

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

May 22, 2001

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: E. Dosedall, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Margaret T. Stevenson Talented Young Writer Award Recipient: Jenna Livergant

ORIGINATOR: Pat March, Principal Talmud Torah

RESOURCE

STAFF: Cam Colville, Carol Anne Inglis, Anne Mulgrew

INFORMATION

Jenna Livergant from Talmud Torah School is the 2001 recipient of the Margaret T. Stevenson Talented Young Writer Award. Margaret Stevenson is best known for her encouragement of young writers and promotion of quality children's literature during the years she served as supervisor language arts for Edmonton Public Schools. The purpose of this award is to promote annual recognition of a talented young writer completing his or her eighth year of schooling in Edmonton Public Schools. The portfolios of all the applicants are impressive demonstrations of the board priority "to improve student achievement in the core subjects with an emphasis on language arts and mathematics".

Samples of writing submitted by Jenna demonstrated evidence of her personal growth as a writer, her positive attitude towards the literary arts, and satisfied the following selection criteria:

- show a range of writing for different purposes, situations and audiences
- show persistence with complex writing tasks
- display a strong personal style and sense of voice
- demonstrate excellence in content, organization, word choice, syntax, and control of writing conventions
- show evidence of reading a wide variety of literature
- show evidence of valuing the work of other authors

Excerpts from the writing of Jenna Livergant are provided in Appendix I.

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APPENDIX I - Excerpts From the Writing of Jenna Livergant

**EXCERPTS FROM THE WRITING OF JENNA LIVERGANT,  
TALMUD TORAH SCHOOL  
From Jenna's introduction to her portfolio**

My successes in writing have certainly been with my figurative language. I tend to be overly dramatic about life in general, and I think it shows in my descriptive writing. I enjoy being able to put things down in writing; it gives me a sense of clarity and reassuring structure to life, while at the same time, a secret that no one can unlock. Writing properly, according to all the rules is not exactly challenging, but stressful. When I write, it's as if I'm thinking. It may not always make sense to others, but in my mind it's crystal clear. Most of all, writing poetry is hard, because it seems like it needs the most attention when it comes to rules.

One day, I'd like to write a book, one of those award winning, heartfelt, witty stories that evoke every emotion possible. I doubt if I'd ever finish it though; I'd be too afraid of criticism, I suppose. I enjoy writing everything. I believe I learn something from each piece: sometimes how to improve my next piece, sometimes how to improve me. I think all of my writing takes a part of me, as I take a part of all my writing.

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**Excerpt From "Memories are Forever"  
(story was written March 12, 2000)**

As Jonas arrived he saw through the tinted windows in his car the familiar river and bridge he had passed by so many times in his youth. Nothing else remained. No annex, or central plaza, no dwellings, schools or play centers. There was only the hueless grass and a large stone in the middle of an open field.

The stone had a large plaque, which read:

Here was a community  
Of Sameness and tranquillity.  
All was safe and welcoming,  
None was strange or startling.  
The life they lived was memory free.  
A time of no colour, no freedom to be.  
This place was so utopian, the people had thought,  
The lies, deceit and untruthfulness, they had all bought.  
Destruction was the only option,  
When memories were set free,  
Here was a community,  
But it is no longer here to see.

It was clear to Jonas that the community had destroyed themselves, unwilling to accept the memories. Jonas picked a flower from near by and placed it on the stone.

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**“Don’t Let the Media Define Body Image”  
(Letter to the Editor Written in September 2000)**

What dictionary is the media using? Because their definition of the perfect body is way off! We have to stop the media from creating body image standards that define our perception of beauty and demean our self-worth.

Whenever I turn on the T.V. I see thin actresses and models. They’re advertng milk, cars, cosmetics, soap, clothing and more. The message they’re sending women all over the world is that to be successful you must be thin. And, by leading us to believe this, they are encouraging guys to believe that beautiful means thin, too.

The saddest part is that all too often we let ourselves believe that if only we could be a size 1, if only we could have smaller waists, bigger boobs or sexier thighs, we could be “perfect” and our lives would be happier. EENNN! Those are the shallow lies we have mind numbingly accepted; they are the superficial untruths that we allow to belittle our self-esteem.

From day one, we were introduced to the Barbie doll: the stereotype of the figure we all

want and most women are not. Only recently was she given occupations to appeal more to most everyday women. But who does this little-miss-priss-pants think she is? Work-out Barbie always looks stylish in her hot pink exercise outfit, but in real life, to attain that kind of body you would need to devote your life to working up a major sweat. Though Barbie seems harmless to a five year old, some people do actually aspire to look like her when they’re older.

Magazines, movies and television have such a great influence on us that rather than accept who we are and what we look like we try to conform to their images. Some people become so obsessed with losing weight and staying thin that they drive themselves into the deep dark and hellish pits of life threatening diseases like bulimia and anorexia. Everyday another girl is becoming a victim and slowly killing herself. By refusing to victimize ourselves we can lift the heavy burdens of “beauty” off our shoulders; this would be the most beneficial weight loss of all.

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**Excerpt from “Waves of Fear”**

The day continued, nevertheless, with a series of monotonous tests. It was low tide in the ocean of fear, the waves still crashed early, but it was only a matter of waiting for the massive wave. As time crawled on, night fell, quiet, dark and mysterious. Those sterile, white hospital walls mimicked the black night sky, growing dark and soundless. The mysterious shadows of the dark kept me awake all night long. I felt so alone in those puddles of trepidation, by then already a sea of torture.

The sun rose early, laughed at my poor, unfortunate soul and rushed those butchers off to the imprisoning white walls. The time, once a crawling toddler, grew to be an Olympic runner. It ran circles around me until I was dizzy with apprehension and my stomach was a jigsaw puzzle no one would ever solve. Soon it would be time...

Salty pools of tears overflowed, streaming down my pale cheeks. My palms were sweaty and achy.

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### **Excerpt from Jenna's Reflections on her Portfolio**

I believe that the most important part of writing is having an emotional basis for what you're writing. I think that my writing reflects my opinions and the characteristics that make me an individual. Most importantly, I think that my writing demonstrates an understanding for life lessons and an insightful out look towards the world. I feel that my writing allows me to express my feelings, my worries and fears, as well as my joys and victories.