

Margaret Laurence Lecture 2015 now online ^[1]

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AVAILABILITY

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CRRU director delivers annual Margaret Laurence Lecture

Child care advocate Martha Friendly sent a clear message as she delivered the annual Margaret Laurence Lecture on March 10, 2015: Canada needs public policy for a national child care program.

An attentive audience of students, faculty, and local child care workers packed Trill College's Bagnani Hall to hear Ms. Friendly's lecture entitled "Child care shouldn't be just a matter of luck."

The annual lecture honours Margaret Laurence, a Canadian literary icon and social justice activist who was Trent University's fourth chancellor. The lecture series addresses topics that were important to Ms. Laurence, including peace, ecology, literature, and feminism.

"I feel daunted to be following all of the illustrious women who have given the Margaret Laurence Lecture over the years," Ms. Friendly admitted in her opening remarks. Previous lecturers include Adele Wiseman, June Callwood, Ursula Franklin, Shirley Douglas, and Jane Urquhart.

Calling Canada "an inhospitable place to raise children," Ms. Friendly said Canada was one of the lowest ranked countries for child care and early child care education. In her lecture, she outlined the kind of public policy needed to make child care a universal and accessible entitlement for all families.

Ms. Friendly's remarks rang true for Stephanie Mattern, a local child care worker. "I was impressed with Martha's comment that children are citizens and need to be treated as such," she said.

"It's important that Trent put on events like these that are open to everyone," Ms. Mattern added. "I like to listen to someone else's ideas because it sparks thoughts of my own. I might do more research because I've learned about something I've never heard before."

Maya Gunnarsson, a graduate student at Trent's Frost Centre for Canadian Studies and Indigenous Studies, attended because she wanted to learn more about an issue that touches Canadian families everywhere. She agreed that the Margaret Laurence Lecture is a valuable community event. "It's important to have lectures that are open to community members, because sometimes universities can be insular and exclusive," Ms. Gunnarsson said.

Region: Canada ^[4]

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