



2007 Debbie Zimmerman Early Years Niagara Literary Award Named – *Not a Box* Chosen as Favourite Children's Book

Media Release

(Niagara, February 8, 2008) On February 7, 2008 at the Niagara Regional Council meeting the winning book for the 2007 Debbie Zimmerman Early Years Niagara Literary Award was named. *Not a Box*, written and illustrated by Antoinette Portis, was chosen as the award winner after a process of on-line voting and voting by ballot at Ontario Early Years Centres, Regional Child Care Centres, and public libraries across the Niagara Region.

Over 1,700 ballots were cast with *Not a Box* receiving the majority of votes. Votes were cast by children, parents and grandparents. Debbie Zimmerman stated, "I am pleased to see our community actively engaged in early literacy across the Region. Early literacy provides children with the tools to develop skills for the future to ensure success in their lives."

A review of 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.

The award is named for Debbie Zimmerman to recognize her six years as Regional Chair (1998-2003). The award continues 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; and celebrating children's authors.

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For a photo from this event please contact Michelle Thacker at: 905-684-7200 ext. 224