



SEPTEMBER 16, 2025

Presentation to Rotary Club of Hamilton AM

CELEBRATING TELLING TALES' 16TH SEASON

Thank you for being with us
for over 16 years!

Our shared mission & goals
make a great Rotary project!



MISSION

to deliver outstanding literary programming for children and youth that raises awareness of the necessity of literacy in our community.

VISION

to inspire a love of reading and improve literacy levels in children and youth.

OUR PROMISE IS

- to celebrate Canada's rich cultural heritage;
- foster understanding, compassion, inclusion, accessibility and environmental awareness;
- inspire a love of reading by connecting children and youth with Canadian authors, illustrators, storytellers, and performing artists; and
- to encourage curiosity, nurture critical thought, and develop informed perspectives amongst youth.



WHY IS TELLING TALES SO IMPORTANT TO ROTARY

Telling Tales address all seven Rotary causes!

- Supporting education
- Fighting disease (mental health)
- Saving mothers and children
- Growing local economies
- Protecting the environment
- Providing clean water
- Promoting peace



5 GOALS OF

New Strategic Plan: 2024-2027

- 1 Be known as a leader** in engaging children and youth, an advocate for literacy, and a champion of critical thinking
- 2 Have deeper connections** and reciprocal partnerships with our community: organizations, families, industry, and creatives
- 3 Increase the diversity** of our staff, attendees, volunteers/board, partners, and authors to better reflect the diversity of Hamilton
- 4 Create accessible, welcoming spaces** and presentation formats for our activities for all neurotypes and different types of ability
- 5 Be an organization with stable funding and resourcing**



GOAL 1:

Be known as a **leader** in **engaging** children and youth, an **advocate** for literacy, and a **champion** of developing critical thinking skills in youth.



GOAL 1: Be known as a leader in engaging children and youth, an advocate for literacy, and a champion of critical thinking

2024 Program Highlights



"I got to meet one of my childhood heroes and share many stories of why this person and their books made such an impact on me as a child."

Festival Attendee 2024

Featuring more than
120+

Canadian children's authors, illustrators, musicians, and performers

over
99

presentations (up from 86 in 2023)

67

in-person performances and workshops at Telling Tales Festival on September 21 & 22, 2024

15

virtual, live-streamed school and community presentations January-November 2024

17

in-person community presentations March-August 2023



Rotary



GOAL 1: Be known as a leader in engaging children and youth, an advocate for literacy, and a champion of critical thinking

2024 Program Highlights

Telling Tales Festival at Royal Botanical Gardens (RBG)

- **September 21 & 22, 2024** at RBG's Hendrie Park
- **128+** authors, illustrators, musicians, and performers
- **65** performances, workshops, and activities
- **850** new children's books sold
- **2,500+** children's books given away
- **124** community members volunteered
- **1,000+** autographs

Festival Attendee 2024

"Meeting the authors and illustrators of stories inspires the kids to be creative in their own writing and art. Doing hands-on activities, workshops, the story walk and seeing performers helps them to understand literacy is not only about sitting and reading a book."



12,000+ guests

over two days

8,000+ books

swapped (new or gently used)



GOAL 1: Be known as a leader in engaging children and youth, an advocate for literacy, and a champion of critical thinking

2024 Program Highlights

Telling Tales Festival Festival Visitor Feedback



Over
59%

new attendees representing all ages

94%

would recommend Telling Tales to someone else

83%

reported their experience was very good to excellent

87%

reported they are very likely to return to the Festival



“Making reading accessible and being such a fun event really creates a positive, emotional memory that’s tied to reading.”



GOAL 1: Be known as a leader in engaging children and youth, an advocate for literacy, and a champion of critical thinking

2024 Program Highlights

Telling Tales Festival Festival Visitor Feedback

SCHOOL PARTNERED VIRTUAL LIVE-STREAMED SERIES

- HWDSB and HWCDSB reached **3,970 students and teachers**
- **10** Presentations January - June 2024
- **8** Authors/Illustrators
- **209** Classrooms
- Reached **5,225** students and teachers

Authors from HWDSB and HWCDSB:

- Charlene Chua
- Andrea Curtis
- Linh Nguyen
- Ruth Ohi
- Dom Pelletier
- Anoosha Syed
- Keltie Thomas
- Vicki Vansickle



GOAL 2:

Create **accessible, welcoming spaces** and presentation formats for our activities for **all neurotypes** and different types of **ability**



GOAL 2: Create accessible, welcoming spaces and presentation formats for our activities for all neurotypes and different types of ability

2024 Program Highlights

Telling Tales live-streamed presentations broadcast nationally

CGN (CELEBRATING GRAPHIC NOVELS)

- 3 Presentations June 12, 2024
- 4 Authors/Artists
- 39+ Classrooms
- Reached 975 audience members

Host: Kevin Sylvester

Featured Artists:

- Christine D.U. Chung
- Anna Humphrey
- Salwa Majoka
- Arley Nopra

GOAL 2: Create accessible, welcoming spaces and presentation formats for our activities for all neurotypes and different types of ability

2024 Program Highlights

Telling Tales live-streamed presentations broadcast nationally

STORYSCAPES

- 2 Presentations February & November 2024
- 2 Authors/Illustrators
- 40+ Classrooms

Reached an estimated:

1,200 views!

Featuring:

Anoosha Syed and Nadia Alam

Join illustrator
ANOOSHA SYED



Rotary



HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED
**How a Picture Book
is Made?**

Join illustrator
NADIA ALAM for
StoryScapes



A FREE Virtual Workshop
9:15-10 AM | February 26

Grades
1-6

GOAL 2: Create accessible, welcoming spaces and presentation formats for our activities for all neurotypes and different types of ability

2024 Program Highlights

More in-person community presentations than ever before—introducing the *Inclusive Tales* Model

17 IN-PERSON EARLYON AND COMMUNITY PRESENTATIONS ACROSS HAMILTON IN FRENCH AND ENGLISH:

- BGC Hamilton-Halton-Ellis Ave-March Break Camp
- EarlyON-BGC Hamilton-Halton-Green Venture
- EarlyON-Niwasa
- EarlyON-Wesley-Dom Agastino
- EarlyON-St. David's
- EarlyON-YMCA-Neighbour2Neighbour
- Frost Bites festival/EarlyON-BGC Hamilton-Halton- Bernie Morrelli
- gritLIT/EarlyON
- HPL-Central Branch
- HPL-Dundas Branch/EarlyON
- HPL-Valley Park Branch
- HPL-Sherwood Branch/EarlyON
- HPL-Saltfleet Branch
- HPL-Kenilworth Branch
- Imagine in the Park/EarlyON



Featured Authors:

- Nadia Alam
- Lana Button
- Sylv Chiang
- Madison Farkus
- Melanie Florence
- Jess Hannigan
- Nadia Hohn
- Lynn Leitch
- Fareh Malik
- Jennifer Mook Sang
- Kate Jenks Landry
- Farah Qaiser
- Jessica Rose
- Sade Smith
- Vikki VanSickle
- Kerri-Lynn Winters
- Wai Mei Wong

626

children and their families attended



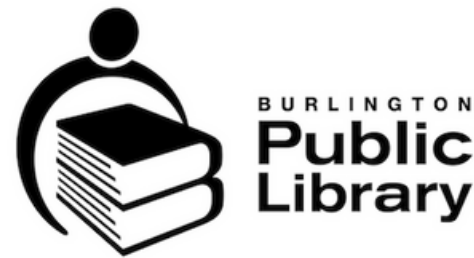
GOAL 3:

Have deeper connections and reciprocal partnerships with our **community**: organizations, families, industry, and creatives



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2024 Year-Round Partners



NEW IN 2024

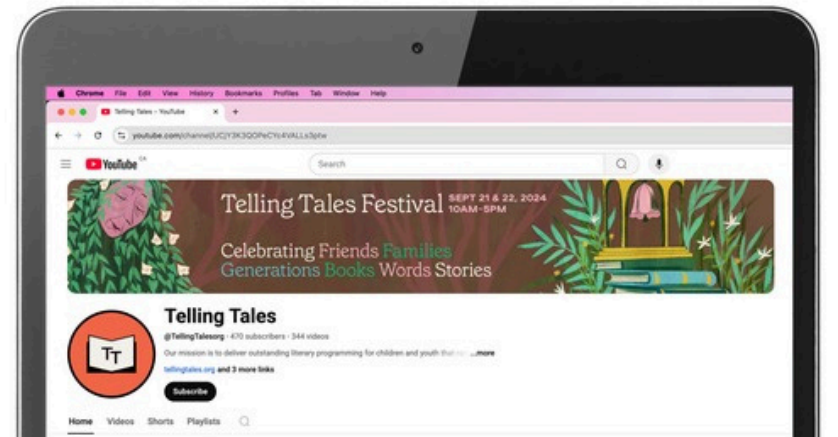
Telling Tales began providing mentorship in the community through a partnership with Hamilton Verse to support their capacity. Hamilton Verse nurtures talent and celebrates the diverse literary lineages of the young people in our city. They offer tailored programs like group novel writing for youth and short story workshops for middle schoolers.

GOAL 3: Have deeper connections and reciprocal partnerships with our community: organizations, families, industry, and creatives

Telling Tales Digital Highlights

YOUTUBE

Our channel has over **264K lifetime views** and features: Telling Tales and other recorded virtual program offerings.



E-NEWSLETTER

Features author interviews, writing prompts, and more and delivered to **8,000+ subscribers**—a **38% increase** from 2023.

TELLING TALES WEBSITE

- **32,000+ readers** visited the Telling Tales website in 2024.
- The Creativity Club is where Kids can share their with Telling Tales audiences on our website.



IN 2024:

97,700

reach on Instagram

6,400

reach on Facebook

19,000

reach on TikTok

5,000

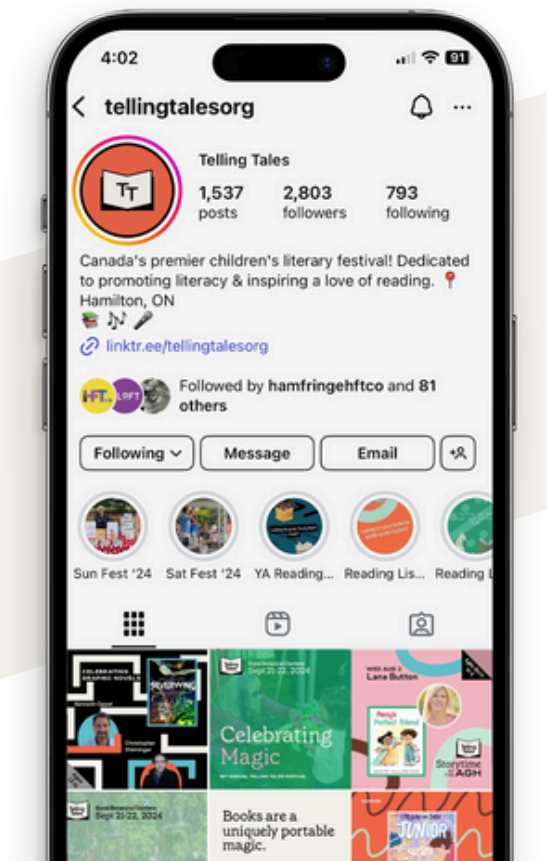
reach on LinkedIn

22,000

reach on YouTube

11,300

social media followers to date



GOAL 4:

Increase the diversity of our staff, attendees, volunteers/board, partners, and authors to better **reflect the diversity of Hamilton**



GOAL 4: Increase the diversity of our staff, attendees, volunteers/board, partners, and authors to better reflect the diversity of Hamilton

Our Audience: 2024 Demographics

Average family has

4 members

70%

Ages 25-49

80%

Live in Hamilton/Halton

23%

Black, Indigenous,
Persons of the Global Majority

75%

have a household income
of 50k+

80%

Female

27%

Ages 0-10

13%

Live in GTA

17%

Persons living with
a Disability

94%

have a College Degree or
Higher Education



"We are immigrants and I think it is a good way to introduce children to reading, culture, and the Canadian language. It was extraordinary to participate in the event."

GOAL 4: Increase the diversity of our staff, attendees, volunteers/board, partners, and authors to better reflect the diversity of Hamilton

Telling Tales Team

Volunteers and Committees

2024 VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

- **121** volunteers
- **2,100** volunteer hours
- **3** Educator Advisory Committee Members
- **9** Selection Advisory Committee Members
- **9-12** Board Members

"I believe the excitement around attending Telling Tales inspires my little one to continue his love of reading and finding new books to bring home and explore together."

2025 SELECTION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Angela Ventresca
George Zeng
Jennifer Mook-Sang
Jenny Sterzaj
Khadeeja Maklad
Macklin Loosley-Millman
Setareh Masoumbeiki
Alethea Hindra
Nicole Clark



GOAL 4: Increase the diversity of our staff, attendees, volunteers/board, partners, and authors to better reflect the diversity of Hamilton

Telling Tales Team

2025 Staff and Board Members

STAFF & CONTRACTORS

Heather Kanabe, *Executive Director*

Marlee Sansom, *Development Officer*

Michelle Fernandes, *Communications Coordinator*

Emily Sattler, *Programming Manager*

Wend Yasen, *Community Programming & Volunteer Coordinator*

Rachel Shadid, *Programming Assistant*

Laura Van Alphen, *Creative Consultant*

—

Danielle Hitchcock, Twin Design, *Graphic Design*

Emily Downs, *Occupational Therapist Consultant*

BOARD MEMBERS

Laura Lukasik, *Chair*

Derek Fleming, *Treasurer*

Suzon Cochrane, *Secretary*

Hortense Fraser

Jane Allison

June Dickenson

Tarah Middleton

Sumbul Syed



GOAL 5:

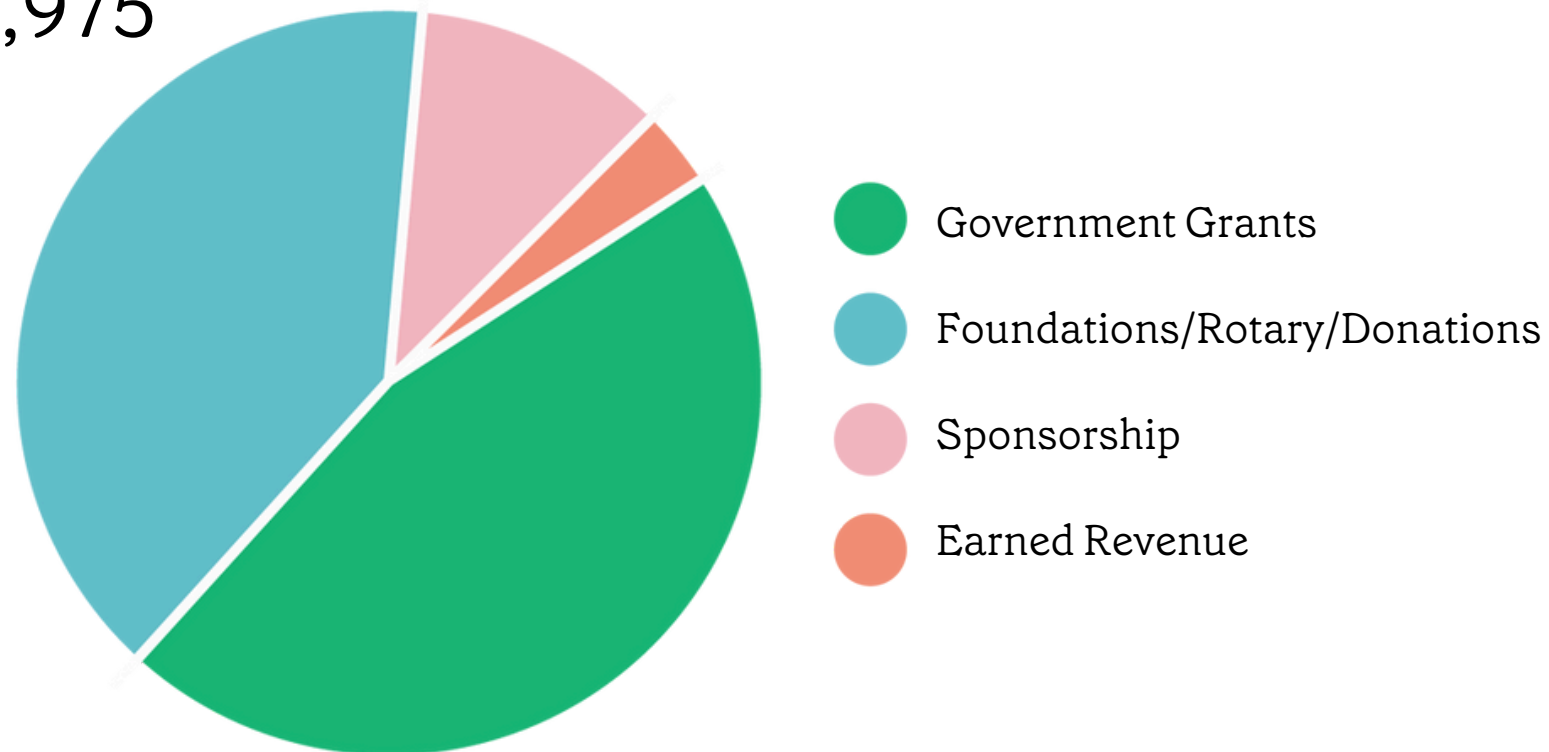
Be an organization with **stable funding**
and **resourcing**



Audited Financials 2024

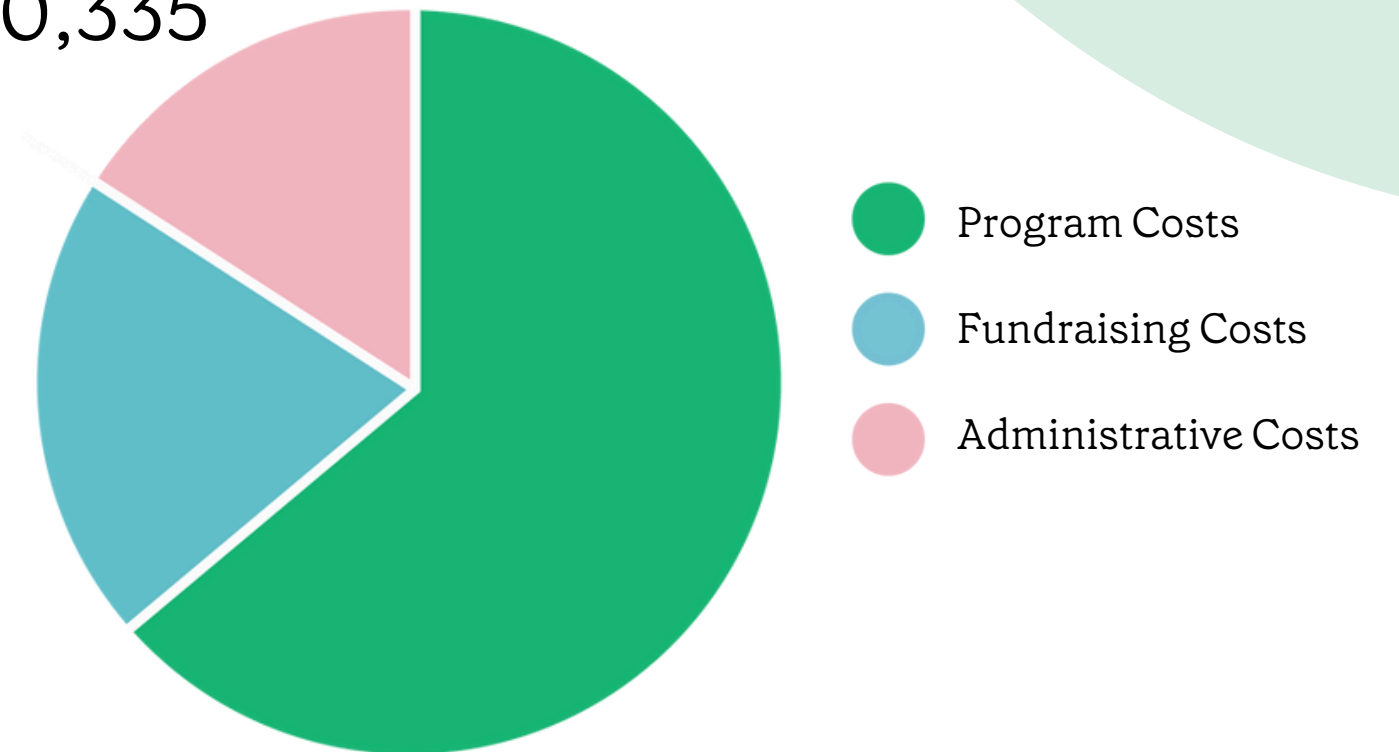
REVENUES

\$591,975



EXPENSES

\$590,335



In line with the 2024 budget, revenue and expenses grew to support an intensive period of program and organizational research and evaluation undertaken in partnership with consultants with expertise in Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, Strategic Planning, and Accessibility.



STRATEGIC PLAN:

Telling Tales began undergoing a new **strategic planning process** in 2024—with draft recommendations outlined for implementation between **2024-2027**.

PLANS FOR 2025 INCLUDE:

- expanding youth Festival programming, youth mentorship program funded by the City of Hamilton's Early Years System, and organizational partnership with Hamilton Verse (young adult writing and reading programming led by racialized artists);
- a diversified fundraising strategy including developing new relationships with foundations and returning to pre-pandemic earned revenue targets;
- new and expanded community partnerships with Arts for All: Kinderfest; Selection Advisory Committee members; After school programs, and more;
- an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) plan developed in partnership with Evenings & Weekends Consulting which includes revamping operations and artistic selection through the lenses of EDI, new HR policies (Personnel Policy and a new Safer Spaces: Anti-Discomfort, Discrimination, Harassment, Bullying Policy) that clarify the organization's workplace culture, and a survey our stakeholders (audience, volunteers, artists, funders) for input on our programming and policies; and
- building an inclusive and accessible model for storytelling presentations supported by an Occupational Therapist.



EDIB 360 REVIEW AND OPERATIONAL PLAN:

Telling Tales will promote **equity**, **diversity**, **inclusion**, and **belonging** (EDIB) for stakeholders and audiences, guided by *Evenings & Weekends Consulting's* EDIB plan completed in 2024.

PLANS FOR 2025 INCLUDE:

- implementing EDI training for staff and board members;
- adapting program design based on findings from the Inclusive Tales Research Project to meet the needs of children with disabilities;
- expanding ASL and francophone language activities at the festival;
- building on existing and developing new community partnerships that provide a diversity lens;
- publishing a revised EDI Statement on our website;
- posting a public call, and encouraging new membership in our EDI committee, and
- enhancing staff resources and expanding capacity whenever possible.



PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE: 2025 TELLING TALES SEASON

Starting in 2025, we will bring our reimagined approach to storytelling to all Telling Tales programming, fostering inclusive and meaningful connections between authors and the young people in our community.

PROPOSED TIMELINE:

80+ Children's authors and illustrators at 100+ events.

JAN - MAR 2025

(6) HWDSB Presentations

FEB 2025

StoryScapes with Jess Hannigan

MAR 2025

(2) HWCDSB Indigenous Author Presentations

APR - JUN 2025

(6) Pilot Story Makers in After School Program

JUN 2025

(2) Telling Tales at Imagine In The Park - Live ASL

JAN - SEP 2025

(8) EarlyON Storytimes

JUN 2025

(3) Celebrating Graphic Novels

JUL 2025

Youth Story Makers Event

JUL - AUG 2025

(2) Telling Tales at Hamilton Summer Camps

AUG 2025

(1) Telling Tales at Westfield Heritage Centre

OCT 4 & 5, 2025

(65+) 17th Annual Telling Tales Festival

OCT 2025

StoryScapes

NOV 2025

Telling Tales at WAHC's second Saturday drop-in

DEC 2025

StoryScapes

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE: 2025 TELLING TALES SEASON

Recent & Upcoming Events

HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED
How a Picture Book is Made?

Join illustrator
NADIA ALAM for
StoryScapes



Telling Tales StoryScapes

A FREE Virtual Workshop
9:15-10 AM | February 26

Grades 1-6

CELEBRATING GRAPHIC NOVELS



A FREE Virtual Event
All Day | June 14

HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED
How a Picture Book is Made?

Join illustrator
ANOOSHA SYED for
StoryScapes



Telling Tales StoryScapes

A FREE Virtual Workshop
9-10 AM | February 21

Grades 1-6

Recent Events:

- StoryScapes Virtual Series
- Digital school events

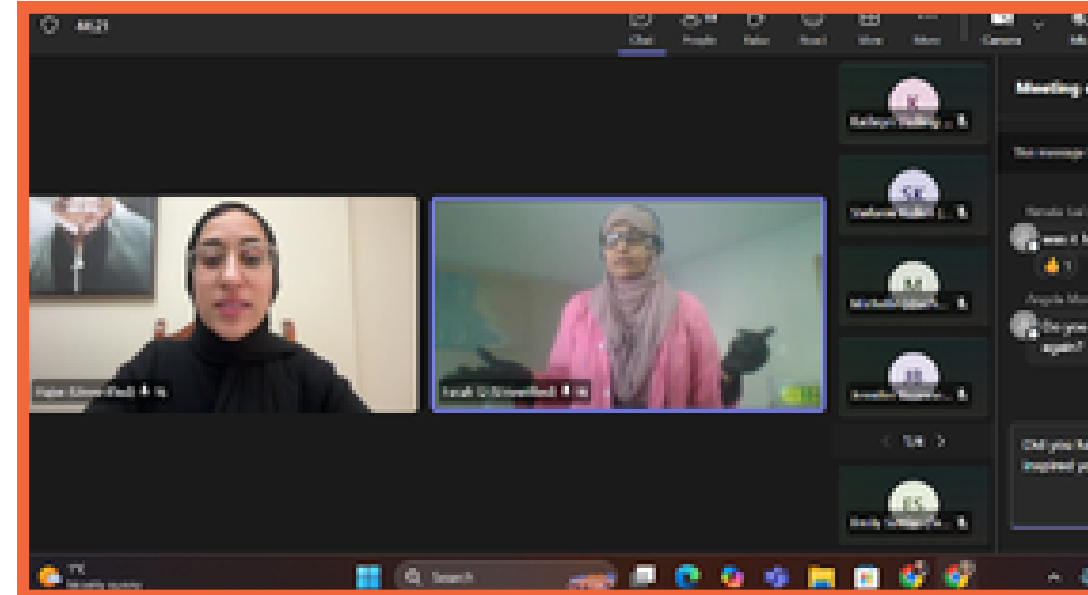
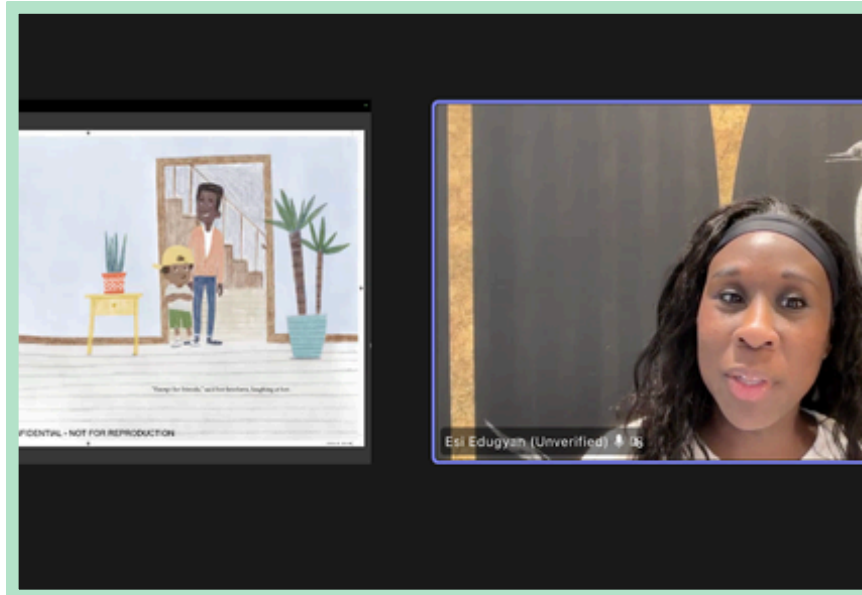
Upcoming Events:

- Story Makers in After School Program
- EarlyON x Telling Tales
- Imagine In The Park
- Celebrating Graphic Novels



PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE: 2025 TELLING TALES SEASON

HWDSB & HWCDSB



HWDSB

- Wali Shah, *Call Me Al*
- Onome Ako, *Mon nom est Kikelomo*
- Monique Gray Smith, *Circle of Love*
- Angela Misri, *Today I Am* (contributor)
- Farah Qaiser & Hajer Nakua, *Khadijah and the Elephant Toothpaste Experiment*
- Esi Edugyan, *Garden of Lost Socks*

HWDSB

- Martha Troian, *It's Powwow Time!*
- SJ Okemow, *Âmî Osâwâpikones (Dear Dandelion)*



New Program: Story Makers in After School

StoryMakers

TELLING TALES IS INVITING YOUR CHILD TO

A tailored literary event with multi-sensory activities featuring an author from our Telling Tales Reading List.

VIOLA DESMOND BEFORE & AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM
Wednesday, April 30
4-5pm

Brianna Banana: Helper of the Day
by Lana Button

WHAT TO EXPECT:
I will **listen** to a story.
I will **meet** an author or illustrator.
I will do an **activity** based on the story.
I can **take a break** in the nearby in a Quiet Area if I need it.

Visit [TellingTales.org](https://tellingtales.org)

Umbrella Family and Child Centres of Hamilton | HAMILTON COMMUNITY FOUNDATION | Hamilton

- **Six (6) presentations** starting in April partnered with the City of Hamilton
- For school-aged children (**ages 6-12**) who participate in After School Programs within Hamilton.
- Designed in collaboration with our **Accessibility Consultant** specifically to create an inclusive and accessible event for children of all abilities and neurotypes.
- The goal of StoryMakers is for children to participate in a literary event that inspires a love of storytelling in a safe and engaging environment and features sensory-based activities.

Facilitated by our team of six (6) Youth Mentees:

- Mary Akhtar
- Maya Augier
- Lauren Don
- Alethea Hindra
- Aaliya Seta
- Sukhmanveer Toor



New Program: Story Makers in After School

Featuring:

- Lana Button, Brianna Banana, *Helper of the Day*
- Tiffani Brown, *Frankie D, Vegan Vampire*
- Anna Humphrey, *Big City Buns*
- Sid Sharp, *Bog Myrtle*
- Alina Tysoe, *Purrnormal Activity*
- Kari-Lynn Winters, *Hungry for Engineering: Poems to Gnaw On*



Imagine in the Park



- All the Festival Fun, Three Months Early! Telling Tales returns to the great outdoors at Hamilton’s fabled Gage Park, with our friends from Imagine in the Park.
- Kicking off our EarlyON Series and featuring three (3) author presentations.

Where to Find Us

Friday: Look for us in the Gage Park bandshell.

Saturday: Look for us in the Storytelling Tent.

We’ve invited along a few of Canada’s best-loved picture book authors, who will entertain our youngest audience members with readings from their latest stories. Join us there on June 6th and 7th!

Featuring:

Onome Ako, *Mon nom est Kikelomo*



CGN: Celebrating Graphic Novels

Telling Tales
CELEBRATING GRAPHIC NOVELS
A FREE Virtual Event
LIVE 9AM Daily! June 10 to 12

HOSTED BY
Kevin Sylvester

JUNE XX, X:XX XM
Johnnie Christmas

JUNE XX
X:XX XM
Vivian Zhou

Whitney Gardner

JUNE XX
X:XX XM
Stephanie Cooke

AVAILABLE ON DEMAND
Enjoy unlimited replays until June XX.

TellingTales.Org

Ages 6-12

- Our series of **three (3) presentations** featuring new Canadian graphic novels for children and teens.
- Join host Kevin Sylvester from **June 10th to 12th** for interactive virtual author visits—broadcasting LIVE at 9:15 daily to schools across Canada and offered ON DEMAND for a week.
- This is your chance to follow along with Canada’s finest graphic novelists as they share their stories.

Moderated by:
Kevin Sylvester

Produced by:
Marty Chan

Featuring:
Johnnie Christmas, *Gamerville*
Stephanie Cooke & Whitney Gardner,
The Racc Pack: Prince and the Pawper
Vivian Zhou, *Atana and the Jade Mermaid*



EarlyON Storytime



Participating EarlyON Centres

- BGC Hamilton-Halton
- Centre de sante - IITP
- Heritage Green
- HWCCCC
- Niwasa
- Today's Family
- Wesley
- YMCA

Featuring

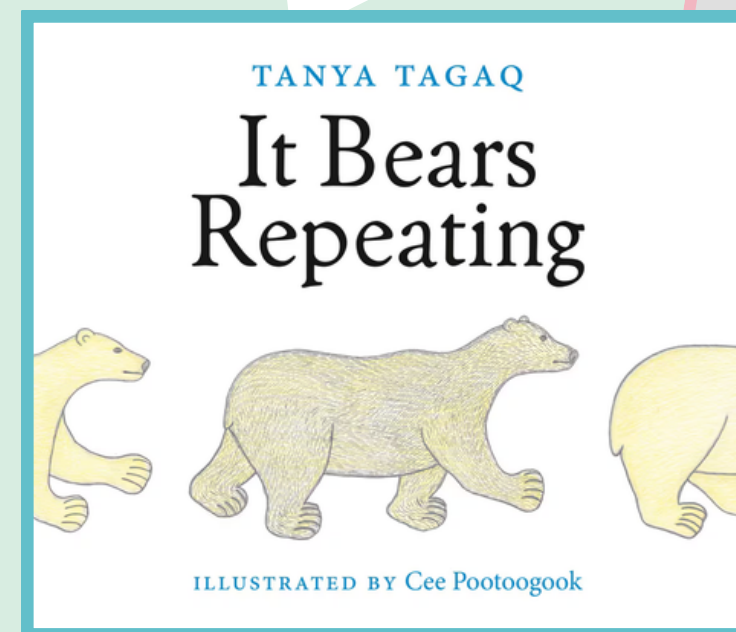
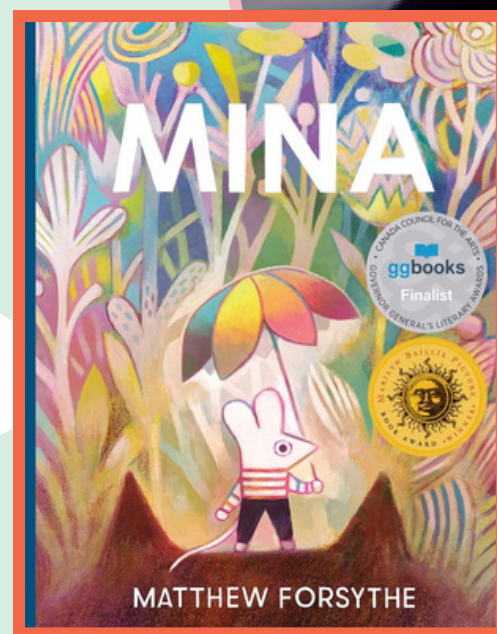
- SJ Okemow, *Âmî Osâwâpikones (Dear Dandelion)*
- Onome Ako, *Mon nom est Kikelomo*
- Janie Hao, *Sometimes I Eat with My Hands*
- Kid (Ebenezer) Halie, *Mad at Dad*
- Aimee Reid, *Baby Animals Trying: A Celebration of First Moments*
- Thao Lam, *Everybelly*
- Anitha Rao-Robinson, *Sari Sisters*
- Jess Hannigan, *The Bear Out There*

Festival Preview

Headliners:

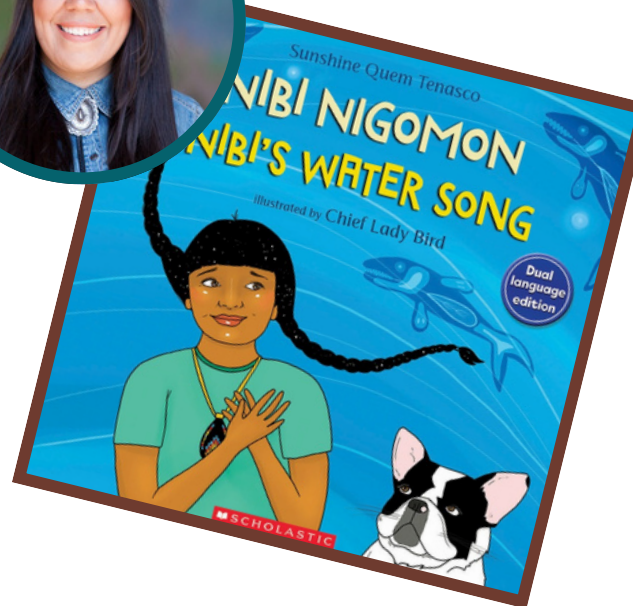
- Tanya Tagaq
- Matthew Forsythe

- **13** new releases! August through October 2025
- **9** requests from outside of Ontario
- **15** publishers
- **2** French Publications
- Full day of **ASL** presentations



PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE: 2025 TELLING TALES FESTIVAL • OCTOBER 4 & 5

50+ of authors invited...



Volunteering

FESTIVAL ROLES!

- Zone Supervisor
- Festival Wayfinder
- Book Swap Volunteer
- Workshop Assistant
- Autograph Table Volunteer
- Community Partner
- Volunteer

WORKSHOP ASSISTANT VOLUNTEER

Royal Botanical Gardens, Burlington
We need friendly and outgoing volunteers to help at various workshops throughout the festival grounds. In this role, you will support Telling Tales authors and illustrators as they lead our young guests through hands-on, illustration & writing workshops and activities...



BOOK SWAP VOLUNTEER

We need volunteers to help to operate the very popular book swap. Families arrive with previously loved books and children and adults use their loonies and toonies to buy other people's treasured children's books...



CREATIVITY ZONE VOLUNTEER


We need friendly and outgoing volunteers to help at our busy Creativity Zone. In this role, you will support Telling Tales community partners as they lead our young guests through arts & crafts and creative expression activities, as well as organizations and merchants in our Exhibitor's Grove...



GOAL 5: Be an organization with stable funding and resourcing

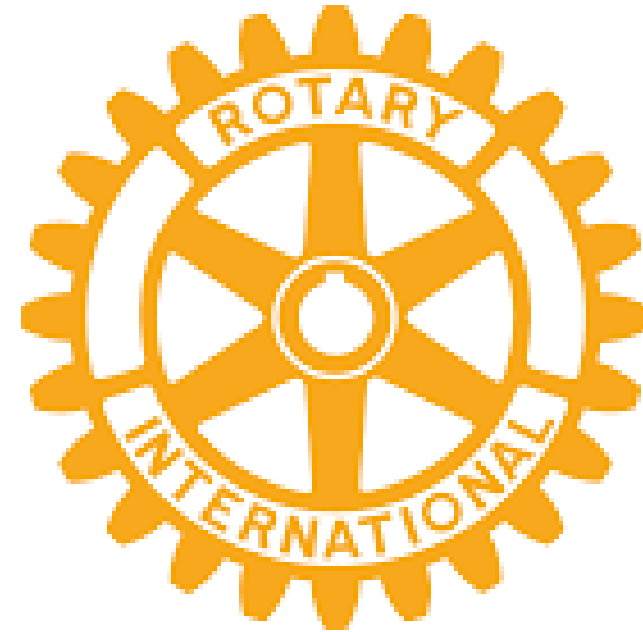
Thanks to Our Funders, Partners & Sponsors



- MAJOR PATRONS**
The Turkstra Family
- MAJOR DONORS**
The Michael Young Foundation
- HAMILTON COMMUNITY FOUNDATION FUNDS**
Anonymous Family Foundation
The Dougher Community Fund
The Edith H. Turner Foundation Fund
- READING LIST SPONSOR**
Library Bound 
- MAJOR IN-KIND**
BLR-LLP
Impressive Printing
Hamilton Video & Sound
- LITERACY CHAMPIONS – FIRST EDITION**
Arts for All
Centre Francophone Hamilton
Dan Lawrie International Sculpture Collection
Forest of Reading
Hamilton Verse
Rotary Club of Burlington Central
Rotary Club of Waterdown
Rotary Club of Burlington Lakeshore
Lawrie Insurance
Ontario Library Association
Penguin Random House

THANK YOU ROTARY: Rotary collectively supports over \$12,000

Rotary



LITERACY CHAMPIONS – MAJOR PARTNER & FIRST EDITION (\$2,000+)



LITERACY CHAMPIONS - MAJOR PARTNER (\$3,500)

Rotary Club of Hamilton AM

LITERACY CHAMPIONS - FIRST EDITION (\$2,000)

Rotary Club of Burlington Central

Rotary Club of Burlington Lakeshore

Rotary Club of Waterdown

LITERACY CHAMPIONS - HARDCOVER (\$1,000)

Rotary Club of Burlington

Rotary Club of Dundas

Rotaract Hamilton

LITERACY CHAMPIONS - PAPERBACK (\$500)

Rotary Club of Burlington North

Rotary Club of Flamborough

Rotary Club of Hamilton Stoney Creek

Rotary Club of Niagara Falls Sunrise

Thank you for helping us connect local kids to inspiring literacy programs. Your support helps to enrich lives and create lifelong readers.



Great tales never grow old.

Address: c/o BLR-LLP, P.O. Box 1521, 20 Main St N, Unit 4, Hamilton, ON, LOR 2H0
Telling Tales is a Canadian registered charitable not-for-profit, #72526 0897 RR0001