



The Canadian Children's Book Centre

Canadian Classic *Mortimer* Selected as 2020 TD Grade One Book Giveaway Title in Celebration of Program's 20th Anniversary

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Toronto (April 23, 2020) – In a time of immense change where many parts of our lives have been affected, like attending school, the Canadian Children's Book Centre (CCBC) believes reading and celebrating great Canadian stories is more important now than ever. We are thrilled to announce that *Mortimer*, written by Robert Munsch and illustrated by Michael Martchenko, has been selected as the 2020 TD Grade One Book Giveaway title. As we celebrate 20 years of the TD Grade One Book Giveaway, we are reminded of the way books can bring us together as a community. *Mortimer* joins 19 other phenomenal picture books that have been selected as TD Grade One Book Giveaway titles since 2000.

In fall of 2019, the CCBC began a search for a classic Canadian book that would appeal just as much to children today as it did when it was originally released. *Mortimer* was selected for 2020 for its classic status and its longstanding ability to instill a love of stories in children. This fun story of a boy who would rather sing than go to sleep will bring together families and have children singing along. "I watched Robert Munsch telling the story, *Mortimer*, to a class of little kids," says illustrator Michael Martchenko. "When it came time to sing, 'Mortimer, BE QUIET!', the kids were so excited they were practically levitating. I knew then that we had a winner and it's still a winner today." Published by Annick Press, *Mortimer* was originally released in 1983 and since then 1.5 million copies have been sold. "When I tell stories, *Mortimer* always works," says Robert Munsch.

Administered by the Canadian Children's Book Centre and through the generous sponsorship of TD Bank Group, each year the TD Grade One Book Giveaway gives the gift of a great Canadian children's picture book to every Grade 1 student in Canada. Working with ministries of education, school boards and library organizations, the CCBC distributes over 550,000 giveaway books each year. "With so many uncertainties in our current world, one of the few things that we can be sure of is the power of stories to heal, to make us laugh, and to foster a sense of connection with each other," says Rose Vespa, Executive Director of the Canadian Children's Book Centre. "It is exciting to be able to introduce this Canadian children's favourite to a whole new generation of young readers who will fall in love with this joyful story.

Since 2000, over 10 million books have been given to Grade 1 students nation-wide. Copies will be distributed in the fall of 2020. For many children, *Mortimer* will be the first book they have ever owned. "With his indomitable spirit and unconquerable enthusiasm; *Mortimer*

is not to be denied!" says Rick Wilks, President of Annick Press. "What a great model; it's no wonder the book has resonated for so long with Canadian kids who love to act it out, sing along and repeat the patterning text."

"*Mortimer* is a Canadian classic that has delighted families for decades," says Andrea Barrack, Global Head, Sustainability and Corporate Citizenship at TD Bank Group. "As part of the TD Grade One Book Giveaway we're proud to share this book with families across the country in English, French, and printbraille. In doing so, we are helping children grow their reading skills and their confidence, at a time when the world around them may feel overwhelming. This is a great example of what we hope to achieve through the TD Ready Commitment, our global corporate citizenship platform."

Translated into French by Christiane Duchesne, francophone and French immersion students will receive copies of *Le dodo de Mortimer*, published by Éditions Scholastic. "*Le dodo de Mortimer* has been, since its publication, a favourite among French readers across the country," says Chantale Lalonde, Vice President, French Division at Scholastic Canada. "Éditions Scholastic has the privilege, year after year, to promote this fantastic picture book."

For the second time, the CCBC has partnered with CNIB Foundation to undertake a project that will distribute printbraille editions of the book to a number of Grade 1 students who are potential braille readers. Printbraille copies of the book will also be available at select CNIB Foundation centres and hubs throughout Canada.

For parents, [a recording of Robert Munsch reading *Mortimer*](#) is available online for young ones to listen to now. For parents searching for more great titles to read, a list of all 20 TD Grade One Book Giveaway titles is available [here](#).

For more information, please contact:



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About the Canadian Children’s Book Centre

The Canadian Children’s Book Centre is a national, not-for-profit organization founded in 1976. We are dedicated to encouraging, promoting and supporting the reading, writing and illustrating of Canadian books for young readers. Our programs, publications, and resources help teachers, librarians, booksellers and parents select the very best for young readers. For more information, visit bookcentre.ca.

About TD Global Corporate Citizenship

TD has a long-standing commitment to enriching the lives of its customers, colleagues and communities. As part of its corporate citizenship platform, The TD Ready Commitment, TD is targeting CDN \$1 billion (US \$775 million) in total by 2030 towards community giving in four areas critical to opening doors for a more inclusive and sustainable tomorrow – Financial Security, Vibrant Planet, Connected Communities and Better Health. Through The TD Ready Commitment, TD aspires to link its business, philanthropy and human capital to help people feel more confident – not just about their finances, but also in their ability to achieve their personal goals in a changing world. For further information, visit td.com/tdreadycommitment.

About Annick Press

Annick Press is a proudly independent children’s publisher based in Toronto, Canada. Annick is recognized as one of the most innovative publishers of fiction and non-fiction for children and young adults. Our books are distributed in the United States by Publisher’s Group West, represented in Canada by Ampersand Inc. and University of Toronto Press, and licensed internationally. Annick also publishes e-book and audiobook editions of select titles.

Founded in 1975 by Rick Wilks and Anne Millyard, Annick’s reputation was built on a commitment to literature for youth that reflects the world of the contemporary child. We encourage critical thinking and the development of a child’s inner resources so that, in addition to becoming confident, contributing members of their community, they are also engaged with society at large and their peers around the globe. Most of all, we believe in the power of the joy of reading; we are passionate about ensuring that our books be self-affirming, informative, and fun. For more information, visit annickpress.com.

About Éditions Scholastic

Éditions Scholastic introduces young people to the joys of reading and encourages them to broaden their horizons. Still today, after almost 50 years, we continue this mission thanks to our award-winning French-Canadian books. For more information, visit scholastic.ca/editions.

About the CNIB Foundation

The CNIB Foundation is a non-profit organization driven to change what it is to be blind today. CNIB delivers innovative programs and powerful advocacy that empower people impacted by blindness to live their dreams while tearing down barriers to inclusion. The organization’s work is powered by a network of volunteers, donors and partners from coast to coast to coast. To learn more or get involved, visit cnib.ca.