

Beverly Matson (2017)



“A tiny whirlwind of enthusiasm”! What better way to describe Beverly Matson who, ever since she came to Guelph in 1967, has directed her love of drama and her boundless energy to working with children and youth in this community. Over these past fifty years, she has been involved in virtually every aspect of young people’s theatre – as director, producer, costumer, wardrobe mistress, playwright as well as teacher and mentor.

She has done so for dozens of community organizations, including Guelph Little Theatre, Guelph Spring Festival, Theatre Guelph and Royal City Musical Productions. She even created her own Guelph Children’s Theatre Company in collaboration with Guelph Arts Council.

For 23 years, Beverly held the position of teacher-librarian at Ottawa Crescent Public School in Guelph where she also set up special noon-hour and after-school programs and helped present two Gilbert and Sullivan student productions as well as many Reader’s Theatre productions that she created from literary stories. Involving every child in the classroom, she often used string games and origami figures to animate these stories, or as one former student commented, she made “words... spring to life from pages of books.”

When Beverly retired in 1995, she turned some of her energy and enthusiasm to performing, directing and teaching puppetry, once again often using string and origami to bring shows to life. Puppets Elora, Rainbow Day Camp and Camp Quality for children with cancer all benefited from her efforts. She also became involved in the Guelph Guild of Storytellers, performing in many venues over the years and using her drama talents and experience in yet another community endeavour.

There can be little doubt that, although Beverly Matson does not offer a huge physical presence, she has inspired and opened many doors for children and youth in this community, offering them drama and theatre opportunities that they would never otherwise have had.