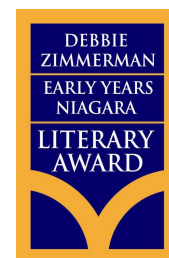


Debbie Zimmerman Early Years Niagara Literary Award Fact Sheet



Background:

The Debbie Zimmerman Early Years Niagara Literary Award Planning Committee (DZEYNLA) has established a unique award for children's literature aimed at the 0-6 age group.

This award is named for Debbie Zimmerman, at the end of her service as Regional Chair of the Niagara Region, to continue her legacy by:

- highlighting the importance of the youngest citizens in Niagara;
- encouraging early reading with children from infancy to age six;
- helping parents choose the right books for children from infancy to age six;
- celebrating children's authors.

Who:

Niagara Regional Council developed the award in 2004, after a review of existing awards for excellence in children's literature showed that none existed in Canada for infants to age six.

This award aims to draw attention not only to the value of reading with children in their early years when their brains are at peak development, but also to the need for quality books for this age group.

It also recognizes the invaluable role that libraries, Ontario Early Years Centres, and child care centres play in supporting Niagara's families and encouraging early literacy in our community.

All voting sites, including public libraries and Ontario Early Years Centres, are encouraged to incorporate the short listed titles into their regular children's programming and to invite their local elected officials to read a story at their centre or branch.

What:

Over the past two years over 2, 900 votes have been cast, both online and at designated voting stations hosted by Ontario Early Years Centres, public libraries, and other sites throughout Niagara. In partnership with the Touch a Truck fundraiser, 600 copies of the award-winning books have been provided to sites where families and children gather, including public libraries, Ontario Early Years Centres, licensed child care centres, and pediatrician's offices.

When:

Five outstanding books were shortlisted by the Selection Committee for the award in June 2007. Families are encouraged to read these books together before voting online or at designated voting sites from September 1- November 30, 2007.

The award winning title will be announced before Regional Council in January 2008.

For more information:

www.earlyyearsniagara.org

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