

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

May 22, 2007

TO: Board of Trustees
FROM: E. Schmidt, Superintendent of Schools
SUBJECT: Margaret T. Stevenson Talented Young Writer Award Recipient: Danielle Dardis

ORIGINATOR: M. Caley, Principal McKernan

RESOURCE

STAFF: Carol Anne Inglis, Anne Mulgrew

INFORMATION

Danielle Dardis from McKernan School is the 2007 recipient of the Margaret T. Stevenson Talented Young Writer Award. This is the 14th year that the award has been presented. It recognizes Margaret Stevenson, who 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 grade 8 in Edmonton Public Schools. The portfolios of all the applicants are impressive demonstrations of the board priority "to improve achievement of all students in core subjects with an emphasis on literacy and numeracy." Danielle's writing 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 Danielle Dardis are provided in Appendix I.

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APPENDIX I - Excerpts From the Writing of Danielle Dardis

**EXCERPTS FROM THE WRITING OF DANIELLE DARDIS,
MCKERNAN SCHOOL**

From Danielle’s Introduction to her portfolio

I have a passion for writing, which is unfortunate, because it has given me a big bump on my ring finger of my right hand. But I suppose I can live with the bump, because I couldn’t live without writing. I know it’s corny, but it’s true. I like writing because it is a way to express myself, through the actions of characters with things that could never actually happen, but I want people to know about.

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I like making things up, more than any other kind of writing, and I suppose I’m this way because I lay in bed every night for about an hour before actually falling asleep. This is the ideal time to imagine. So I lie there, and think of names, and characters, and things that could be different than they are. I practically create new worlds. And I do this because, who wants to think about their upcoming essay on the war of 1812? Certainly not me. Where is the imagination in the war of 1812? It has already happened, there is a way it has to go, and events that have to occur, and no matter how hard anyone tries, we cannot change this war. But to create a war of your own is something completely different.

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The only time that I write something true, is when I am assigned to, this is also known as being forced to. But there is so much unexplored territory in the universe that I don’t see how anyone could write about something that everyone already knows about. My passion is creating. And my tool for creating, is writing.

**From Description for “The Pliers and the Nit”
(A short story written by Danielle in grade seven)**

This is a short story I wrote in grade seven. I was inspired for it when remembering the time I lost a tooth, and then lost the tooth. My mom had told me that if I left a Rice Krispie cereal under my pillow, the tooth fairy would accept it anyway. But I had second thoughts about what the tooth fairy would think of this, so I didn’t do it. My intentions for this piece were to carry out the thought I had of what the tooth fairy would think of this.

Excerpt from “The Pliers and the Nit”

She scurried across the bed and propped up the pillow. There it was. “Third tooth this week, Billy. That sounds a bit unnatural to me...” she pondered, and slowly pulled a pair of spectacles out from under her cloak.

Adjusting them on her nose, she peered closer at the tooth. “Aha,” she exclaimed, “a Rice Krispie! I should have known you’d been losing teeth far too quickly. Why don’t we all just play nasty tricks on the Tooth Fairy and rob her of all her quarters!”

If anyone had been watching this temper tantrum, they would have been astonished at how much rage the little Tooth Fairy could produce. “Oh, you may think you’re getting off easy, but beware Billy; this time I’ve brought my pliers! Ha ha ha!” With that, the fairy leapt up the sleeping boy’s arm until she was on his chin, pliers in hand.

She pried open his mouth and gingerly placed her tool on one of Billy’s two front teeth. On three, she would pull. One, Two...Billy inhaled deeply and, unknowingly, saved his tooth by sucking in the Tooth Fairy and wedging her between his pearly whites. A howl escaped her mouth, but there was no one small enough to hear her, unless you count...

**From Description for “The Other Winter Wonderland”
(A short story written by Danielle in grade seven)**

I wrote this piece in grade seven. My intentions in it were to create a story of what life may be like in a snow globe. The assignment was to write something about winter or Christmas.

Excerpt from “The Other Winter Wonderland”

Brushing off the excess snow that was clinging to his hat, Frosty was just about to shuffle back to his igloo when...the forces of nature snapped, and the crystal-coated ground began to twist and turn, like an earthquake. Suddenly, the movement stopped and a brilliant blizzard began. It smothered Frosty, concealing him from the rest of the world.

The wind stopped its wailing and Frosty’s eyes flipped open. He calmly patted his snow-packed body with his lanky stick arms to check that he was all intact. Everything was there, except for his rabbit-nibbled nose and of course, his top hat. An orange lump was buried in his igloo. Yes, that would be his carrot.

From Danielle’s Reflections on her portfolio

Ever since I can remember, my mom and I have read together every night, so long as it is not too late. It started with short stories and picture books, but now, we are right in the midst of reading the classic *Anne of Green Gables* series. I think that all of this reading has helped me to grow as a writer, because I could see how things are done by the professionals, like their vocabulary and dialogue, and I could also extract ideas from these stories and novels. Or if I see things that I absolutely disagreed with while reading, I could create the story again, but change things to the way I think they should be.

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I have been a passionate writer since I learned to print, and I am dedicated to my work. After going through all my old writing folders in a search to find the pieces I would submit for this award, I got a lot of reading in. While I was reading all of my old pieces, I found that I grew; I expanded my borders through the years, and wrote about what pleased me. I can’t help myself. I love to write.