

Chicago resident wins Toastmasters' 2013 World Championship of Public Speaking

Presiyan Vasilev, an immigrant from Bulgaria, rises above 30,000 participants to win world's largest speech contest

RANCHO SANTA MARGARITA, Calif., Aug. 24, 2013 /PRNewswire/ -- With a humorous speech titled "Changed by a Tire," Presiyan Vasilev, a 30-year-old sales professional from Chicago, Illinois, won the Toastmasters World Championship of Public Speaking on Saturday, Aug. 24. Vasilev, along with eight other final contestants, reached the championship level after several eliminating rounds that began six months ago with 30,000 participants from 122 countries. [Watch Vasilev compete [here](#).]

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(Logo: <http://photos.prnewswire.com/prnh/20130222/MM64912LOGO>)

"This is a dream come true," said Vasilev, a native of Bulgaria. His speech resonated with a capacity crowd of nearly 1,600 from around the world, who attended the contest held in the Duke Energy Center in Cincinnati, Ohio. His winning speech was about the personal experience of reaching out and asking for help. "I stopped to change a tire; instead the tire changed me," he said. "I believed reaching out was a weakness, but I discovered my weakness was in refusing to reach out."

Vasilev joined Toastmasters three years ago and competed in many speech contests before reaching his goal of earning the title of World Champion of Public Speaking. In his acceptance speech, he said, "Toastmasters is the best personal development laboratory you can find."

Vasilev immigrated to the United States 11 years ago from Sofia, Bulgaria, in search of "multicultural variety" and self-improvement. He found his voice in Toastmasters, where he joined six clubs in Chicago. "I love competing, and I have benefited from the wonderful support of my Toastmasters family," he said. Vasilev says he looks forward to returning the favor and wants to use his championship experience to mentor others. He offers the following advice: "Never give up!"

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

Vasilev claimed the title of Toastmasters' 2013 World Champion of Public Speaking during the organization's annual convention held in Cincinnati, Aug. 21-24.

Second- and third-place winners were Kingi Biddle from Rotorua, New Zealand, with his speech titled "My Sitting Place" and Shurooq AlBanna from Dubai, United Arab Emirates, with her speech, "Finding the Pearl."

About Toastmasters International

Toastmasters International is a nonprofit educational organization that teaches public speaking and leadership skills through a worldwide network of meeting locations. Headquartered in Rancho Santa Margarita, California, the organization's membership exceeds 292,000 in more than 14,350 clubs in 122 countries. Since 1924, Toastmasters International has helped people of all backgrounds become more confident in front of an audience. For information about local Toastmasters clubs, please visit www.toastmasters.org. Follow [@Toastmasters](#) on Twitter.

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