

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Telling Tales celebrates 15 years with big announcements!

HAMILTON, ON – May 8, 2023: Telling Tales, Canada's most beloved children's literary event, will mark its 15th anniversary in 2023 with the announcement of a new Executive Director and an outstanding line-up of literary programming for the entire family!

As part of this milestone anniversary, the Telling Tales family wishes founder, Susan Jasper, congratulations on her retirement and thank her for her creativity and foresight in developing Telling Tales – a true literary gift to so many thousands of children, their families, and the amazing Canadian authors, illustrators, storytellers, and musicians who have graced Telling Tales' stages over the years. In recognition of Susan's dedication, contributions, and stewardship to Telling Tales, a legacy fund with the Hamilton Community Foundation will shortly be established in her name.

A new chapter for Telling Tales is set to begin with Heather Kanabe at the helm as the new Executive Director. "I have every confidence in the world that Telling Tales will soar with Heather's passion, creativity and leadership skills," enthuses Susan Jasper.

Heather is a passionate book and nature-loving arts manager with over 20 years of experience working across the cultural sector, including as the Executive Director of the HFTco, producing the annual 12-day Hamilton Fringe; Treasurer for Hamilton Artists Inc. and the Canadian Association of Fringe Festivals; and Festival Director of The Word On The Street Toronto, Canada's largest book and magazine festival. Heather graduated from the University of Toronto with an Honours BA, Specialist Designation in Arts Management and an MBA from the HULT International Business School in Dubai. The Telling Tales Board is thrilled to have Heather join the team.

This milestone anniversary also provides an opportunity for the team to reflect on the festival's many successes and incredible community impact over the years as well as to look to the future. "2023 brings us some exciting opportunities to enhance our programming and look toward what we want our legacy to be," states Board Chair Laura Lukasik. "Our line-up this year is outstanding and we're very proud that the diversity of our presenters reflects the communities we serve."

The slate of programming for 2023 kicks off with Telling Tales joining Imagine In the Park on June 2 and 3, to welcome Anoosha Syed, Charlene Chua, and Jennifer Maruno for an afternoon of literary delight in Gage Park.

Next up is the always-popular Celebrating Graphic Novels interactive virtual event scheduled for Wednesday, June 14, featuring Duane Murray, Kathleen Gros, Paul Gilligan and Shawn Dale, with emcee Kevin Sylvester.

Fans of Telling Tales will be excited to participate in a new "Storytime at Whitehern," scheduled on the afternoons of July 5 and August 2 at Whitehern Historic House's garden in downtown Hamilton. This family-friendly event is for children ages six and under, featuring Charlene Chua, SJ Okemow, Yolanda T. Marshall, and Lana Button who will explore themes of community and friendship.

The grand finale for 2023 is of course the return of the Telling Tales Festival to the Royal Botanical Gardens with two fun-filled days of programming on September 16 and 17. Don't miss your favourite authors, illustrators, and storytellers presenting on five stages throughout the gardens. Headliners for the 15th anniversary festival include David A. Robertson, Esi Edugyen, Kenneth Oppel, Kevin Sylvester, and Marie-Louise Gay who are among a total of over 30 presenters showcasing the best in Canadian children's literature and arts! The full festival schedule will be released in August.

"The team at Telling Tales is continually looking for new ways to share stories and engage children and youth in the magic of reading and storytelling," notes incoming Executive Director Heather Kanabe. "Having the ability to extend our programming to new and accessible locations across the City of Hamilton and surrounding areas will allow us to welcome new audiences, and is an important step forward within our 2023 plans."

For detailed information about Telling Tales' 15th anniversary programming, events, and opportunities to donate, visit tellingtales.org. While you're there, be sure to check out the [2023 Reading List](#) to get a head start on your festival reading!

For more information, interview, or photos, please contact:
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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.