

## Her Spirit Lives On

In October 2003 the Caledon Public Library held its annual Young Adult Short Story Writing contest. This year there were two age groups 12-14 and 15-18. The contest closed at the end of October and by the time the judges made decisions and the winners were announced it was mid-December. The kids who won dropped by the Bolton Library shortly before Christmas to pick up their cheques and to have their pictures taken. In the end it was at the beginning of January that I finally got everything together, (the article and pics) to send off to the local papers to print. It was then that I was informed of the terrible tragedy that had occurred. The first prizewinner in the 15-18 year category was a promising young writer by the name of Elizabeth Scavetta. Elizabeth was tragically killed in a car accident on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2004. I was shocked and immediately chose not to run the picture and article in fear of upsetting Elizabeth's parents and family. The story that Elizabeth wrote was a hauntingly beautiful tale of a young woman coping with the loss of her mother. One of the judge's comments on the sheet was that he had "wept at the beauty of the story".

Some time passed and still I was unsure of how to handle the situation. I wanted to acknowledge Elizabeth and her story but was unsure of how to do this in a manner that was respectful to her family and one that would honour her as well. I received a phone call from Heather Scavetta, Elizabeth's mother inquiring as to when we were going to run the article. She also mentioned that she and her husband would be very interested in sponsoring our short story contest. The only thing that she and her husband wanted was that every winner would receive a copy of Elizabeth's story. They asked if we would consider re-naming the contest "*The Elizabeth Scavetta Memorial Short Story Writing Contest*".

I was deeply touched. To think that through this senseless tragedy the Scavetta's would have the strength to not only come forward but to think of such a wonderful way to keep Elizabeth's memory alive.

I did not know Elizabeth personally. I met her only once to take the picture of her and our other winner. All that I have heard about Elizabeth makes me so proud to think that we have been given this little part of her to live on for many years. I do know from all who knew her that she loved to write. She believed in the beauty of words.

All of us at the Caledon Public Library are honoured to rename our Young Adult short story writing contest after such a promising young writer and well-loved young woman. There are absolutely no words or kind acts to replace what the Scavetta's have lost but perhaps there is some small comfort in knowing that Elizabeth and her story will continue to touch the lives of young adults in Caledon for years to come.

The first Elizabeth Scavetta Memorial Short Story for teens will take place in October at all branches of the Caledon Public Library. If you are interested in reading the story that Elizabeth Scavetta wrote titled "Mother", log onto our website at

[www.caledon.library.on.ca](http://www.caledon.library.on.ca) . Many of Elizabeth's other writings can be read at [www.tarawinds.ca](http://www.tarawinds.ca)

By Kelley Potter