

Press Releases

Telling Tales: A Family Festival of Stories Four-month Reading Campaign Starts Here

The Telling Tales Festival kicks off a four-month reading campaign that begins with Jude Johnson's school visits, carries on through the summer thanks to our online recommended reading list, and leads up to the main event: the third annual Telling Tales festival, featuring Canada's best children's writers, illustrators, storytellers, and musicians at Westfield Heritage Village.

Media are invited to check in with Hamilton's musical ambassador Jude Johnson who is currently visiting 14 inner-city schools across Hamilton that are challenged by poverty, giving students advance festival presentations and inviting them to this year's Telling Tales Festival. Free to attend, the September festival gives many children and families an unheard of opportunity to see and hear their favourite literary performers.

The Telling Tales Festival makes reading come alive for children across the economic spectrum. Whether they travel by car, or catch a free ride on a sponsored school bus, children of all ages will find their favourite authors and discover new ones, sing along with talented musicians, explore authentic buildings in Westfield's beautiful pioneer village, and join in many other fun-filled activities, all free of charge and age-appropriate.

Feature talent includes: Tim Beiser; Rebecca Bender; Rob Blunsdon; Jo Ellen Bogart and Barbara Reid –for their 2011 TD Grade One Book Give-Away program–featured title *Gifts*; Sharon Jennings; the renowned Jean Little; Lesley Livingston; French author Mireille Messier; the popular Robin Muller; Mahtab Narsinham; local hero Ken Roberts; Caribbean-born Itah Sadu; festival veteran Ken Settrington; graphic novelist Kean Soo; and Robert Paul Weston. Over 20 performers in all – check www.tellingtales.org for presenter biographies plus, new for 2011, our recommended summer reading list.

Quick Festival Facts:

This year's FREE festival runs rain or shine, Sunday, September 18, 10:00 – 4:00

- Telling Tales launched in 2009 and instantly put the Hamilton Conservation Authority's Westfield Heritage Village on the national map, attracting 4000 guests and raising \$20,000 for Hamilton-based literacy programs.
- Tourism Hamilton honoured the inaugural festival, naming it best festival in the medium-budget category and giving honorable mention in the Rookie-of-the-Year category.
- In 2010, 5000 children and their families visited on festival day; \$45,000 was raised for Hamilton-based literary projects and surprise guest Robert Munsch thrilled the capacity crowd with renditions of his popular stories.
- Now a much-loved annual event, Telling Tales draws fans from Hamilton, the Greater Toronto Area, the Golden Horseshoe, and Guelph/Cambridge/Kitchener-Waterloo.

The festival wishes to thank TD Bank Group, the Ontario Trillium Foundation and a host of additional sponsors and in-kind donors.

Several finalists for the \$25,000 TD Canadian Children's Literature Award as well as Jo- Ellen Bogart and Barbara Reid, author and illustrator of *Gifts*, the title chosen for the 2011 TD Grade One Book Giveaway Program, will be appearing at Telling Tales this year.

About the Festival:

Now in its third year, Telling Tales: A Family Festival of Stories is jointly hosted by the Hamilton Conservation Authority, the Hamilton Public Library, and Rotary International. Key financial support is provided by TD Bank Group, the Ontario Trillium Foundation (2010), and a growing list of local Rotary clubs. For a full list of community partners, sponsors, and in-kind donors, please visit www.tellingtales.org.

Festival media partners include *The Hamilton Spectator*, Corus Entertainment (CHML, Y108 and Vinyl 95.3FM), and CHCH Television.

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Media Contact

June Dickenson

Phone: (647) 477-6000 or (905) 689-0388

E-mail: junedickenson@cogeco.ca

Festival Contact:

Susan Jasper

Phone: (905) 973-6478

E-mail: sjasper@sympatico.ca

Please visit: www.tellingtales.org