

From the desk of Rob Costante, Principal...

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The *National Scripps Spelling Bee* is arguably the most prestigious academic event that is offered to school aged children. And for the first time ever, St. Francis de Sales School will be represented by one of its students. On Saturday, March 4th on the campus of UMES, 8th grader Erin Welch took the stage for the fourth time as a participant for the Regional Spelling Bee. Impressively, Erin was the runner-up winner at this event for two of her previous three years as a participant. One of those second place finishes saw Erin move through 46 rounds before she lost to the winner. Yet, even after such a hard fought loss, she remained focused on representing PENGUIN NATION as the regional champion. Her determination was not based on merely an uncanny ability to dissect the origins of words or some sort of photographic memory. Instead, her success as a speller is a direct result of good ole fashioned effort. In an age where many students might merely rely on the crutch of a spell check tool rather than learn how to use phonetic awareness, vocabulary comprehension and the development of a vast memory bank of words to improve their abilities as a speller, Erin stands tall as a young lady who refuses to take the easy road. She is a student who persevered towards her goal not by chance, but by determined effort. We are very proud of Erin and all that she did to earn this celebrated accomplishment.

It is only fitting that in the same week that the Regional Spelling Bee was held, a unique holiday occurred. "Dr. Seuss Day" (also known as "Read Across America Day") honors a man who wrote entertaining, yet quirky stories as a way to encourage young children to read. On May 2nd, SFdS teachers dusted off their favorite "Cat in the Hat" lid, their "Thing 1 and Thing 2" costumes and made "Green Eggs and Ham" all in honor of the work of Theodor Seuss Geisel. Also, our 6th grade students used this day to read their favorite Seuss story to our younger Penguins. And as I reflect on this distinctive holiday, I can't help but think that 8 years ago when Erin Welch was in Kindergarten, an older student reading a Dr. Seuss story might have inspired a love of words in her that encouraged Erin to become the Spelling Bee champion that she has become.

This week we extend our appreciation to the treasured sponsorship that the Philip & Barbara Long Family Foundation have provided to St. Francis de Sales School. Thank you!

Philip & Barbara



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