

Toastmasters Kicks Off World's Largest Speech Contest

30,000 participants compete to become the 2015 World Champion of Public Speaking

RANCHO SANTA MARGARITA, Calif., Feb. 11, 2015 /PRNewswire/ -- The world's largest speech competition has launched with more than 30,000 contestants in 126 countries vying for the title of World Champion of Public Speaking. The Toastmasters International Speech Contest begins with participants practicing and giving their presentations in local clubs as they polish their oratory skills while advancing to area, division and district levels. The competition culminates with the World Championship of Public Speaking on Aug. 15 in Las Vegas.

"The speech contest is one of the highlights of the Toastmasters experience," says Toastmasters International President Mohammed Murad. "Speakers from all over the world compete in the contest. Win or lose, contestants benefit from taking their public speaking skills to the next level."

Ninety-one district semifinalists will compete during the Toastmasters 2015 International Convention held Aug. 12 - 15, in Las Vegas, at Caesars Palace Hotel and Casino. Finalists will make it to the final round on Aug. 15, where the winner is crowned the Toastmasters World Champion of Public Speaking.

To be eligible for the competition, participants must be age 18 or older, and present a five-to seven-minute speech in English on any topic. Judging criteria include speech content, originality, organization, gestures, style and timing.

"The speech contest represents the end of a great journey for contestants," says Dananjaya Hettiarachchi from Columbo, Sri Lanka, who is Toastmasters' 2014 World Champion of Public Speaking. "To begin at the club-level and proceed through the area, division and district contests takes a lot of confidence, practice and, most importantly, self-determination."

Click [here](#) to watch Hettiarachchi's winning speech from the 2014 World Championship of Public Speaking. For more information about the World Championship of Public Speaking, visit <http://www.toastmasters.org/About/World-Championship-of-Public-Speaking>. To visit a club contest, contact pr@toastmasters.org.

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 313,000 in more than 14,650 clubs in 126 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](https://twitter.com/Toastmasters) on Twitter.

Video - <http://youtu.be/Vrb7t6SBbi0>

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