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News

Home-schooled student queen of Geauga County Spelling Bee

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By Jacob Lammers

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Although homework might be a foreign concept to her, Kirsten Prout is no stranger to hard work.

The home-schooled seventh-grader defeated eight other competitors Wednesday night to win the 2010 Geauga County Spelling Bee. The annual event was hosted by the Geauga County Educational Service Center in Chardon.

"I'm surprised I guess," said Kirsten, holding her gold trophy. "I didn't think I was going to win. I'm just happy that I won."

After four months of studying, her father, Steve Prout, said it was well-deserved.

"She was nervous about competing against all the kids in the county," he said. "We told her not to worry and just do her best."

Aside from reading, the Middlefield Village girl said she enjoys piano, volleyball and photography.

Spelling bee coordinator Debra Barrickman said that all competitors accomplished a great deal before the event began.

"Each one here is a district champion already," Barrickman said. "They each had to go through several layers of competition to get here. I just think it's a good chance for students in the county to have a common competition."

Initially, the 12-year-old thought she won after correctly spelling the word "prodigal" at the end of Round 14. Yet the rules stipulate that "if one speller remains at the end of the round, a new round is begun and the remaining speller is asked to spell the next word on the list."

In Round 15, Kirsten claimed victory with the word "cafeteria."

"I was actually really nervous," Kirsten said. "I just tried to look serious. I didn't want to freak out."

Her mother and teacher, Shelby Prout, said Kirsten expressed an interest in competing in a spelling bee two years ago.

"She's just a natural speller," Shelby Prout said. "It was really neat that (the Geauga County Educational Service Center) did this — to allow home-schoolers to have a shot."

"This was a fun thing to do."

With the Tri-County Spelling Bee set for March 11 in Kirtland, Kirsten said she plans to "study a lot," though she calmly added "I think I'll do OK."

The words

Round 1: interrupt, trauma, guitar, forlorn, talc, geode, fiesta, artichoke, chronic

Round 2: yacht, karate, mahi-mahi, gazelle, postmortem, knapsack,

Round 3: filament, renovate, totem, croquette, hickory

Round 4: souvenir, gondola, tithe, stipple

Round 5: ventilate, pragmatic, nether

Round 6: haiku, grabble, sarcasm

Round 7: diatribe, idiom

Round 8: acronym, cognition

Round 9: ravioli, orthodox

Round 10: caribou, ambiguity

Round 11: sallow, matinee

Round 12: agnostic, succotash

Round 13: carnivore, junco

Round 14: quesadilla, prodigal

Round 15: cafeteria

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