

Jobs for Youth until 2000, when it became a year-round program.

Madam Speaker, I encourage my colleagues in the House to join me in recognizing the good work and success of San Mateo County Jobs for Youth as they celebrate 25 years of helping young people begin their productive lives of employment.

EXPRESSING CONDOLENCES FOR THE VICTIMS OF THE MINING ACCIDENT IN NOVOKUZNETSK, RUSSIA

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 24, 2007

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today to express my condolences over the terrible mining accident that took place earlier today near the Russian city of Novokuznetsk in Siberia. According to news reports, as many as 38 people may have been killed and still others injured in a methane gas explosion at the Yubileynaya coal mine. This is a terrible and sad accident.

Words alone cannot adequately convey my sympathy over this tragic accident. Coal mining is a difficult and dangerous job often done by the economically disadvantaged and accidents such as these only make that challenging way of life harder. Indeed, we Americans are, unfortunately, no stranger to mining accidents.

Just this morning the Helsinki Commission held a hearing on Russia. Our hearts and prayers go out to all those Russians affected by this tragedy and we hope that those who remain trapped are recovered soon and alive.

TRIBUTE TO SUNEIL IYER, SECOND PLACE WINNER IN NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC BEE

HON. DENNIS MOORE

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 24, 2007

Mr. MOORE of Kansas. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Suneil Iyer, a seventh grade student at Indian Trail Junior High School in Olathe, Kansas, who recently finished in second place at the 2007 National Geography Bee.

Suneil, who received a \$15,000 college scholarship prize award, qualified for the national bee by winning the Kansas National Geographic Bee for the second year in a row. Like his family, friends and neighbors, I am very proud of Suneil, and welcome this opportunity to share news of his success with my colleagues in the U.S. House of Representatives.

Madam Speaker, I include with this statement two recent articles from the local press regarding Suneil Iyer's success: an article from the Kansas City Star that was published prior to the national bee, and an article from today's Olathe Daily News summarizing the results of that competition.

[From The Kansas City Star, May 18, 2007]

THREE-PEAT NOT ON GEOGRAPHY WHIZ'S MAP: INDIAN TRAIL STUDENT PLACED FOURTH IN NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC BEE LAST YEAR

(By Martha Zirschky)

Suneil Iyer has always loved animals, his mother says. The Indian Trail eighth-grader is intrigued by the wildlife in Antarctica and says he'd love to travel there.

A year ago, Suneil Iyer missed a question on the "Somers Islands"—aka Bermuda—at the National Geographic Bee finals in Washington, D.C. and was eliminated.

Many would find consolation in being the youngest finalist and still finishing fourth on the national stage. But not Suneil, now a 12-year-old Indian Trail Junior High seventh-grader who's again qualified for next week's final round.

If he places in the top three and wins scholarships worth \$25,000, \$15,000 or \$10,000, he would be ineligible to return again in 2008. That's his goal.

"I want to win and get it over with," he said.

Suneil qualified for the national bee by winning the Kansas National Geographic Bee for the second-straight year. Next Tuesday, he'll be one of 55 fourth- to eighth-graders who advanced from an original field of 5 million contestants to compete in the national preliminaries. Tuesday's top 10 winners will move on to Wednesday's finals with Alex Trebec, the Jeopardy host, serving as moderator.

Suneil will join geography bee winners from the 50 states, Washington D.C., Puerto Rico, United States Territories and Department of Defense Dependents schools. His trip and that of his seventh-grade social studies teacher, Jill King, are being paid for by National Geographic.

Contestants can miss one question, Suneil said, and still stay in the running. Miss again and you're eliminated. Suneil made it to question 95 last year before his second miss.

The questions are both oral and written, and contestants have 12 seconds to answer, Suneil said. Both physical and cultural geography are fair game.

His goal, of course, is the \$25,000 college scholarship. Second or third would be an improvement over last year. The main thing, he says, is to win and not have to return to the pressure mill of a national contest.

Suneil has a large support system of family, friends and school community.

"This is a nice cooperative community," his mother, Lila, said. "It is a great community in which to raise kids."

Suneil's father, Ramakrishnan, is his main tutor, but he's also mentored by Eswar, an older brother. Although Suneil beat his brother last year at the state bee to win the trip to nationals, Eswar remains one of his biggest fans.

At Indian Trail, students even help Suneil by researching geography questions and putting them on cards for Suneil to study.

"The school supports Suneil with its 'Suneil, did you know?' (program)," Assistant Principal Margo Twaddle said.

Twaddle dispels the notion that Suneil is a one-trick pony. He's been the school spelling bee champ, participated in the Science Olympiad, been to math camp and played on a recreational softball team.

His career goals include becoming a pilot or marine biologist, or—not surprisingly—a geographer. He won his first geography bee when he was in fourth grade and began drawing animals at age three.

"As a little guy, he was always interested in animals, real or fictional," his mother said.

Suneil's father travels extensively and occasionally the family accompanies him, as

they did on a "trip of a lifetime" to the Galapagos Islands. The best part, Suneil said, was the islands' animal inhabitants, such as the iguana and giant tortoise.

On Suneil's dream itinerary? Egypt for the antiquities, he says, and Antarctica for the wildlife.

But first, there's a trip to Washington D.C.

[From the Olathe News, May 24, 2007]

OLATHE BOY PLACES SECOND IN NATIONAL GEOGRAPHY BEE

(By Arley Hoskin)

Olathe residents do not have to travel far to find a geography whiz.

Indian Trail Junior High School seventh-grader Suneil Iyer demonstrated his talent Wednesday with a second-place finish at the 2007 National Geography Bee.

"We are so proud of him," said Suneil's mother, Linda Iyer. Suneil traveled to Washington, D.C., with his parents, Linda and Ram Iyer, and his ninth-grade brother, Eswar, on Monday. The preliminary rounds started Tuesday.

The top 10 students competed in the final round Wednesday. Suneil competed in the bee for the first time last year when he placed fourth. He said he wanted to do better this year and is happy with second place.

"I wanted to get first, but I still thought second was pretty good," Suneil said.

Suneil received a \$15,000 college scholarship for his finish.

Suneil stumbled when judges asked him to name "a city that is divided by a river of the same name that was the imperial capital of Vietnam for more than a century."

"I just guessed," Suneil said.

Suneil did not guess the correct answer: Hue.

Caitlin Snaring, a 14-year-old home school student from Washington, placed first and received a \$25,000 college scholarship. Third place, and a \$10,000 college scholarship, went to Mark Arildsen, a 13-year-old Tennessee student. Linda Iyer said Suneil gained more than geographical knowledge and college money during the competition.

"The connections with the kids that he's made have been really wonderful," she said. "The kids here are all just really interested in this geography thing. They were just having a ball here." After Tuesday's rounds, the students gathered for a barbecue and games. Suneil said he enjoyed the recreational activities the bee planned for the students.

"They were fun," he said.

Ram Iyer said he thinks Suneil continues to show his peers in Olathe that geography is fun.

"His school was very excited that he was going," Ram Iyer said. "This has made a lot of other students think about if they want to try the geography bee."

Students age 10 to 14 can compete in the national bee, but this will be 12-year-old Suneil's last year. Students who place first, second or third cannot compete again.

IN HONOR OF CORPORAL RYAN A. BISHOP, UNITED STATES ARMY

HON. KAY GRANGER

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 24, 2007

Ms. GRANGER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the courage of a brave and dedicated hero of the State of Texas and of our Nation.

Corporal Ryan A. Bishop was a United States Army soldier and a true American hero who gallantly and selflessly gave his life for