



The Canadian Children's Book Centre

Malaika's Costume Selected as the 2021 TD Grade One Book Giveaway

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Toronto (April 23, 2021) – The Canadian Children's Book Centre (CCBC) is excited to announce the title for the 2021 TD Grade One Book Giveaway. *Malaika's Costume*, written by Nadia L. Hohn and illustrated by Irene Luxbacher, will be distributed to over 550,000 Grade 1 students in fall 2021. The book is the first in a series of three and is published by Groundwood Books, with the French edition (*Le costume de Malaika*) published by Éditions Scholastic.

Malaika's Costume follows young Malaika as she gets ready to celebrate carnival in her hometown in the Caribbean, while her mother sets up their new life in Canada. Infused with bright colours and rich language, young readers will relate to Malaika's vivid imagination and her determination to bring her dream carnival costume to reality. Community plays a key role in this beautiful picture book and, with many of us still isolated from our friends and loved ones because of COVID-19, community is more important to us now than it ever was before. It is our hope that, no matter what the world looks like in the fall, *Malaika's Costume* will bring people together and connect readers all across Canada, including those in remote areas and Indigenous reserves.

"I am thrilled and honoured that my picture book, *Malaika's Costume*, has been selected for the 2021 TD Grade One Book Giveaway," says Canadian author Nadia L. Hohn. "This is definitely a dream come true. As a former Grade 1 teacher, I know how important it is for children to have their own copy of a physical book that they can keep for themselves and cherish as they become emergent readers. Having had a chance to share *Malaika's Costume* through many author visits, I know that children connect with my story's themes of resourcefulness, family, immigration and cultural celebration. I am also excited that many children and families will look at Malaika, her family, and community and see themselves in the illustrations and language, while others will learn more about the language, culture, and diaspora of Caribbean people. Thank you so much for choosing *Malaika's Costume*."

"Hurray for *Malaika's Costume*," says Canadian illustrator Irene Luxbacher. "I'm going to celebrate with some soca and coconut drops! And were it not for Nadia Hohn and her Malaika, I wouldn't have had the chance to even know what that meant. Nor would I have had the opportunity to see how much better the world is when we are willing to experience life through the stories of people who are different from us. To all those getting to hold and read a copy of *Malaika's Costume* for the first time as a result of the TD Grade One Book Giveaway, I wish you safe travels. May the inevitable adventures that accompany the open mind and empathetic heart that Malaika inspires, help you grow into the kind of people that change the world for the very best. Now pass me a coconut drop!"

Administered by the Canadian Children's Book Centre and through the generous support of TD Bank Group, every 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 annually. "Thanks to the continued contribution from TD of our most popular program, children all across Canada will find themselves transported to an island in the Caribbean when they read *Malaika's Costume* this fall," says Rose Vespa, Executive Director of the Canadian Children's Book Centre. "After consulting with educators, parents, experts and young readers, we are

confident that this is the ideal book for the 2021 TD Grade One Book Giveaway. This book is a celebration, not just of carnival, but of family, imagination and community.”

Since 2000, over 11.4 million books have been given to Grade 1 students across Canada. For many children, this will be the first book they have ever owned. “Groundwood Books is thrilled that TD Bank Group and the CCBC have selected *Malaika’s Costume* as the TD Grade One Book Giveaway this year,” says Karen Li, Publisher of Groundwood Books. “Over the past year, in every possible way, we have been confronting the lack of meaningful diversity, equity and inclusion in our society, and the consequences thereof. We feel that Malaika—a character who has already been embraced across the country—offers us a valuable perspective. Her story shows the diverse cultures, family structures and socio-economic realities often underrepresented in children’s books. But just as importantly, *Malaika’s Costume* is about cultivating community, resilience, and joy. We hope that as the TD Grade One Book Giveaway selection, this special edition will be the start of many fun and fruitful family conversations.”

"*Malaika’s Costume* highlights the special relationship between grandmother and granddaughter, celebrates Caribbean culture and shares the importance of creativity," says Naki Osutei, Associate Vice President, Social Impact (Canada), TD Bank Group. "Through the TD Ready Commitment, our global corporate citizenship platform, we’re proud to share this book with families across the country and help kids to fall in love with Malaika’s story. With this book, we’re helping teach children about representation, connection, and hope, especially at a time when the world around them may feel overwhelming.”

Translated into French by Isabelle Allard, francophone Canadians and French immersion students across Canada will receive copies of *Le costume de Malaika*, published by Éditions Scholastic. “It is such an honour and a privilege to share a heartwarming story about community and celebration with thousands of Grade 1 students. We fell in love with Malaika and her family thanks to Irene’s brilliant illustrations and Nadia’s whimsical text. Now, thanks to the Canadian Children’s Book Centre and TD Bank Group, *Le costume de Malaika* will be cherished by so many more readers” says Chantale Lalonde, Vice President, French Division at Scholastic Canada.

Premiering today on the CCBC’s YouTube channel, Bibliovideo, is an exclusive trailer of *Malaika’s Costume*, perfect to get young readers excited for this amazing book. [Watch the video now](#) and subscribe to the channel for more videos all about Canadian books for young people.

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 Greenwood Books

Groundwood Books is an independent Canadian children's publisher based in Toronto. Our authors and illustrators are highly acclaimed both in Canada and internationally, and our books are loved by children around the world. We look for books that are unusual; we are not afraid of books that are difficult or potentially controversial; and we are particularly committed to publishing books for and about children whose experiences of the world are under-represented elsewhere. For further information, visit groundwoodbooks.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.
