



**TORONTO May 6 2013** - Fresh off the monumental success of celebrating a 25 year milestone in 2012; the excitement of *Spelling Bee of Canada* is back in its 26th year. The championship final takes place this Sunday in time for Mother's Day at the Delta Chelsea Hotel in Toronto. Organizer Julie Spence says the competition has faced more than a few challenges this year. "We were definitely affected by the teachers strike. In the past we have relied on their help to organize spelling bees at the school level. But it's considered extracurricular so during the strike we had no help. But the parents really stepped up this year, especially the moms. So it's only fitting that the championship falls on Mother's day this year," says Spence.

During this last year of preparation Spence says she has really grown to appreciate the role of the mothers, grandmothers in helping the children achieve success. "It's really a family affair. I see two generations of a family brainstorming for strategies to help their little ones to do well; often learning how to spell some of these words themselves! And the moms are there to give big hugs when the kids get disappointed. The mom is a counsellor, a teacher, a coach, cook, driver, everything, so they play a major role in this process and that's why we really want to honour them this year," says Spence.

84 contestants from around Ontario will vie for the title of top speller this year. There are lots of cash prizes and other rewards at stake. But Spence says the competition is not all about the search for the best speller. She says it's about encouraging participants to understand the value and power of words.

This year's guest speaker echoes that sentiment.

Motivational speaker *Ash Silva* is on board to deliver the keynote address. "Now that these participants have learned all these words, how will they use them?" he asks.

Silva says he wants to impress upon young people that words have power. A successful motivator and entrepreneur, Silva says a big part of the reason he accepted the challenge of speaking to a room full of nervously excited kids is because his life is not fulfilled without giving back. The motto he lives by: "We earn a living by what we make. We create a life by what we give," says Silva.

The 26th Annual Spelling Bee of Canada Championship Final takes place Sunday May 12 at the Delta Chelsea Hotel. Everyone is invited to attend the opening ceremony at 9:30am.

Start times are as follows:

- 9:30am Opening Ceremony
- 10:00am Primary Category
- 12:30pm Junior Category
- 2:00pm Intermediate Category

Julie Spence is available for interviews upon request. Based on availability interviews with Spelling Bee contestants may also be arranged.

For more information on the Spelling Bee please visit [www.spellingbeeofcanada.ca](http://www.spellingbeeofcanada.ca)

