

Chalk Talk

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PLEASE SHARE **CHALK TALK** WITH YOUR COLLEAGUES !!!

Letter from the Editor

Dear Educators:

"I often grandly say that writing is not just my living and my livelihood but my very life, and it's true." -- from the book, *Mortality*, Christopher Hitchens, writer and journalist, 1949 - 2011

If ever there was a born writer, Christopher Hitchens was one. In his final book, a memoir written during his last months, Hitchens reflects on a life spent as a writer, journalist, commentator, and public speaker. Often controversial, he was silver-tongued, quick-witted, and lion-hearted. Strong in his beliefs, he was never at a loss to defend them with all the intellectual acuity he could muster. Unafraid of opposing views, he confounded his detractors with seemingly boundless energy and a photographic memory. He was driven, curious and sought to make a difference using his most powerful tool -- words.



In November, 2010, I was fortunate to attend the Munk debate featuring Hitchens and former British PM Tony Blair. The topic was whether religion was a force for good or evil in our world. Hitchens, not surprisingly, argued against. Thin due to recent chemo treatments for esophageal cancer, his mane of blond hair was gone. His powerful, distinctive voice was also somewhat diminished but his presence was not.

A brilliant mind combined with razor sharp communication skills made him a formidable and daunting debator. Bit by bit, he took apart the opposing thesis. Then, he took it to another level, exalting the defining virtues of being human -- dignity, integrity, courage, and compassion -- that he felt rendered religion unnecessary. Voted the debate winner, we sat in awe as he forcefully and eloquently put forward his meticulous argument -- very witty, often poetic -- skillfully persuading the audience to his point of view. His love of life shone through. He wrote to the very end, even when he was no longer able to speak.

Recently, we lost three notable Canadians, former Alberta Premier Peter Lougheed, journalist Henry Champ, and iconic Sam Sniderman, aka, Sam the Record Man. This week's issue features an essay competition encouraging students to write about people who have made an impact on society in 2012.

CoEd Communications is dedicated to supporting teachers by providing access to free classroom resources and programs. We invite you to visit our website at www.4edu.ca. [Feed-back is welcome!](#)

Mary Kovack

A&E Classroom 2012 Essay Contest

A&E Canadian Classroom's 'LIVES THAT MAKE A DIFFERENCE ESSAY CONTEST' challenges students in grades 5-12 to write an original 300 word essay on the life of a person they believe made the biggest difference on Canadian society in the past year. Students can win cash prizes for themselves and teachers can win cash prizes for their classrooms.

The submissions will be judged by a national panel of education experts and A&E representatives. The essays will be judged based on the following criteria: persuasiveness (33 per cent), creativity (33 per cent) and relevancy (33 per cent). Two winners from each grade level -- 5th-8th grade and 9th-12th grade -- will be selected.



- 2 GRAND PRIZES:** 1 prize for each of Grades 5-8 & 9-12
- Student: **\$3,000** Cash Prize
 - Department/Classroom of Teacher: **\$1,000** Cash for use in the classroom.

- 2 FIRST PLACE PRIZES:** 1 prize for each of Grades 5-8 & 9-12
- Student: **\$2,000** Cash Prize
 - Department/Classroom of Teacher: **\$1,000** Cash for use in the classroom.

[Note: Due to Provincial restrictions the contest is void in Quebec.]

Each entry must include the student's name, complete address, postal code, telephone number, age, grade, name of teacher, school, school address, and local cable system (if known).

Please note that there are two ways to enter:

- online at the A&E Canadian Classroom's website at: <http://www.livesthatmakeadifference.com/>
- Entries can also be mailed to:
LIVES THAT MAKE A DIFFERENCE ESSAY CONTEST, c/o Temple Scott Associates, 95 King Street East, 4th Floor, Toronto, Ontario M5C 1G4.

Check out the *Lives That Make a Difference* Facebook page for more details and join the conversation!

Educators are encouraged to have students in their civics, social studies, current events, literacy and history classes participate in this year's contest.

This year's deadline is December 14th, 2012!

For official contest rules and a consent form, please visit <http://www.livesthatmakeadifference.com/>.

The 2012 Lives that make a Difference Essay Contest

The heroes that make a difference... in and out of your classroom

\$3,000.00



One of Your Students Could Win

Last Spring, A&E Television Networks awarded cash prizes to the winners of its **2012 Lives That Make a Difference Essay Contest**. Selected from a record number of entries, the winners represent schools from Ottawa, Ontario, Victoria, British Columbia. The Grand Prize winners received a \$3,000 cash prize and an additional \$1,000 for their teacher for use in the classroom. First Prize winners received \$2,000 cash prize and an additional \$1,000 for use by their teacher in the classroom. Each of the winning schools also received an A&E prize package comprised of a television, DVD player, and classic A&E DVDs.

As always, the students' topics are a snapshot of our recent history. It will come as no surprise that two of the winning entries dealt with the impact on Canada by late NDP leader, Jack Layton. One of the students wrote very poignantly about personal courage demonstrated by a Vancouver resident during the Stanley Cup Riots last Spring. Here's a look at last year's winners:

Neve Sugars-Keen, a grade 6 student at Hopewell Avenue Public School in Ottawa won First Prize in the Grade 5-8 category with her essay, *A Hero Not Remembered*, which depicts the courage demonstrated by an unidentified woman during the Vancouver Riots following the Stanley Cup. Neve's essay compares the rioters to bullies and expresses her admiration for the woman who stood up to the crowds and tried to calm them down. Neve wrote, "In her situation, not many people would do what she did. And that is what makes this woman a hero to me ... Because she did not stand by. She stood up."

Emily Candell, a grade 11 student at Pacific Christian School in Victoria won First Prize in the Grade 9-12 category with her essay, *The Magic Beans of Love, Hope and Optimism*, which compares Jack Layton's legacy to the popular fable 'Jack and The Beanstalk'. In recounting Jack's many achievements and his determination to make a difference for his country, Emily compares the triumphs of both Jacks, "Like the fairytale Jack, Layton was known for taking risks, having vision, and being a giant slayer."

Mary Faheim, a grade 11 student at St. Aloysius Gonzaga Secondary School in Mississauga won the Grand Prize in the Grade 9 to 12 category with her essay, *A Letter to Jack*, inspired by Jack Layton's own farewell letter to Canadians. Mary wrote passionately about Layton's legacy and the powerful impact he had on young Canadians noting his leadership and unyielding commitment to Canada, "Thank you for assuring me that I can attain the unimaginable. Thank you for teaching me what it truly means to be Canadian."

To read more, [click here](#) or go to www.AETV.com/class/canadianclassroom.

[Note from Editor: We regret that at press time, information about the 2nd Grand Prize winner could not be released.]

Be Inspired. Students -- Start Writing Today!

