

May 31, 2019

## Winners of 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Hackmatack Children's Choice Book Award

The winners of the 2019 Hackmatack Children's Choice Book Award were announced this morning in a ceremony at Paul O'Regan Hall in Halifax Central Library. They are:

English Nonfiction: **Joanne George** for *Smiley: A Journey of Love*

English Fiction (tie): **Charis Cotter** for *The Painting* and **Daphne Greer** for *Camped Out*

French Nonfiction: **Karin Gottot & Maxim Cyr** for *Les Dragouilles en vacances !*

French Fiction: **Diane Carmel Léger** for *L'Acadie en baratte*

*Smiley: A Journey of Love* (Fitzhenry & Whiteside) is the story of Smiley, a golden retriever born in a puppy mill and rescued by author Joanne George, a veterinary technician from Stouffville, Ontario. Although Smiley was born without eyes and with dwarfism, he was trained as a St. John Ambulance therapy dog and became a social media star. Filled with photos of Smiley, George's book offers a gentle, uplifting tale about overcoming challenges with kindness.

In *The Painting* (Tundra) Annie finds a painting of a lonely lighthouse and is immediately drawn to it—and her mother wishes it would stay banished in the attic. Then Annie's mother slips into a coma following a car accident, and Annie finds herself falling into the painting. This novel about the power of dreaming is the fourth Hackmatack-nominated title by Charis Cotter, a resident of Newfoundland.

In *Camped Out* (Orca) Max finally gets his wish to attend summer camp, but with a hitch—he can only go if he escorts his autistic brother, Duncan. Daphne Greer, from Newport Landing, Nova Scotia, was nominated for the 2017 Hackmatack award for her novel, *Jacob's Landing*, and her latest novel, *Finding Grace*, is shortlisted for a 2019 Atlantic Book Award.

*Les Dragouilles en vacances!* (Éditions Michel Quintin) follows the adventures of the dragouilles, those tireless travelling potatoes, as they are on vacation. We journey with them as they go down the fastest roller coasters in the world, become hula-hoop champions, and participate in a toe fight. Gottot & Cyr, residents of Montreal, also won Hackmatack awards in 2013 for *Les Bleues de New York* and in 2018 for *Les Bleues de Toronto*.

In *L'Acadie en baratte* (Bouton d'or Acadie) Nico is on holidays with his grandmother, on a grand tour of Acadian historic sites, tourist attractions, and cultural events in a Volkswagen van that seems capable of the impossible, even the magical. Author Diane Carmel Léger won the 2006 Hackmatack award for *La butte à pétard* and was nominated in 2016 for *La patate cadeau*. Her new novel, *Le secret de la vieille Madouesse* is nominated for a 2020 Hackmatack award. She lives in Dieppe, New Brunswick.

In the week leading up to the Hackmatack award ceremony, thirteen of the nominated Canadian authors visited participating schools and libraries in the four Atlantic provinces. Thousands of children in grades 4 to 6 participated in the Hackmatack program over the course of the school year by reading from the shortlist of 40 titles (20 French and 20 English) and voting for their favourite in each category.

This year marks the twentieth anniversary of the Hackmatack Children's Choice Book Award program, which is presented by TD and supported by the Canada Council for the Arts, Nova Scotia Department of Education, and the New Brunswick Public Library Service, among others. For more information about the award program, visit [hackmatack.ca](http://hackmatack.ca).

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