

Congratulations to our school spelling bee winners! They are as follows:

- **Intermediate South**-Mary Antonowicz, from Mrs. Donnelly Rose's grade 6 cycle
- **Intermediate North**-Darren Bonifacio, from Ms. Lee's grade 8 cycle
- **Intermediate East**-Madchen Dingedine, from Mrs. Rutzler's grade 8 cycle

These three victorious spellers will move on to the next round in the Bee circuit, competing against other local school winners in the Regional Spelling Bee Competition, to be held at Monmouth University in March. Good luck!

From mid-February through March 28, 2019, Toms River Regional Schools will participate in the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Big Read, featuring *The Things They Carried*, a collection of interconnected Vietnam War short stories by Tim O'Brien. The book, which has sold more than two million copies and was a Pulitzer Prize finalist, has been described as "a ground-breaking meditation on war, memory, imagination, and the redemptive power of storytelling."

Grades 6-12 students across the district will be working with the novel in various capacities; at the intermediate level, our sixth and seventh grade students will read O'Brien's related short story, titled "Calling Home," and learn about the author and setting of the story and novel through various reading and writing activities. Our eighth grade students will have an opportunity to read multiple, carefully selected excerpts from *The Things They Carried* and participate in cross-curricular activities within their cycles.

Additionally, we are excited to share that Tim O'Brien will be speaking to our community about his time in Vietnam and experience in writing the book. This special event, which is open to the public, will take place on Thursday, March 28, 2019, at the Jay and Linda Grunin Center for the Arts at Ocean County College.

We invite all of our community members to participate in our district Big Read! Please mark Thursday, March 28, 2019, on your calendars and join us in welcoming Tim O'Brien to Toms River.