



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Start the School Year with Stories: Telling Tales Festival Returns with Award-Winning Creators and Free Programming for All Ages**

Hamilton, ON, Sept 22, 2025: As families head into the back-to-school season, there's no better way to fuel young minds than with the Telling Tales Festival, Canada's largest free celebration of children's literature, returning October 4-5 to the Royal Botanical Gardens, Hendrie Park, Burlington.

This year's [Main Stage](#) headliner events are not to be missed: Saturday features a powerful throat singing performance by Giller Prize-nominated author [Tanya Tagaq](#) and Ottawa's Charlotte Qamaniq, followed by a reading of Tanya's new children's board book, *I Would Give You My Tail* (2025). On Sunday, acclaimed illustrator and Adventure Time lead character designer [Matthew Forsythe](#) joins from Los Angeles to share his stunning new picture book, *Aggie and the Ghost*. These are once-in-a-lifetime moments for readers of all ages.

This year, Telling Tales expands accessibility:

- All Saturday performances feature ASL interpretation partnered with Silent Voice, head to their Exhibitor Booth to learn how to sign and ASL storytelling, visit [Adam Pottle](#) on our Main Stage to engage in a live ASL performance.
- Quieter zones for low-stimulation reading and sensory-friendly play. Scholastic will be onsite with the [Munsch Sensory Zone](#)—an immersive, calm space celebrating Robert Munsch's newest release *The Perfect Paper Airplane*, complete with a paper plane creation station and audio from your favourite Munsch titles.
- Active spaces around the festival include bouncy castles, nature discovery walks, and sculpture tours of the [Dan Lawrie International Sculpture Collection](#).
- Environmental literacy is made accessible through selected book themes and inclusive, hands-on activities like [BurlingtonGreen](#)'s wildflower seed ball workshop—showing how everyone can take part in creating positive change.

Now in its 17th year, this free two-day festival invites over 12,000 children and adults to dive into a world of books—designed to ignite a lifelong love of reading and learning. Featuring 60+ acclaimed Canadian authors and illustrators, the Festival offers readings, creative workshops, and book signings tailored to every age group:

- [Read Together Tent](#) (Ages 0-6): 20 drop-in mini storytimes by Telling Tales Reading List authors.
- [Early Readers Tent](#) (Ages 6-8): Interactive readings, plus live storytelling through Caribbean folktales and the "Author Making Machine."
- [Preteen Tent](#) (9-12): Workshops on mystery, sci-fi, Indigenous stories, plus art and poetry activities.

- [Young Adult Tent](#) (13+): Panels on romance, fantasy, spoken word, and multiverse storytelling—including Hamilton Verse's young writer showcase.

Telling Tales is grateful to be able to provide free, accessible programming thanks to generous sponsors, like the [TD Bank Group](#). "At TD, we believe that literacy is the foundation for lifelong learning, inclusion, and opportunity," shares Nick Podetz, District Vice President, Hamilton North/Burlington. "Events like Telling Tales help young minds imagine, dream, and build a better future—and that's something we're deeply committed to supporting."

Families, children, and book lovers of all ages can explore the beautiful grounds of Royal Botanical Gardens, Hendrie Park, while experiencing the best in today's children's literature.

Held on October 4 and 5 from 9:45 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily—the event is free with registration.

Details on presenters, presentations, publications, and registration links can be found at [tellingtales.org](https://tellingtales.org).

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### **About Telling Tales**

Telling Tales is a Canadian Registered Charity committed to delivering outstanding literary programming for children and youth that raises awareness of the importance of literacy in our communities. Telling Tales season is co-hosted by Hamilton Public Library and Rotary Clubs of Burlington and Hamilton. This event is financially assisted by the Ontario Cultural Attractions Fund, a program of the Government of Ontario through the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Gaming, administered by the Ontario Cultural Attractions Fund Corporation. [Full list of supporters](#). Visit us online at [tellingtales.org](https://tellingtales.org). Connect with us on X, Instagram [@tellingtalesorg](#), and Facebook at [TellingTales.Org](#).

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