

Portland resident wins Toastmasters' 2012 World Championship of Public Speaking

Rising above 30,000 participants, 25-year-old Ryan Avery is youngest ever to win world's largest speech contest

RANCHO SANTA MARGARITA, Calif., Aug. 18, 2012 /PRNewswire/ -- With a speech titled "Trust is a Must," Ryan Avery, a Toastmaster from Portland, Oregon, won the Toastmasters [World Championship of Public Speaking](#) today. At age 25, he is the youngest World Champion of Public Speaking in the history of the contest. Along with eight other finalists, Avery reached the championship finals after several eliminating rounds that began six months ago with 30,000 participants from 116 countries. [Watch a highlight of Avery's winning [speech](#).]

In a seven-minute speech about the importance of keeping one's promises, Avery won the judges' vote and audience's heart. "A promise is only as good as the person who gives it," he said, sharing lessons learned the hard way. His humorous yet poignant speech resonated with an international audience of nearly 1,500 who attended the contest during the Toastmasters International Convention in Orlando, Florida, Aug. 15-18.

"It took lots of practice to get to this point!" says Avery. "In my bedroom I have a sign that says, 'What would Michael Phelps do?' If he could get up early to practice every day, so could I. I also have lots of mentors, and my wife was incredibly supportive. The process has helped me grow as a person and realize that Toastmasters is an amazingly supportive organization."

A member of the Portland Toastmasters club, Avery joined Toastmasters a year and half ago to improve his chances of promotion at his job with the Special Olympics. Three weeks ago, he received that promotion, becoming its Director of Communications and Marketing.

Avery competed in many Toastmasters speech contests before reaching his goal of earning the title of World Champion of Public Speaking. His advice to others: "Don't just give a speech, find a message that matters to you and deliver it with passion."

Speakers delivered five- to seven-minute speeches on wide-ranging topics, and were judged on content, organization and delivery.

Second- and third-place winners in the Toastmasters World Championship of Public Speaking were Palaniappa Subramaniam of Penang, Malaysia, with his speech, "Finding the Right Shoes," and Stuart Pink of Attleboro, Massachusetts, with his speech "Brain Lifting."

About Toastmasters International

Toastmasters International is a nonprofit educational organization that teaches public speaking and leadership skills through a worldwide network of clubs. Founded in October 1924, the organization currently has more than 280,000 members in 13,500 clubs in 116 countries. Each week, Toastmasters helps more than a quarter million people of every ethnicity, education level and profession build their competence in communication so they can gain the confidence to lead others. For information about local Toastmasters clubs, please visit www.toastmasters.org. Follow Toastmasters International on Twitter [@Toastmasters](#).

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