

First Literacy of Boston seeks teams for 35th annual spelling bee

By **Rita Chandler** Globe Correspondent, Updated February 5, 2025, 9:35 p.m.



In 2022, First Literacy held its scholarship awards ceremony at Faneuil Hall in Boston. PAT GREENHOUSE/GLOBE STAFF

First Literacy is looking for teams to participate in its 35th annual spelling bee — the Boston-based nonprofit's largest fundraiser for adult basic education and literacy.

Corporations, family and friend groups, and community organizations are all welcome to participate in the event, which will take place on April 3 at 6 p.m. at the State Street Channel Center in Boston, First Literacy said in a statement.

Former WBZ morning radio anchor Josh Binswanger will be back for his 15th year as emcee, the statement said.

“The excitement is building,” executive director Terry Witherell said in the statement. “This signature event reflects our ongoing commitment to raising awareness about the challenges faced by adults with low literacy, while providing a fun and engaging experience for all.”

“We hope to see even more groups joining us this year,” she added.

Proceeds from the event will support First Literacy’s free educator workshops, program grants, and scholarships for adult learners pursuing higher education or vocational training. The nonprofit is committed to aiding “adult learners, teachers, and recent immigrants,” the statement said.

Over the years, the bee has raised over \$3.6 million, according to the statement. Last year, it raised \$265,000, the Globe [reported](#).

Each three-person team is required to donate a minimum \$5,000 to enter the competition, according to the statement. Donations are tax-deductible.

Teams must sign up by March 12 to secure a spot, but late registrants will still have a chance to compete for the “wild card” slot during the event’s lightning round, the statement said.

Sponsors for this year’s spelling bee include Animal Rescue League of Boston, BNY, Brookline Bank, Deloitte, Fahey Family Charitable Fund, Franklin Templeton, K&L Gates, KPMG, MFS Investment Management, In Honor of Karen Morrissey, Newmark Group, Peabody Essex Museum, and UBS, the statement said.

Anyone interested in forming a team or learning more about the event can visit www.FirstLiteracy.org or email aletteney@firstliteracy.org.

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