



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

## **Telling Tales Celebrates 15 Years of Sharing Stories and Building Community**

**HAMILTON, ON – March 13 , 2023:** When Telling Tales launched in 2009, it immediately resonated with the local community and quickly grew to be one of Canada's leading festivals. Making homegrown Canadian authors, illustrators, and storytellers the main attraction, and their audiences children of all ages, proved to be an award-winning combination. (FEO Top 100, Rotary's International's Zone award for "Bridging Continents and Building Community). Early on, an advance reading list was added to build momentum for the main event and encourage children and families to read their literary heroes before coming to the festival to meet them in person.

With literacy as its foundation, Telling Tales became known for putting the best children's book creators on many stages, in the magical venues of Westfield Heritage Village, Zoom, and now Royal Botanical Gardens, shining its spotlight on over 300 of the country's best literary artists, including headliners David Bouchard, Dennis Lee, Marie-Louise Gay, Lawrence Hill, Ruth Ohi, Kenneth Oppel, Robert Munsch, Barbara Reid, Itah Sadu, and Jeremy Tankard. Total live audiences numbering 65,000 and virtual audiences exceeding 200,000 have participated to date.

"As we complete the first chapter of this story, we are immensely proud of the world we have created together to celebrate stories," says Susan Jasper, Telling Tales founder and outgoing executive director. "We are so grateful to the hundreds and hundreds of believers who have helped us to grow this dream. Together we are sending a clear message to our youth and families that reading is fun, entertaining and important."

The theme of this year's Telling Tales is "Stories Help Us Grow" and we are thrilled to share the 2023 illustration, created by Chief Lady Bird, a First Nations (Potawatomi and Chippewa) artist from Rama First Nation. Her Anishinaabe name is Ogimaakwebnes, which means Chief Lady Bird. She uses her spirit name as an acknowledgement of her Anishinaabe culture and the importance of family and community. She has perfectly captured the essence of this year's theme in this beautiful illustration. Watch for expressions of this year's theme and illustration with the announcement of our presenters in May and festival schedule in August.



Our [website](#) additions in celebration of the 15th anniversary include the creation of a new List of Top Books by Age, the Presenters Hall of Fame, a new festival video, and a year-round contest to collect stories from fans about their best Telling Tales memories over the years.

Most significantly, Telling Tales announces that it is marking its 15th anniversary with the creation of an endowment fund as a way of ensuring that Telling Tales is able to serve our community for generations to come.

"We are excited to be working with Hamilton Community Foundation to establish an endowment fund as a very concrete way of marking this anniversary with our commitment to building the Telling Tales legacy," states Chair, Laura Lukasik. "As the fund grows in perpetuity, it will provide a revenue stream to help us to keep expanding our programming and keep inspiring young readers at Telling Tales events, in schools (virtually and in-person) and in our community. As we celebrate 15 fantastic years, we are more convinced than ever that this story deserves to be a never-ending story."

For more information, interview or photos please contact:  
Linda Cvetanovic  
Telling Tales  
[communications@tellingtales.org](mailto:communications@tellingtales.org)

Telling Tales is a Canadian, Registered Charity committed to delivering outstanding literary programming for children and youth that raises awareness of the importance of literacy in our communities. We appreciate the support of our government and community partners without whom this would not be possible.