



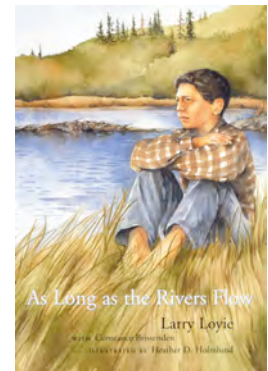
LIVING TRADITIONS WRITERS GROUP

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***As Long as the Rivers Flow* Honoured by 2006 First Nation Communities Read Program**

The First Nation Communities Read program is delighted to announce that *As Long as the Rivers Flow* is the book Ontario's First Nation public librarians have decided to honour as the 2006 First Nation Communities Read selection.

As Long as the Rivers Flow, written by Larry Loyie with Constance Brissenden (www.firstnationswriter.com), illustrated by Heather D. Holmlund, and published by Groundwood Books, is a memoir capable of speaking to young and old. Set in 1944, it recreates the summer Lawrence Loyie was ten years old, the last summer he spent with his Cree family before a Canadian government program forced him to attend residential school.



A seven-member jury of representatives from Ontario's First Nation public libraries, supported by Southern Ontario Library Service, selected the First Nation Communities Read 2006 title. Reviewers have described the book as "welcome and discussion-provoking" (*Quill & Quire*) and "a haunting combination of art, story and document" (*The Toronto Star*). *As Long as the Rivers Flow* received the 2003 Norma Fleck Award for Canadian Children's Non-fiction.

Larry Loyie is also the author of a new children's book, *The Gathering Tree* (Theytus Books, 2005), written with Constance Brissenden. In *The Gathering Tree*, he tackles another difficult subject, HIV awareness and prevention, in a gently told family story with a First Nations storyline. Illustrated by Heather D. Holmlund, the book includes 20 dynamic acrylic paintings that authentically bring the characters and rural setting to life.

The First Nation Communities Read program, launched by Ontario's First Nations public library community in 2003 with the support of the HarperCollins Canada and the Ontario Library Service, enabled Ontario's First Nations public library community to make its own contribution to the popular community reading movement. Through its featured titles, the program encourages family literacy and intergenerational storytelling, and promotes the publication, sharing and understanding of aboriginal voices and experiences. The program expanded to Saskatchewan in 2005 and is launching in British Columbia in 2006.

In 2006, Ontario's First Nation public libraries and public libraries in Saskatchewan and British Columbia will receive copies of *As Long as the Rivers Flow* to support their participation in the First Nation Communities Read program. During Ontario's First Nations Public Library Week (February 13-18), several First Nation public libraries in southern Ontario will host Loyie, Brissenden and Holmlund in their communities to share Loyie's story and to encourage self-expression through storytelling, public readings, discussion, writing and illustration.

Throughout the year, book stickers, a poster, and promotions at the 2006 Ontario Library Association Super Conference in Toronto (February) and the 2006 Canadian Library Association Conference in Calgary (June) will increase public awareness of *As Long as the Rivers Flow* and the First Nation Communities Read program. All libraries and communities across Canada are welcome and encouraged to celebrate *As Long as the Rivers Flows* in 2006 through readings, displays and programming and to participate in the First Nation Communities Read program each year.

Books previously honoured by the First Nation Communities Read program are:

- 2005 ***SkySisters***, written by Jan Bourdeau Waboose, illustrated by Brian Deines, and published by Kids Can Press
- 2004 ***Solomon's Tree***, inspired by Tsimpshian master carver Victor Reece, written by Andrea Spalding, illustrated by Janet Wilson and published by Orca Book Publishers
- 2003 ***Dragonfly Kites***, written by Tomson Highway, illustrated by Brian Deines, and published by HarperCollins Canada

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For more information about the First Nation Communities Read program and the First Nations Public Library Week program, contact:

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Southern Ontario Library Service, operating under the authority of a board, is mandated by the Ontario Ministry of Culture to increase co-operation and co-ordination among public library boards and to assist public libraries by providing them with services and programs that reflect their needs, including consultation, training and development.

For more information about *As Long as the Rivers Flow*, its authors and illustrator, contact:

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