

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

May 24, 2005

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: A. McBeath, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Margaret T. Stevenson Talented Young Writer Award Recipient: Cala Jorgensen

ORIGINATOR: R. Smilanich, Acting for Principal Westmount

RESOURCE

STAFF: Carol Anne Inglis, Anne Mulgrew

INFORMATION

Cala Jorgensen from Westmount School is the 2005 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 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."

Samples of writing submitted by Cala 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 Cala Jorgensen are provided in Appendix I.

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APPENDIX I - Excerpts From the Writing of Cala Jorgensen

**EXCERPTS FROM THE WRITING OF CALA JORGENSEN,
WESTMOUNT SCHOOL**

From Cala's Introduction to her portfolio

My social studies teacher once told me that first impressions are made within the first four seconds, so I hesitate writing this introduction. I want to say just the right thing so that the audience, be it an average everyday reader or a highly respected and important person on a committee, will be interested. I have come up with so many hooks in my mind that finally I've just felt like screaming, "This is me! This is my writing! Enjoy!" But then you might think I'm crazy.

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I often get comments on how much I revise and edit, for better or for worse. Sometimes it feels like I have nothing from my original writing left. And then, finally, there is the good copy, the finished piece. I try to have as much fun as I can with these, aesthetically speaking. I just think that life is too short to be confined to 10 point, Times New Roman with one-inch margins.

Well, I don't want to take up too much of your time - I just have one more thing to say: ***This is me! This is my writing! Enjoy!***

"Time"

(A poem, written Spring 2004)

It runs without stopping
 Dragging others along with it, willing or not
 It captures life, enjoyment and categories it into numbers
 But if it left us, we would be lost
 Chaos replacing any sense of comfort
 It is one of the only things everyone agrees on
 Every race, every gender, every country, every religion agrees
 Time is what holds us together, like glue
 Because without it, we would be lost

Excerpts from "Bohemian Love"

(A short story based on the Queen song, *Bohemian Rhapsody*, written October 2004)

He was short (about five feet) and stubby, but big. Big, not in an overweight way but he was big boned. Black, curly, untamed hair overflowed onto his face. Over top of his hair was a pointy hat, kind of like a witch's, with sparkling gold something-or-others on it. His thick black unibrow made his ghost white eyes pop out at you and his pupils were about the size of the eraser on the end of a pencil. He wore a long robe to match his hat and it trailed behind him.

The man stood on a tall wooden stand, which had just appeared out of nowhere. All of a sudden the darkness disappeared and light shed across the area exposing another large patch of floor and three rows of wooden bleacher-like seats filled with what seemed to be clones of the first man.

**Excerpts from “What They REALLY Think About Santa Claus”
(An opinion piece/interview, written December 2004)**

Mrs. Claus. “Yes, Nick’s a good guy. I guess a bit of a workaholic though. I still love him nonetheless. He’s very thoughtful, always out delivering presents, supervising elves, making appearances at malls, helping reindeer get friends, you know, whatever. We *do* get to spend our vacation together. Except that one year, when that poor kid came out saying he saw his mother kissing Santa Claus, that was a bad year. We took separate vacations. He went “golfing” in Florida while I went shopping in Paris. I have to say that’s not the only time that’s happened. Every once and a while I’d find a bit of lipstick on his suit, I just kept my mouth shut. Another thing, ever since we were newlyweds I’ve wanted children of our own. I ask him every now and then but he keeps making excuses. His favourite is “But it would devastate them to know it’s really their parents putting presents under the tree!” Actually the first time I mentioned it, he got elves.”

Mrs. C. could no longer continue due to a sudden outburst of tears.

Reflections on “What They REALLY Think About Santa Claus”

When I wrote this, I had just finished writing some longer, more complex pieces (one of them being *Bohemian Love*) and I wanted to do something that was short and sweet. As you may have guessed, it was just before Christmas time and the whole Santa Claus thing was on my mind. I started jotting down ideas and afterward just kind of put it into a format. That is what I like about this piece, I didn’t originally set out to do an opinion piece or an interview or anything like that. I just started brainstorming and eventually moulded it into what it is now. I also like it because it is humorous and it just lets your brain take a bit of a rest.

Concluding Reflections

I think that this specific collection of writing shows how much my writing has developed over time as well as proven that I can write in quite an extensive collection of different genres. I love to write what I feel as I’m feeling it so that is probably why certain mechanics such as spelling and grammar sometimes take a back seat. I’m at my best when I’m allowed to write what I please, without many restrictions, but I’m also able to follow guidelines and write about a specific topic while putting my own spin on it. I think I show potential because while I continue to grow and develop as a person, it will become evident in my writing. As my goals, values and opinions evolve I will become a stronger writer. In a way this portfolio also shows how I am as a reader, especially in writing stories. Not only does it exhibit my vocabulary and comprehension levels, but also my understanding of theme, plot, character, and setting.

Most of all, I hope that this portfolio shows who I am as a person because we can all be readers, we can all be writers, but only I can be me.