



A FOREST OF GARBAGE

BY ELIZABETH SEIDL AND TERRY MOTE

When thinking about our collective human legacy, it has never been more important to consider how we treat our environment. When we travel around the city, our view is frequently blemished by garbage gathering and drifting through our parks, trails and streets. Often we will catch sight of the ubiquitous plastic bag caught in the branches of a tree, a sad reminder that we are planting and cultivating litter instead of trees.

Decades ago, the planners of historic Gage Park included the planting of trees as a legacy for future generations; unfortunately, this thoughtful gift has been unappreciated, and even forgotten. We are not being good ancestors, or stewards of our public spaces. Our values have changed from that of previous generations – the commercial is celebrated and daily living has been corporatized. We use once and dispose, we choose convenience over responsibility, we eat and walk at the same time. The rise in the use of plastics has paralleled this shift in values and culture, and a plastic forest has sprung up within the natural forest. In many ways we are all responsible, and it's easy to assume we don't have choices – but we do, or that we can't make a difference – but we can.

The deLight festival was created during the 2015 Neighbourhood Leadership Institute and had a successful debut in February 2016 with the Chinese Lantern installation at the Pipeline Trail in Crown Point, followed

by the 1000-Bottle Waterfall at Delta Park the following year. Now, in 2018, under the banner of The Hamilton Dialogues, a not-for-profit organization, delight was powered by the energy and talent of a core group of volunteers: Olga Kwak, Werner Lichtenberger, Ingrid Mayrhofer, Fatima Mesquita, Bethany Osborne, Douglas Petican, Ute Schmid-Jones, Elizabeth Seidl, and Magdalena Wierzbicka.

DeLight, Hamilton's Light Fest and proud partner of Hamilton Winterfest, returned on Saturday, February 17, 2018, with a whimsical light installation at Gage Park to show that the park belongs to all of us – along with its forest of garbage. The collection of lit-up sky dancers made of recycled plastic bags playfully reminds us that we can make better choices for ourselves and our community, to honour our ancestors, respect the spaces that we share, and set a caring example for those who follow.

Terry Mote and Elizabeth Seidl are local residents and friends of the environment.

How to Encourage a Love of Reading

BY JOANNA WILLIAMS

We all know it's important to read, but it may be hard to find the time, to select the right book, or to pick the best reading spot. Reading together doesn't have to be complicated or take up a lot of time. Here are four simple ways to support literacy in your home.

1. Visit your local library together

Kids love picking out their own books. Letting them select topics that interest them will encourage them to open the pages to discover more. Make an afternoon of it. See what's happening at your local library. They offer great activities including story time, games, author presentations, and crafts for the kids. Make a date with the kids and attend an event, and then be sure to spend some time browsing the aisles for a few books to bring home.

2. Set aside 15 minutes a day

Commit to spending a few minutes each day to learn. Literacy is not just about reading a book – it includes a wide range of activities you can do together as a family: sing a song, follow along a recipe while preparing a meal, write an email or letter to a friend, draw a picture for grandma, or play a word game. The key is to set aside some time to do an activity together. Find more family literacy activities at ABC Life Literacy Canada's website: www.abclifeliteracy.ca.

3. Bring characters to life

Kids love hearing silly voices. The next time you choose a story off the bookshelf have fun coming up with different voices to distinguish the characters. Make the characters jump off the page with animated actions and their own special accents. Get the kids involved too – they can read a part and come up with their own silly character

voices. This encourages them to read, recognize story structure and that quotations are used when a character speaks. Plus, it's so laugh-out-loud fun!

4. Pick a different story

Do you find you are always reading the same story? Although repetition is good for children, it's also valuable to explore new destinations and meet new characters. You never know, you may even discover a new favourite book.

Find a different genre or see what non-fiction books are available. Try historical fiction, learn about a different place or an unusual animal. If your child likes a particular author or series, look for similar themed series. Not sure where to start? Ask a librarian, check out a book list, ask a friend for recommendations, or visit your local bookstore and ask them to recommend a local author.

The Canadian Children's Book Centre features great Canadian titles and themed book lists in the resource section on their website www.bookcentre.ca, and download the Telling Tales Reading List for more great Canadian books for children and teens at www.tellingtales.org/reading_list.

Whether you set aside time to visit the library, your local bookstore, or enjoy story time all snuggled up before bed, incorporating books and literacy activities into your daily routine allows children to experience the joy and magic of stories.

Stay up to date with the latest in children's literature, discover new book titles, information on award-winning Canadian authors and a kids Press Club by visiting TellingTales.org.

Happy Reading!

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