



For Immediate Release

Arshan Shahriar to Represent Waterloo Region at Scripps National Spelling Bee in Washington, D.C.

– Grade four student wins second annual Waterloo Region ECU Scripps Regional Spelling Bee –

KITCHENER, ON (February 12, 2024) – Following an intensive and exciting Sunday afternoon competition of local middle school students from across the Waterloo Region and beyond, Arshan Shahriar, a grade 4 student at Selwyn Elementary School in Toronto, has been named the 2024 ECU Scripps Regional Spelling Bee champion, successfully spelling the winning word “hijab”. With 16 finalists competing, this year’s Bee marked the second year a Regional Bee has been hosted in the Waterloo region. In addition to a six-night, expenses-paid trip to Washington, D.C. for the Scripps National Spelling Bee this May 2024, ECU – A Division of WFCU Credit Union (“ECU”) has also awarded Arshan a \$200 Educational Scholarship.

The ECU Scripps Regional Spelling Bee was held at the Kitchener Public Library Theatre on Sunday, February 11, featuring Jim Crichton of CTV Windsor fame as the Pronouncer. It was hosted by presenting sponsor, ECU – A Division of WFCU Credit Union. It was a close and competitive event, going 15 rounds before the Champion Word round, where Arshan successfully spelled his final word and became the youngest champion the event has seen to-date.

“Providing youth with opportunities for growth and development is an important part of our mission and our commitment to the communities we serve,” said Eddie Francis, President and CEO of WFCU Credit Union. “We’re proud to sponsor Waterloo Region’s ECU Scripps Regional Spelling Bee to foster learning and healthy competition in a fun and interactive way. Congratulations to Arshan and his family. We will be rooting for you this May!”

While parent company, WFCU Credit Union, will host the Windsor Scripps Regional Spelling Bee for the sixth consecutive year next month, hosting Waterloo Region’s second annual competition demonstrates its community engagement commitment to its local ECU membership. As part of the credit union’s community engagement program, *INSPIRE*, the Regional Spelling Bee promotes literacy and language arts in an engaging way. It also aligns with the credit union’s mission to support organizations and individuals that contribute to the well-being of the community, with particular emphasis on youth, education, and health.

Arshan Shahriar of Selwyn Elementary School will now advance to compete in the 2024 Scripps National Spelling Bee held near Washington, D.C., where he will be competing against hundreds of students from around the world. The highly-anticipated event will be televised on ION, the Bee’s broadcast home. Full broadcast details can be found at spellingbee.com.

In addition to flight and accommodations during the event and a \$200 Educational Scholarship on behalf of ECU - A Division of WFCU Credit Union, Arshan has also won the following:

- **The Samuel Louis Sugarman Award** – a 2023 United States Mint Proof Set provided by Jay Sugarman, chairman and CEO of iStar Financial, in honour of his father.
- **The Britannica Online Premium** – a one-year subscription for the premier online resource from Encyclopedia Britannica.
- **The Merriam-Webster Unabridged Online** – a one-year subscription for the official word source for all levels of competition for the Scripps National Spelling Bee.

“We were very proud of every student who competed at this year’s Waterloo region event,” said Beth Ann Prince, Manager, Community Investment, WFCU Credit Union. “Taking the stage took bravery, confidence and concentration.

You are all champions and exemplify the spirit of the Bee. I'd also like to thank all of the participating schools and teachers who invested time in the program. We hope to see you again next year!"

*To request media interviews, please contact Julia Harper at jharper@wfcu.ca or 647-330-4706.

About WFCU Credit Union:

WFCU Credit Union has been recognized as a leading, progressive financial institution headquartered in Windsor and Essex County since 1940. Proudly serving Ontario residents, community organizations, small businesses, commercial entities, and public institutions for over 80 years, WFCU Credit Union is the sixth largest credit union in Ontario, and twenty-first largest credit union in Canada.

WFCU Credit Union operates nine retail locations across Windsor-Essex, one in Chatham, one in London, and three in the Waterloo Region through ECU – A Division of WFCU Credit Union. WFCU also operates the digital entity, Omnia Direct. Through its variety of service channels including online and mobile banking, live telephone banking, and ATM services, WFCU Credit Union and its divisions have become the financial institutions of choice for 71,831 members across Ontario, including 66,235 personal members in 26,025 households, 3,942 businesses, and 1,654 organizations. Currently, WFCU Credit Union has \$9.49 billion in Managed Assets and Member Service Totals of \$12.79 billion. WFCU Credit Union membership is open to anyone who lives and/or works in Ontario.

WFCU Credit Union is an Official Regional Partner of the Scripps National Spelling Bee.

About Scripps National Spelling Bee:

The Scripps National Spelling Bee is the nation's largest and longest-running educational program, having launched in 1925. The purpose of the Scripps National Spelling Bee is to help students improve their spelling, increase their vocabularies, learn concepts and develop correct English usage that will help them all their lives. Visit spellingbee.com for more information about the Scripps National Spelling Bee, which is administered on a not-for-profit basis by The E.W. Scripps Company (NASDAQ: SSP).

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MEDIA CONTACTS:

Julia Harper
Marketing Communications Specialist
WFCU Credit Union
519.505-4380
jharper@wfcu.ca

Rebecca Stasko
Director, Marketing, Communications & Community Investment
WFCU Credit Union
519-974-3100 ext. 1077
519-567-4863
rstasko@wfcu.ca