

Dufferin Youth Festival of the Arts celebrating 15 years

By CONSTANCE SCRABFIELD
Columnist

Ella Claridge, a grade six student at Mono Amaranth Public School, decided last year that it would be a good plan to produce a poster promoting Dufferin Youth Festival of the Arts.

Said Ella, "I thought it would be really cool to let people know about this show where everybody can come and show their talents."

Ella has been a fan of DYFA since her first year going to it when she was in grade four.

"I like going and listening to the music," she told us, "and just having fun with everyone on the stage."

This year, Ella is singing, drumming and dancing as part of the participation her school is contributing to the festival. Her acquaintance with the festival

was much earlier than that, though, for she heard all about it from her grandmother, Pam Claridge, who has been very involved with DYFA for several years.

So, last year, Ella created her own poster with some guidance. It was a wonderful success and earned very positive comments.

This year, therefore, Ella took it upon herself to promote the idea of any and all of the students at MAPS making posters as a competition.

"I sort of came up with the idea - I went to the Principal and teachers. I made a couple of announcements and then I went to the classrooms to show them how to make posters and give them ideas."

"The most important thing to show on the posters this year is that it is the 15th anniversary of the show. We wanted to put that out there as it has

been going on for so long."

Not only the instigator of the project but also the person responsible for the success of the plan, Ella set the deadline for the completion of the posters and collected them all herself for delivery to the festival's administration.

One thing that really pleased Ella was that posters came in from students in all the grades. "A lot of them were from grades one, two and three, so everyone was included before some of them can even go."

There were a tremendous 80 poster entries submitted by the students of MAPS.

In a telephone conversation with one of the originators of the festival, Wendy Carter, she was very enthusiastic about the whole project. "Ella's story is one of the gems of this festival," she remarked.

Although it was called a contest,

whereas DYFA is non-competitive, they referred to six of them as being "recognised as exceptional." The others, also much admired, are deemed "special mention."

Certificates were presented to all the entrants in recognition of their participation.

In keeping with the snowball effect this festival always has, next year, the poster project has been taken on by Island Lake Public School and it is hoped that each year another school will take on the challenge.

Ms Carter declared, "We are delighted to open this to all schools. When we asked our colleague here who scanned and posted all 80 posters to the website this year what would happen if there were 80 posters from every school, he said we would do our best! I could hear her smile over the telephone, "It would be a good problem."

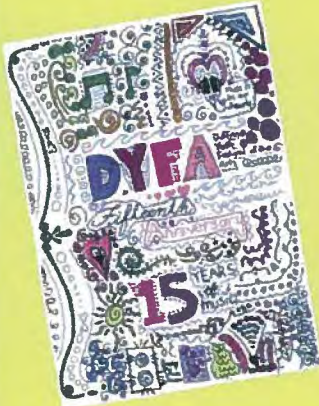
Ms Carter wanted to be sure we mentioned that the new Superintendent of the Dufferin family schools for the Upper Grand District School Board, Bonnie Talbot, signed every congratulatory certificate for all 80 posters.

"The superintendents and the school boards have always come to the bat to support us," she said.

Ms Carter had, additionally, breaking news for us: Community Living Dufferin is bringing some of its clients with their support workers to the festival to see and photograph the visual art display at the festival. Photography has become a passionate hobby amongst some of the people at CLD as an artistic expression.

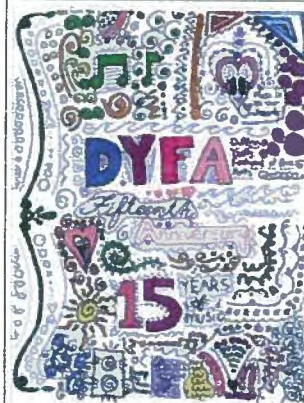
Once again, DYFA has made another step in its inclusiveness. It is all a part of its successful longevity.

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