pleased to offer financial assistance through RSVBee to ensure we provide opportunities for the nation’s best spellers.”

RSVBee Eligibility and Application Process

Parents can apply on behalf of their child for one of about 140 total RSVBee invitations at spellingbee.com/rsvbee beginning Feb. 11, 2020. The deadline to submit the online form is March 29. To be eligible, students must:

- Attend a school (or home school) that is enrolled with the Scripps National Spelling Bee.

- Be in seventh or eighth grade.
- Win their school or community spelling bee in the 2019-2020 school year or be a previous participant in the national finals.

The Bee will issue RSVBee invitations based on past performance in the national finals, grade level, participation in an unsponsored region or the largest, most competitive regions.

The deadline for parents to accept their RSVBee invitation and pay the \$1,500 participation fee is April 7, 2020, at 11:59 p.m. Eastern.

Financial Aid

For 2020, the Bee is offering up to 18 financial aid packages to pay a majority of the RSVBee expense for qualified families. The aid will waive the \$1,500 participation fee, pay for one hotel room for six nights during Bee Week, provide a \$500 gift card for meals and a \$500 stipend for travel. Parents who receive financial aid for their child will be responsible for any additional travel expenses to the competition, which is held at the Gaylord National Resort and Convention Center.

Parents can apply for financial aid after receiving an RSVBee invitation. Children who qualify for free or reduced-price lunch are eligible for financial help. The Bee will verify financial aid applications and award aid on a first-come, first-served basis. More information about RSVBee is available [here](#).

The 93rd Scripps National Spelling Bee is May 24-30.

About the Scripps National Spelling Bee:

The Scripps National Spelling Bee is the nation's largest and longest-running educational program. The purpose of the Scripps National Spelling Bee is to help students improve their spelling, increase their vocabularies, learn concepts and develop correct English usage that will help them all their lives. Visit spellingbee.com for more information about the Scripps National Spelling Bee, which is administered on a not-for-profit basis by The E.W. Scripps Company.

About Scripps:

[The E.W. Scripps Company](#) (NASDAQ: SSP) advances understanding of the world through journalism. As the nation's fourth-largest independent TV station owner, Scripps operates 60 television stations in 42 markets. Scripps empowers the next generation of news consumers with its multiplatform news network Newsy and reaches growing audiences through broadcast networks including Bounce and Court TV. Shaping the future of storytelling through digital audio, Scripps owns top podcast company Stitcher and Triton, the global leader in technology and measurement services. Scripps runs an award-winning investigative reporting newsroom in Washington, D.C., and is the longtime steward of the Scripps National Spelling Bee. Founded in 1878, Scripps has held for decades to the motto, "Give light and the people will find their own way."

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