

Your Entertainment Connection

Write on for Brant's budding authors

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Your Brant Connection

Are you a writer with a manuscript that needs dusting off? Need feedback on a short story? Want some professional writing tips from a published author?

The County of Brant Public Library kicks off its first writer in residence program with author Lauren Kirshner, who will offer one-on-one meetings with residents starting July 14. This service, which is free, is sponsored by the library and will continue until the end of December.

Kirshner, 29, is excited at the idea of connecting with fellow writers, and is enthusiastic about teaching.

"This is my first writer in residence position but I've been teaching creative writing in schools and in the community around Toronto for the last two years. I love teaching creative writing.

"The County of Brant has never had a writer in residence before, and I'm really looking forward to meeting and working with members of the community."

She has been publishing from the age of 18. Her work includes poetry, feature stories, book and music reviews and a novel. She was named Toronto's "best emerging author" by NOW magazine.

In 2007, she completed her masters of English in the field of creative writing at the University of Toronto. Two years later, her first novel, *Where We Have to Go*, was published by McClelland and Stewart.

"Where We Have to Go is a coming-of-age story about a girl named Lucy Bloom during seven very important years of her life," Kirshner says of her novel's plot.

"It's a story about growing up and one family's struggle to stick together despite the many challenges that



Submitted Photo

Writer Lauren Kirshner will be taking up residence at the County of Brant Public Library.

face them."

Where We Have to Go was a finalist for the 2010 City of Toronto Book Award and was selected as the One Book One Brant novel of the year. It was translated into German and Dutch, and will be published in the U.S. in 2012.

During her stay as writer-in-residence, Kirshner will be helping writers in the community hone their skills. Writers interested in manuscript reviews may submit up to 15 pages of prose, double-spaced.

In addition, she will run creative writing workshops: Aug. 15, 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m., youth workshop for ages 12 to 20; Sept. 24, 2 p.m. to 4 p.m., From Seed to

Story: Exploring the Writing Process; and Oct. 22, 2 p.m. to 4 p.m., Writing People: An Intro to Characterization.

"The purpose of the workshops is to give people instruction in a certain area of creative writing and a chance to explore their own ideas in a hands-on group workshop," says Kirshner.

"There are no experience requirements for the workshop and everyone is welcome."

She says that she doesn't expect the manuscript consultations to be a "one size fits all process." Instead, she plans to respond each writer according to his or her needs.

"I'm going to read people's stories before the meeting and during the

meeting I'll give my feedback. But, really, my hope is that each meeting will take on the form of a relaxed and thoughtful conversation," she said.

"If we decide that the characters don't quite seem real enough, we'll have a conversation about character development; if a person can't finish their story, we'll talk about the narrative arc and flesh out the possibilities for completing the plot.

"Sharing creative work is a brave act, and these meetings are meant to be constructive and low stress. I'm here to help people realize their creative goals in whatever ways I can."

Want to take part?

To make an appointment for a one-on-one manuscript consultation with Lauren Kirshner, or to reserve your spot in one of the writer in residence workshops, call Sharon Briggs at Paris library at 519-442-2433. Spaces are limited and early sign-up is encouraged.

For more information on the program, please visit the library website at www.brant.library.on.ca. And to learn more about the writer in residence, visit www.laurenkirshner.com.