

A natural speller

9-year-old dazzles at MIT

By Evan Greer

"I don't like spelling," says 9-year-old Andover resident Krishnan Chandra, expressing a sentiment not unusual among children of his age.

He may not like it, but he sure is good at it.

On Aug. 4, Krishnan came in third place in the senior (9-12) division of the North South Foundation's 2002 National Finals Spelling Bee.

A total of 161 spelling whizzes from 28 states competed in the contest, which took place at MIT's Wong Auditorium in Cambridge.

About 60 contestants competed in the senior division.

Krishnan proceeded to the finals after winning first place in the New England Area Regional Contest in May 2001.

The North South Foundation is a non-profit organization that holds contests in the US for children of South Asian origin and provides scholarships for economically deprived students in India.

Pemma Chandra, Krishnan's proud mother, read about the contest last year and entered Krishnan in it. In the 2001 contests, Krishnan

came in second in Massachusetts and fourth nationally.

Originally from Madras, India, Chandra felt very positively about the North South Foundation.

"They really help people over there (in India)," she said. The Chandra family has been living in the United States for seven years and in Andover for the past three years.

"You could say I was a little nervous," says Krishnan, "because I knew it was tougher (this year) than last year, because there

were more participants."

How does one become such a walking dictionary? "It's just studying," shrugs Krishnan, who attends Bancroft Elementary School and says his favorite subjects are geography and math. "Not spelling," he maintains.

"We were very proud," said Chandra, "he worked really hard, and it paid off."

The North South Foundation was founded in 1989 by Dr. Ratnam Chitturi and now has 21 centers around the US that hold these contests for children of South Asian origin.

For more information, visit <www.northsouth.org>.



Krishnan
Chandra