

Forest of Reading Festival Partners with CBC to Launch a Virtual Edition of the annual event

The annual Forest of Reading Festival will move to a one-day digital event, hosted and streamed by CBC Books

NEWS RELEASE

TORONTO, ON (May 25, 2020) – The Ontario Library Association (OLA) and the Forest of Reading are excited to announce the Forest of Reading Festival, Canada’s largest literary festival for young readers, will be presented as a one-day, free digital award ceremony event, through a new partnership with CBC Books.

Everyone across Canada will have the opportunity to celebrate Canadian children’s and young adult literature and authors on Tuesday, June 16.

“Having CBC Books as a partner in hosting this year’s festival is a perfect fit,” said Shelagh Paterson, Executive Director, Ontario Library Association. “For the first time, readers across the country will have a chance to participate in the Festival and to hear from their favourite Canadian authors and illustrators.”

CBC Books will host 40-minute ceremonies for the six English school-aged awards to announce and celebrate the winners on their digital platforms. For the French reading award programs, we’ll have details on those winner announcements soon.

“Over the years we’ve seen how much the Forest of Reading Awards mean to both kids and authors,” said Tara Mora, Executive Producer, CBC Books and Literary Partnerships. “When we heard this year’s festival would be cancelled, we knew we wanted to help create a virtual celebration. We’re so pleased to be working with the OLA to encourage readers and support creators at this especially difficult moment in time.”

The Forest of Reading consists of ten programs distinguished by age group and reading level, each with ten nominated titles. The English school-aged programs are Blue Spruce, Silver Birch Express, Silver Birch Fiction, Yellow Cedar, Red Maple, and White Pine. French literature is celebrated through the Peuplier, Mélèze, and Tamarac programs. The adult program, Evergreen, celebrates excellence in Canadian literature. Over 270,000 readers participate in the program through schools, public libraries, literacy centres, and at home.

Committees of library practitioners select the nominated titles and those who participate in the Forest vote for their favourite books in April and May. The winners of the program are typically announced in-person at the Forest of Reading Festival in Toronto in May. However, due to the challenges that faced the Ontario education sector this past year, all in-person Festival events were cancelled on March 6, 2020. Since then, the COVID-19 crisis ensued, and the OLA has been

exploring options for hosting virtual award winner announcements.

We are excited to work with CBC Books to announce the winners of the 2020 Forest of Reading Awards nationally, and to engage with readers, authors, illustrators, publishers, and program supporters in this new digital space.

Follow the conversation [#ForestofReading](#) and [#IReadCanadian](#).

- 30 -

About the Ontario Library Association: The [Ontario Library Association \(OLA\)](#) is a centre of excellence for the library and information sector, with 5,000 members who work in public, school, academic and special libraries. OLA enables members to advocate for the right of individuals to have free and equitable access to information. Our members research, develop and participate in educational programs designed to provide exemplary library services. Signature OLA events include the annual Super Conference and the Forest of Reading® program.

About CBC Books: Home to *Canada Reads*, *Writers & Company* with Eleanor Wachtel, *The Next Chapter* with Shelagh Rogers, *Canada Writes* and the CBC Literary Prizes, CBC Books connects Canadians with books, encouraging a shared love of reading and writing. For book news, writing challenges, reading lists, book recommendations and more, visit [CBCbooks.ca](#).

About Tinlids: [Tinlids Inc.](#) is the official wholesaler for the 2020 Forest of Reading program.

Media and program contacts:

[Meredith Tutching](#)

Director, Forest of Reading
Ontario Library Association
416.363.3388 x222

[Lauren Hummel](#)

Manager, Marketing and Communications
Ontario Library Association
416.363.3388 x227