



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Giving the gift of literacy to children in our community *Telling Tales presents \$10,000 to local literacy organizations*

HAMILTON, ONTARIO – November 30, 2016: For the past eight years, Telling Tales has been proud to give back to literacy projects in the Hamilton community. These contributions directly support local youth, and assist in achieving the Festival’s goals of celebrating stories throughout the year and helping to inspire a love of reading.

“It is immensely satisfying to once again be able to extend support to vital literacy programs in our community,” says Susan Jasper, Telling Tales Festival Chair & Founder. “The **Read to Your Baby** initiative empowers doctors to deliver an encouraging literacy message and a free board book to thousands of young parents, while the **Rotary Summer Literacy Program** enables hundreds of children to develop their literacy skills in a truly fun environment over the summer. And the relationship is reciprocal; these partners support and build Telling Tales throughout the year. Collectively we are doing much to raise readers!”

Since 2009, Telling Tales has raised just over \$109,000 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 valuable 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 sponsorship level. This year they included: Rotary Club of Burlington Central, Rotary Club of Dundas Valley Sunrise, 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: \$5,000

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.

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“Early Literacy Hamilton is dedicated to Hamilton’s children having access to a community rich in resources early on in life so they emerge as lifelong learners of literacy and contributors to Hamilton’s future,” says Laura Wilson, Chair of Early Literacy Hamilton. “Read to Your Baby is a program that provides literacy investments in children’s lives to last a lifetime.”

Read to your Baby Program Facts

- This program offers board books in 161 practices or clinics
- In 2016, 1,900 books were delivered to family physicians, who in turn delivered them to young families
- Over the course of the Read to Your Baby initiative in Hamilton, over 6,000 books have been delivered to families

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 Community Hub, it acts as a bridge over the summer months to provide these children an opportunity to develop literacy skills.

“The Rotary Summer Literacy program is excited to partner with Telling Tales for another summer. Thanks to the generosity of Telling Tales, over 1,000 children have enjoyed a free session of the Rotary Summer Literacy Program since the introduction of the Festival,” says Robert Blunsdon, Program Director of the Rotary Summer Literacy Program.

“The spirit of Telling Tales is alive everyday at Rotary Summer Literacy. Every week students participate in a special writing clinic. Our Telling Tales Fridays inspire hundreds of children to use their imaginations and become authors and illustrators. The Rotary Summer Literacy Program is grateful to Telling Tales for their generosity.”

About Telling Tales

Telling Tales is a yearlong reading campaign dedicated to promoting literacy and inspiring a love of reading. It kicks off in May, peaks at our free, one-day Festival in September, and continues celebrating stories throughout the year.

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

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From left to right: Joanna Williams, Telling Tales PR Manager; Tony Del Monaco, Hamilton Public Library; Suzanne Hampson, Hamilton Public Library; Donna Millard, Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board; Melanie Southern, Hamilton Public Library; Karen Anderson, Hamilton Public Library; Kim Burns, Affiliated Services for Children and Youth; Laura Lukasik, Hamilton Public Library; Evette Sauriol, Read to Your Baby Chair; Naomi Brun, Hamilton Public Library; Peter Thoem, Rotary Club of Burlington Central; Lita Barrie, Hamilton Public Library; Susan Jasper, Telling Tales Founder; Nancy Baker, Rotary Club of Hamilton; Mark Tharme, Muse Marketing Group; Judy Boswell, Muse Marketing Group; Robert Blunsdon, Rotary Summer Literacy Program; Kevin Anstee, Rotary Club of Hamilton; Paul Takala, Hamilton Public Library; and Paul Lakin, Rotary Club of Hamilton AM





From left to right: Naomi Brun, Hamilton Public Library; Kim Burns, Affiliated Services for Children and Youth; Evette Sauriol, Read to Your Baby Chair; Susan Jasper, Telling Tales Founder; and Peter Thoem, Rotary Club of Burlington Central



From left to right: Susan Jasper, Telling Tales Founder; Kevin Anstee, Rotary Club of Hamilton; Robert Blunsdon, Rotary Summer Literacy Program; Paul Takala, Hamilton Public Library; Nancy Baker, Rotary Club of Hamilton; and Paul Lakin, Rotary Club of Hamilton AM

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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 is a yearlong reading campaign dedicated to promoting literacy and inspiring a love of reading. It kicks off in May, peaks at our free, one-day Festival in September, and continues celebrating stories throughout the year.

WHAT?

The **8th Annual Telling Tales Festival** took place on **Sunday, September 18th, 2016** at **Westfield Heritage Village** in Rockton, Ontario. Over 6,000 guests "explored their world" 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 8th Annual Festival took place on Sunday, September 18, 2016.

The 9th Annual Festival will take place on Sunday, September 17, 2017.



Free Transportation

In our ongoing commitment to students from high priority neighborhoods, our transportation supporters from First Student Canada and ArcelorMittal Dofasco provided free transportation to over 1,200 students and their families. Driving guests parked for free at Rockton World’s Fairgrounds where Hillfield Strathallan College provided a free shuttle service to and from 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, Cogeco, City of Hamilton, Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board, Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board, Muse Marketing Group, CHML Children’s Fund, Leggat Auto Group, Ontario Arts Council, Turkstra Foundation, Bermingham Foundation Solutions, Penguin Random House Canada, Scholastic Canada, and a record number of local Rotary Clubs in Hamilton, Burlington, Dundas and Waterdown.

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, CogecoTV, *The Hamilton Spectator*, and *Quill & Quire*.

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. Major In-kind Supporters include: Friesen’s Corporation, Hamilton Best Start, Hamilton Video & Sound, Impressive Printing 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, Brantford Public Library, Bryan Prince Bookseller, Bunjee App, Canadian Children's Book Centre, Columbia International College, Conestoga College, Early Literacy Hamilton, Hamilton Best Start, Hamilton Literacy Council, Hamilton Neighbourhood Action Strategy, Ontario Early Years Centres, World Literacy Canada, and the YMCA of Hamilton, Burlington and Brantford.

Regional Appeal

Approximately **30% of our visitors travelled to the Festival from outside Hamilton** – most significantly from the Burlington, Oakville, Milton, London, Stratford, Kitchener, Cambridge, Guelph, Brantford, and greater Toronto area.

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 \$109,000 has been raised to support key programs offered by community partners. These include the "Read to Your Baby" program, and the Rotary Summer Literacy Program.

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