



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Supporting Literacy & A Love of Reading

Telling Tales presents \$12,000 to local literacy organizations

HAMILTON, ONTARIO – November 24, 2015: The Telling Tales Festival is a one-day event, combined with a yearlong commitment to promoting literacy and inspiring a love of reading. One way we do this is by donating back to local literacy organizations. “It’s incredibly satisfying to be able to give \$12,000 back to literacy projects within our community,” says Susan Jasper, Telling Tales Festival Chair & Founder. “These organizations are important literacy resources in the Hamilton community and each have played an active role in building and supporting our festival.”

Since 2009 Telling Tales has raised just over \$99,000 for literacy projects in our community! 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 of Rotarians review funding proposals. The Committee is comprised of representatives from Rotary Clubs that support at the Silver and Gold sponsorship level. This year they included Rotary Club of Burlington Central, Rotary Club of Burlington Lakeshore, Rotary Club of Dundas, Rotary Club of Dundas Valley Sunrise, Rotary Club of Hamilton, Rotary Club of Hamilton A.M., and Rotary Club of Waterdown.

We’re pleased to announce that the recipients of this year’s literacy funding are:

Early Literacy Hamilton’s “Read to your Baby” program: \$5,200

With the Read to Your Baby initiative a book is given to new parents at their child’s 18-month enhanced well-baby visit, by a doctor or health practitioner, along with a “prescription” to read with their child daily and an invitation to get their child a library card. These funds will help provide infrastructure support so the program can move into the next phase and expand from 150 physician offices to over 400.

“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. “The Read to Your Baby project is working to prepare Hamilton’s youngest

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children to succeed in life by partnering with doctors to prescribe books and encourage families to read together.”

Rotary Summer Literacy Program: \$5,000

The Rotary Summer Literacy Program focuses on literacy development of at-risk youth in Hamilton. Based out of the Wever Hub, it acts as a bridge over the summer months to provide these children an opportunity to develop literacy skills. The funding will be used to continue to offer 200 additional sessions of camp for program participants.

“This year we hope to provide over 2,000 primary/junior students in high needs communities and around the city with a dynamic full day, five week summer program operated in the inner city,” says Robert Blunsdon, Program Director of the Rotary Summer Literacy Program. “Our program is designed to engage, enrich, educate and excite, creating a truly special summer learning experience for one and all.”

Hamilton Literacy Council: \$1,800

The Hamilton Literacy Council has been helping adults with low literacy to improve their skills for over 40 years. Funds will be used to offer special parent outreach workshops.

“We have a program delivery site in the Code Red area of Hamilton, where literacy rates are lowest, high school dropout rates are highest and poverty is no stranger,” explains Helen McLeod, Executive Director of the Hamilton Literacy Council. “Plans are well underway to offer “Home to School” parent literacy workshops and basic computer workshops designed to give parents the literacy and digital technology skills they need to become more involved in their child’s learning.”

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:

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From left to right: Mark Tharme, Muse Marketing Group; Judy Boswell, Muse Marketing Group; Paul Takala, Hamilton Public Library; Melanie Southern, Hamilton Public Library; Karen Anderson, Hamilton Public Library; Robert Blunsdon, Rotary Summer Literacy Program; Naomi Brun, Hamilton Public Library; Rosemary Knechtel, Rotary Club of Hamilton; Susan Jasper, Telling Tales Founder; Marvin Caplan, Rotary Club of Hamilton; Peter Thoem, Rotary Club of Burlington Central; Jacqui Murray, Rotary Club of Burlington Lakeshore; Laura Lukasik, Hamilton Public Library; Evette Sauriol, Read to Your Baby Chair; Lita Barrie, Hamilton Public Library; Kim Burns, Early Literacy Hamilton; Joan Bell, Rotary Club of Dundas; Janet Lucas, Rotary Club of Burlington Lakeshore; Donna Millard, Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board; Marie Robbins, Rotary Club of Hamilton; Anne Bermingham, Rotary Club of Hamilton; Kelly Russell, Telling Tales Festival Coordinator; Joanna Williams, Telling Tales Festival PR Manager; and Helen McLeod, Hamilton Literacy Council.





From left to right: Jacqui Murray, Rotary Club of Burlington Lakeshore; Evette Sauriol, Chair of the Read to Your Baby Program; Kim Burns, Chair of Early Literacy Hamilton; and Janet Lucas, Rotary Club of Burlington Lakeshore.



From left to right: Rosemary Knechtel, Rotary Club of Hamilton; Marvin Caplan, Rotary Club of Hamilton; Robert Blunsdon, Program Director of the Rotary Summer Literacy Program and his children Lucas and Allison; and Joan Bell, Rotary Club of Dundas.

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From left to right: Peter Thoem, Rotary Club of Burlington Central; Helen McLeod, Executive Director of the Hamilton Literacy Council; and Marie Robbins, Rotary Club of Hamilton.





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 **7th Annual Telling Tales Festival** took place on **Sunday, September 20th, 2015** at **Westfield Heritage Village** in Rockton, Ontario. Over 6,000 guests "let their imagination soar" when over 25 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 book shop, children's activity centre, contests and prizes.

WHERE?

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

WHEN?

The **7th Annual Festival** took place on Sunday, September 20, 2015.

The 8th Annual Festival will take place on Sunday, September 18, 2016.

**Free Transportation**

In our ongoing commitment to students from high priority neighborhoods, our transportation supporters from the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board, Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board, First Student Canada and ArcelorMittal Dofasco again provided free transportation to over 1,200 students and their families. Hillfield Strathallan College provided a free shuttle service from Rockton Fairgrounds to Westfield all day long.

Our Co-hosts

Our co-hosts played an integral part of our success and include: Hamilton Conservation Authority, Hamilton Public Library, Rotary Club of Hamilton and Westfield Heritage Village.

Key Sponsors and Supporters

The Telling Tales Festival is grateful for the funding provided by many valued community partners including: TD Bank Group, Muse Marketing, Cogeco, Ontario Arts Council, 20 local Rotary Clubs of Hamilton, Burlington, Dundas and Waterdown, Leggat Auto Group, CHML Children's Fund, Bermingham Foundation, Penguin Random House Canada, Scholastic Canada, and the United Way of Burlington and Greater Hamilton.

Marketing and Media Campaign 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 audiences throughout the year. Our marketing campaign is generously supported by numerous local, regional and national media partners: AM900 CHML, Fresh Radio 95.3, Y108, Cable 14, CBC Hamilton, *Hamilton Magazine*, *Hamilton Spectator*, *Quill & Quire*, TVCogeco and TVOKids.

Major In-Kind Supporters

In addition to generous sponsorships, gifts and donations that total over \$100,000, the Festival benefits from over \$400,000 worth of in-kind gifts of media and services. In addition to our Media Partners, Major In-kind Supporters include: Friesen's Corporation, Hamilton Best Start, Hamilton Video & Sound, Impressive Printing, Rockton World's Fair and Signaids.





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 and Burlington, Books for Everybody, Boys and Girls Clubs of Hamilton, Bryan Prince Bookseller, Canadian Children's Book Centre, Columbia International College, Conestoga College, Early Literacy Hamilton, Hamilton Literacy Council, Ontario Early Years Centres, World Literacy Canada, and the YMCA of Hamilton, Burlington and Brantford. This year we were proud to have Hamilton Best Start celebrate their 10th Birthday Party with us.

Regional Appeal

Approximately **25% of our visitors travelled 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.

Volunteers

Telling Tales is the true story of a whole community working together to raise readers, with over **25 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 \$99,000 has been raised to support key programs offered by community partners. These include the "Read to Your Baby" program, Rotary Summer Literacy Program and the Hamilton Literacy Council.

Award Winning

- Acknowledged by Festivals and Events Ontario as a Top 100 Festival since 2012
- 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 our work as a literacy champion in 2013