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FOCUS ON THE FAMILY HOSTS LARGEST HOME-SCHOOL SPEECH & DEBATE TOURNAMENT

Colorado Springs, Colo., May 29, 2012 – Academic speech and debate has been a favorite home-school activity since 1996. It has grown so popular among home educators that this year's final competition taking place June 5-9 at Focus on the Family has become the largest tournament in its 16 year history.

Families from 26 states will gather for a week of competition at the National Invitational Tournament of Champions (NITOC), the last tournament of the school year. Stoa, a California-based organization that runs the tournament, consists of 1,100 families and nearly 2,000 students.

"We describe ourselves as a Christian home-school speech and debate organization," says Scott York, Stoa's president. "We write the rules and set the boundaries for competition. Smaller tournaments are run throughout the year, all leading to the grand finale, NITOC."

Students compete in 11 speech events and two types of debate. The speech events include categories of literature interpretation, oratory, and impromptu. One format of debate, Team-Policy, consists of two-person teams arguing policy topics. The second is a value-based, one-on-one format called Lincoln-Douglas, named after the famous 19th century debates between Abraham Lincoln and Stephen Douglas.

Chris Jeub, a resident of Monument and the superintendent of the tournament, believes forensics is the best form of education. "I see speech and debate as anything but 'extra' curricular," Jeub says. "All students should be masters at thinking and speaking."

The tournament will hold 599 students, many competing in more than one event. Students were invited based on their success in at least two earlier competitions. The requirement needed to receive a speech invitation included placing in the top 40 percent; a winning record was required for an invitation in debate.

The entire campus of Focus on the Family will be used during the week, even during their working hours. Over 1,000 volunteers are signed up to judge rounds, but Jeub says more are needed. "Not much is more entertaining than judging these fine young people, and we could really use the help."

The event is open to the community, and anyone that is at least 18 years old and a high-school graduate is welcome to judge. No previous judging experience is required and training is provided at the tournament. Potential judges and community members are encouraged to visit the tournament website, <http://nitoc2012.homeschooldebate.net>, for more information.

ABOUT STOA USA

Stoa USA is a national competitive Christian home-school speech and debate league with nearly two thousand students across the country. To find out more about Stoa speech and debate, visit www.StoaUSA.org.

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