

PANEL

The Role of Picture Books in Shaping and Sharing Culture

Saturday May 8, 2021 – 5 pm

Picture books are a vital tool for parents and society in general to pass on language and culture because they tell stories blending the literary with the visual. This panel of children's literature and diversity experts explores the important role of picture books beyond pretty pictures and funny stories.



Mariella Bertelli is a former librarian with many years' experience in programming and services to children and youth. She believes in the power of stories and words to change the world and continues to be active in Canada and abroad as a storyteller and puppeteer, dedicated to making the oral tradition and literature come alive. Mariella is also an advocate for children and young people's rights to stories, literacy and information.



Maria Martella is a bookseller and children's literature expert. Through her love of books she founded Tinlids Inc. a Canadian wholesaler of children and teen books for schools and libraries. Tinlids is also the official wholesaler for the Ontario Library Association Forest of Reading Program, a program that promotes Canadian literature across the province.



A few years ago **Gina Valle** felt that Canada was ready for a truly multilingual book, for Canadians, written by Canadians, and *The Best of All Worlds - Le meilleur monde imaginable* was born. UNESCO endorsed this book for its ability to value children's cultures and language. Dr. Valle is the editor of this unique book and the Founder of Diversity Matters.



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Rose Vespa is currently the Executive Director of the Canadian Children's Book Center. Previously, she held the position as Director of Library Services for the Mississauga Library System. Rose began her career as a children's librarian; however, her thirty-year professional career has encompassed work in a variety of public library settings throughout southern Ontario.