

# First Literacy of Boston seeks teams for annual spelling bee fund-raiser

By [Claire Law](#) Globe Correspondent, Updated February 10, 2023, 11:46 p.m.



Money raised from the March 30 spelling bee will help fund First Literacy scholarships for adult learners. Last August, First Literacy Scholars were celebrated at Faneuil Hall with Boston Mayor Michelle Wu. Also pictured are board chair Jim Nolan, right, and program director Bryan McCormick (partially hidden). PAT GREENHOUSE/GLOBE STAFF

First Literacy of Boston is calling on businesses, community organizations or groups of people to form teams for its 33rd Annual Spelling Bee, its largest fund-raiser which returns for in-person competition next month.

The event will be held at 6 p.m. on March 30 at the State Street Channel Center in Boston, according to a statement from First Literacy, which provides adult basic

education services to low-income residents of Massachusetts.

“After a two-year hiatus we are excited to be hosting the Bee in person this year,” said Executive Director Terry Witherell, according to the statement. “The Spelling Bee is extremely important not just as our biggest fundraiser, but for sharing our mission and spreading awareness of adults struggling with low literacy.”

The competition is “sure to stump even the savviest of spellers,” the statement said. Teams competed at last year’s event, which raised over \$250,000, correctly spelling such winning words as tuyere, saurischian, and phytohemagglutinin.

A minimum, tax-deductible donation of \$3,500 funds a team of three, the statement said. Along with businesses, anyone who would like to form a team can do so, an expansion that was [introduced last year](#).

Teams formed by March 7 will be guaranteed a spot in the first round of pre-recorded play, the statement said. Teams that commit after that date will not participate in the first round, the statement said, but will have a chance to participate in the lightning round at the in-person event.

ADVERTISING

Proceeds will support the nonprofit's work to help adults with low literacy skills. In Massachusetts, 54% of adults have literacy levels below 6th grade, according to a 2022 Think Impact report, the statement said.

Former WBZ anchor Josh Binswanger will serve his 13th year as emcee, the statement said.

First Literacy provides grants for adult basic education programs, scholarships to adult students in college or vocational programs and free professional development workshops for educators, the statement said.

Sponsors for the this year's event currently include State Street, Morgan Stanley, Eaton Vance, BNY Mellon, Franklin Templeton, American Moving & Installation, AST, Brookline Bank, Crimson Lion Foundation, Deloitte, Jeffrey Beale, John Hancock, K&L Gates, KPMG, Liberty Mutual, MFS Investment Management, Patti Quigley, PwC, Newmark Group, Seyfarth and UBS.

To learn more about the event or how to form a team, visit [www.FirstLiteracy.org](http://www.FirstLiteracy.org) or e-mail Amy Letteney at [aletteney@firstliteracy.org](mailto:aletteney@firstliteracy.org).

---

Claire Law can be reached at [claire.law@globe.com](mailto:claire.law@globe.com). Follow her on Twitter [@claire\\_law\\_](https://twitter.com/claire_law_).

[Show comments](#)