



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Giving Back to Literacy** ***\$11,000 presented to local literacy organizations***

**HAMILTON, ONTARIO – December 9, 2014:** The Telling Tales Festival is proud to be able to give back to local literacy organizations. Since 2009 Telling Tales has raised over \$85,000 for literacy projects in our community! The Festival is a free, one-day event, but more importantly a yearlong commitment to promoting literacy and inspiring a love of reading.

The Telling Tales Festival relies on the generosity of sponsors and donors. After all the operating costs are covered, a portion of the remaining funds are donated back into community literacy initiatives.

Each year a committee meets to review funding proposals. Committee members are made up of representatives from Rotary Clubs at the silver and gold sponsorship level and include: Rotary Club of Burlington Central, Rotary Club of Burlington Lakeshore, Rotary Club of Dundas, Rotary Club of Dundas Valley Sunrise, Rotary Club of Hamilton, and Rotary Club of Waterdown.

The recipients of this year's literacy funding are:

#### **Rotary Summer Literacy Program: \$5,000**

"The Telling Tales Festival has been a valued partner for the past five years and this funding will help to provide a summer literacy camp experience for over 2,500 primary and junior students in high needs communities around the city," says Robert Blunsdon, Program Director of the Rotary Summer Literacy Program.

This program provides at-risk youth in Hamilton the opportunity to develop literacy skills in a fun summer camp setting, all at no cost to them. "The program is designed to engage, enrich, educate and excite – creating a truly special summer learning experience," adds Blunsdon.

#### **Early Literacy Hamilton's "Read to your Baby" program: \$4,000**

These funds will help to purchase books that doctors and health practitioners give to new parents at their child's 18-month enhanced well-baby visit, along with a "prescription" to read with their child daily and an invitation to get their child a library card.

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“We know that a passion for learning begins at birth and is driven by the interest and attention of parents, but we also know that parents need to be encouraged to take an active role in literacy development,” explains Kim Burns, Chair of Early Literacy Hamilton. “Funding from Telling Tales has not only benefited children; it has increased parental awareness of their role in supporting literacy development.”

#### **Hamilton Literacy Council: \$2,000**

The Hamilton Literacy Council assists adults with low literacy skills. They offer literacy services for parents to help them support their children in school. With the increased use of technology in learning and communicating, these funds will be used to purchase iPads with basic learning apps.

“The introduction of this technology has brought with it new literacy challenges for parents, who are teachers in their own right,” says Helen McLeod, Executive Director of the Hamilton Literacy Council. “We appreciate the support of Telling Tales and these funds will help us to provide parents with the necessary skills to help their children in school.”

#### **About Telling Tales**

Telling Tales celebrates stories. We do this by bringing together Canadian authors, illustrators, musicians and storytellers with their audience – our children. Telling Tales is a free, one-day, outdoor festival, and a year ‘round commitment to promoting literacy and inspiring a love of reading.

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#### **For more information, or to request high resolution photos, please contact:**

Joanna Williams, Public Relations Coordinator  
[media@tellingtales.org](mailto:media@tellingtales.org)

Judy Boswell, Marketing Co-Chair  
 905-920-1600 | [judy@musemarketinggroup.ca](mailto:judy@musemarketinggroup.ca)



From left to right: Lita Barrie, Hamilton Public Library; Maureen Johnson, Hamilton Public Library; Marvin Caplan, Rotary Club of Hamilton; Melanie Southern, Hamilton Public Library; Susan Jasper, Telling Tales Founder; Laura Lukasiak, Hamilton Public Library; Alex Moroz, Rotary Club of Hamilton; Peter Quaglia, Rotary Club of Hamilton; Anne Stewart, Hamilton Literacy Council; Helen McLeod, Hamilton Literacy Council; Jacqui Murray, Rotary Club of Burlington Lakeshore; Paul Takala, Hamilton Public Library; Kim Burns, Early Literacy Hamilton; and Karen Anderson, Hamilton Public Library.

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From left to right: Marvin Caplan, Rotary Club of Hamilton; Paul Takala, Hamilton Public Library; Alex Moroz, Rotary Club of Hamilton; Laura Lukasuk, Hamilton Public Library; and Peter Quaglia, Rotary Club of Hamilton accepts a cheque on behalf of the Rotary Summer Literacy Program.



From left to right: Marvin Caplan from the Rotary Club of Hamilton and Laura Lukasuk from the Hamilton Public Library present a cheque to Kim Burns from Early Literacy Hamilton for their Read to Your Baby Program.

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From left to right: Helen McLeod from the Hamilton Literacy Council accepts a cheque from Jacqui Murray from the Rotary Club of Burlington Lakeshore, along with Anne Stewart from the Hamilton Literacy Council.





## **Telling Tales Festival Backgrounder**

**OUR MISSION** is to build a national festival that promotes children's stories and a love of reading, while raising awareness and support for local literacy programs in our community.

**OUR VISION:** To be the best children's literary festival in Canada.

### **WHY?**

Stories connect us to our past, our future, and each other. Through stories we bond with our family, our friends, and our heroes. We learn, we dream and we grow. Telling Tales celebrates stories. We do this by bringing together Canadian authors, illustrators, musicians and storytellers with their audience – our children. Telling Tales is a free, one-day, outdoor festival, and a year 'round commitment to promoting literacy and inspiring a love of reading.

### **WHAT?**

The Telling Tales Festival took place on Sunday, September 14th, 2014 at Westfield Heritage Village in Rockton, Ontario. Over 7,000 guests "let their imagination run wild" when over 20 of Canada's leading children's authors, illustrators, musicians and storytellers brought their talents to the people! Everyone enjoyed live performances, book signings, readings and costumed characters in a beautiful, historic village setting. Other attractions included a Giant Book Swap and Shop, Bryan Prince Bookseller Onsite Shop, Children's Activity Centre, contests and prizes.

### **WHERE?**

Westfield Heritage Village, Rockton, ON, Canada, ideally located and easy driving distance (30 minutes) from Hamilton, Kitchener, Cambridge, Waterloo, Brantford, Burlington, Oakville and Milton. Free parking available only at the Rockton Fairgrounds with complimentary shuttle service to Westfield Heritage Village.

### **WHEN?**

The 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Festival took place on Sunday, September 14, 2014.

**The 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Festival will take place on Sunday, September 20, 2015.**

### **Free Transportation**

In their ongoing commitment to students from high priority neighborhoods, both the Hamilton Public and Catholic school boards provided free transportation to over 1,700 students and their families.



**Our Co-hosts**

Hamilton Conservation Authority, Westfield Heritage Village, Hamilton Public Library, and Rotary Club of Hamilton.

**Key Sponsors and Supporters**

TD Bank Group, Cogeco, Imagination Plus, 20 Local Rotary Clubs of Hamilton and Burlington, Brantford and Cambridge, Ontario Arts Council, Bermingham Foundation, Scholastic Canada, Harper Collins Canada, CHML Children’s Fund, Weir’s Lane Lavender, United Way of Burlington and Greater Hamilton

**Transportation Supporters**

ArcelorMittal Dofasco, First Student Canada, Hillfield Strathallan College, Hamilton Wentworth District School Board, Hamilton Wentworth Catholic District School Board

**Marketing and Media Campaign and Partners**

Every aspect of our marketing campaign including our website, Festival App, Facebook page, Twitter feed, Blog and YouTube channel are geared to drive traffic, interest and audience throughout the year. Our marketing campaign is generously supported by numerous local, regional and national media partners: AM900 CHML, Y108, 95.3FRESH FM, Hamilton Spectator, Cogeco, Momstown, CHCH TV, CBC Hamilton, Canadian Children’s Book Centre, and Quill & Quire.

**Major In-Kind Supporters**

Hamilton Best Start, Friesen’s Corporation, Hamilton Video & Sound, Muse Marketing Group, Rockton World’s Fair, Signaids and Impressive Printing

**Community Partners**

The Festival is supported by an ever-growing roster of community organizations including: Adult Basic Education Association, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Hamilton, Books for Everybody, Boys and Girls Club of Hamilton, Bryan Prince Bookseller, Canadian Children’s Book Centre, Early Literacy Hamilton, Hamilton Literacy Council, Ontario Early Years Centres, World Literacy Canada, YMCA of Hamilton, Burlington and Brantford

**Regional Appeal**

**30% of our visitors** travel to the Festival from outside Hamilton – most significantly from the Greater Toronto area, Kitchener, Cambridge, Guelph, Waterloo, Brantford, Milton, Oakville, Burlington and the Niagara region.

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### Volunteers

Telling Tales is the true story of a whole community working together to raise readers, with over **30** volunteers working year round and over **350 volunteers** working from dawn to dusk on the festival weekend.

### Unique Focus

Telling Tales is unique in its dual focus. While the Festival presents and promotes Canadian children's authors, illustrators, storytellers and musicians, we also raise much-needed funds for community-based literacy projects. Since 2009 **over \$85,000** has been raised for local literary programs including a new "Read to Your Baby" pilot program.

### Award Winning

- Acknowledged by Festival and Events Ontario as a Top 100 Festival since 2011
- Winner of the 2010 Tourism Hamilton Award of Excellence
- Rotary International Zone Award for a project that "builds community and bridges continents"
- Adult Basic Education Association awarded Telling Tales the top Agency award for their work as a literacy champion in 2013

