

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Ripple Foundation Announces Winners of 2025-2026 Kids Write 4 Kids Creative Writing Contest, Celebrating 921 Young Authors from Across Canada

Two grade-six writers earn publication; expert judges praise the creativity, craft, and heart of a record field of student storytellers

Toronto, ON (June 1, 2026) — Ripple Foundation, a 100% volunteer-run Canadian educational charity, is thrilled to announce the winners of its annual Kids Write 4 Kids creative writing contest, which this year drew record-breaking 921 participants from 558 schools across nine provinces and one territory.

A judging panel of authors, editors, publishers, and past winners selected two winning stories from ten finalists, rated on creativity, originality, story structure, and writing quality. This year's two winning youth authors are:

- *A New Hope* by Sophie Fifen, Grade 6 (Christian Life School, Fort St. John, BC)
- *The Spark of the Gliding Mind* by Daniel Liang, Grade 6 (Crosby Heights Public School, Richmond Hill, ON)

Both winning stories will be published in print and digitally for readers worldwide, available on Amazon, Google Play, Apple iBooks, and OverDrive. Proceeds from 2026 book sales will be donated to Sophie and Daniel's charity of choice, reflecting the contest's mission to nurture both creativity and philanthropy in young people. The book covers will be illustrated by Sophie Riches, an Indigenous-Canadian illustrator and award-winning 2026 graduate of Sheridan College's Honours Bachelor of Illustration program, who has volunteered her talent for the project. Riches creates colourful, texture-rich artwork for children's books, blending traditional and digital media to add whimsy, curiosity, and a sense of wonder to every narrative.

The contest also recognized eight runners-up: *Between the Boards and the Line* by Tanner Wouda (Grade 5, Agassiz, BC); *Denial* by Maia Embuldeniya-Ferna (Grade 8, Hamilton, ON); *Dinosaur* by Luke Hildebrand (Grade 5, Winnipeg, MB); *Learning to Fly* by Twishaa Kartik (Grade 7, Calgary, AB); *Nature Doesn't Wait* by Brianne Nikolaus (Grade 7, Toronto, ON); *The Library That Returned Books by Itself* by Misha Gs (Grade 4, Mississauga, ON); *The Price of a Miracle* by Jayden Zhang (Grade 7, North York, ON); and *The Strange Boy* by Karina Lackey (Grade 6, Rockwood, ON).

This year's judges were effusive in their praise for the field of young writers.

"Just WOW — I cannot believe the creativity, quality of writing, and just amazing ideas," said author and educator Willie Poll. "This was a group of VERY talented writers who made judging this competition so difficult. Some were serious, others whimsy — many were inspiring. These stories are a great gift, and I hope these young people keep gifting their stories to the world."

"I was SO impressed by all of these stories," said publishing editor Tanya Trafford. "They were so creative, and engaging, and well crafted. Congratulations to all of you. I look forward to seeing your works out in the world."

Author Linda Trinh highlighted the range of voices represented. "There was a diversity of experiences and narratives, embracing history and fantasy, exploring bravery, transformation, and identity," she said. "The quality of writing was incredible, and I loved the creativity and heart of each story."

Graphic novelist Scott Chantler and bookstore owner Emily Dean echoed the sentiment. "I love reading student writing," said Chantler. "It's interesting to see young minds trying to work it all out — not so differently than I was when I was young." Dean added, "Every story I read was beyond my expectations. If

I've learned anything in working with kids, it's that they are more brilliant than anyone gives them credit for."

The encouragement extended beyond this year's entrants. Over the contest's 13-year history, approximately 10% of young authors have entered multiple times during their eligible years, and nearly 40% of winners were returning participants who continued refining their craft — a reminder, the Foundation notes, that persistence is often the key to success.

Author and speaker Ron Tite offered advice for aspiring writers everywhere: "Keep writing. Keep writing. Keep writing. They won't all be good, but they will all be explored. Getting better at writing requires you to write. Don't wait for the perfect day or for inspiration. Just write. And somewhere along the way, you'll have brilliant ideas, wonderful stories, interesting characters, and amazing work. But you can only find them by writing."

Ripple Foundation extends its gratitude to the teachers, principals, parents, librarians, and volunteers who made this year's contest possible.

Read the full winner announcement, including all participating regions and finalist stories, at kidswrite4kids.ripplefoundation.ca/kids-write-4-kids-winner-announcement.

About Kids Write 4 Kids

Kids Write 4 Kids is an annual, nationwide creative writing contest for youth in grades 4–8. Winning stories are published as books and made available for sale online in paperback (\$11.99) and ebook (\$3.99) formats, with proceeds donated to the winners' charities of choice. Young writers can continue developing their skills through the Foundation's free weekly virtual Write It Workshop at workshop.ripplefoundation.ca.

About Ripple Foundation

Ripple Foundation is a 100% volunteer-run Canadian educational charity (Charitable Registration No. 80589 5760 RR0001) that creates and delivers free community programs advocating creative literacy among children and youth. Learn more at ripplefoundation.ca.

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