

News Release-

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

EMILIO FUENTES AND NATALIA ACOSTA DECLARED CO-CHAMPIONS AT THE 2023 NATIONAL SPANISH SPELLING BEE

El Paso, Texas (July 1, 2023)— After five hours of intense competition, a tie was declared at the National Spanish Spelling Bee (NSSB) hosted by Education Service Center Region 19 today. Emilio Fuentes, from The Woodlands, TX, and Natalia Acosta, from Las Cruces, NM, were declared co-champions of the prestigious event. Keilany Baca from Albuquerque, NM, secured the third-place position.

The competition, held at Education Service Center Region 19, brought together twenty-eight champions from across the United States, spanning from Washington D.C. to California. The spellers showcased their exceptional skills in Spanish, meticulously tackling high-difficulty words such as 'incognoscible' and 'moaxaja.' The event commenced at 9 AM and, after several hours of intense spelling battles, culminated in a stalemate around 2:30 PM.

"Both Emilio and Natalia proved to be outstanding spellers and deserved the first-place title," stated David Briseño, NSSB Founder and Coordinator. "It gives me great joy to know we have such determined and poised young people in this competition," Briseño added, emphasizing the remarkable talent displayed by the co-champions.

Returning contender Sheneli De Silva, last year's champion from El Paso, TX, showcased her skills once again and secured the fourth-place position. Prior to the competition, De Silva motivated her fellow contestants, encouraging them to do their best and enjoy the experience. "It is always a lot of hard work, but competing is a lot of fun," De Silva remarked, highlighting the challenging yet rewarding nature of the event.

The top three winners of the 2022 NSSB received cash prizes sponsored by Flutec, the Platinum Sponsor:

1st Place Co-Champions: Emilio Fuentes, \$800, and Natalia Acosta, \$800

3rd Place: Keilany Baca, \$400

Dr. Jose Valesaquez, NSSB co-coordinator and ESC19 Director of Academic Instruction and School Support, acknowledged the remarkable achievements of all the contestants. "We consider all of the contestants to be winners since they've made it to this national level," Dr. Valesaquez affirmed. Following the competition, all participants were recognized with medals, books, local honey, and gift bags during a reception dinner.

"We take great pride in the diversity of the contestants and the high level of academic rigor these young students excel in," expressed Briseño, who initiated the program twelve years ago. "Our goal is to provide students with an unforgettable positive experience that will benefit them academically, boost their confidence, enhance their public speaking skills, and enable them to thrive under pressure," Briseño explained, underlining the multifaceted benefits of participating in the NSSB.

Dr. Velasquez shared his satisfaction with the parents' positive feedback. "Hearing the parents say they would come back next year because their experience was so wonderful is very rewarding," Dr. Velasquez stated. With continued community support, the organizers aspire to grow the competition in terms of participation and sponsorships in the forthcoming years.

During the event, Flutec CEO Daniel Dominguez, the Platinum Sponsor, addressed the competitors and offered words of encouragement and recognition. "Your bravery and tenacity were exemplified by your outstanding performance today. You are the leaders of tomorrow!" Dominguez exclaimed, delivering his message in Spanish.

Education Service Center Region 19 has been selected as the host for the national competition next year. NSSB has been previously hosted in several southwest cities including Albuquerque, NM, San Antonio, TX, and Denver, CO.

-For a complete competition information, visit: nationalspanishspellingbee.com.

-Encore video presentations of the competition and awards ceremony can be seen on YouTube/ESCRegion19.com.

-Pictures will be posted on Facebook/ESCRegion19.com.

-[Click here](#) for program with biography information of the prestigious judges, pronouncer and spellers.

-Event Contacts: David Briseño, National Spanish Spelling Bee Founder and Coordinator, nssbsa@gmail.com, 505-238-6812 and/or Sandra Valladolid, ESC19 Marketing Coordinator, svalladolid@esc19.net, 915-780-5074;

###