



May 7, 2005

To Whom It May Concern,

I have known Ben Bright for a little more than two years, and in that time I have heard him tell stories to many different audiences: to adults at the Tango Coffee Bistro in Stratford, to mixed-age groups of townspeople at the St. Marys Town Hall, to groups of students in grades 4, 7 and 8, to groups of adults and children at the monthly storytelling gathering in St. Marys, and more. Ben is a naturally talented storyteller, and he works hard at his craft. I have admired how he relates closely and spontaneously to his listeners, such as the time he invited a four-year-old, who was talking out in the audience, to come up and become a character in the story. It was delightful. Ben's storytelling comes from his own deeply felt experience and/or from his ever-creative imagination. It evokes laughter, tears, and sometimes a sense of awe or wonder. I would like to see Ben use this gift more fully, so that many more people can experience it.

Ben has been willing to tell stories at events put on by the town of St. Marys, by the schools and other organizations whenever he is available. He is a willing volunteer at the annual St. Marys Storytelling Festival. He has whatever support I can give him in making the art of storytelling his chosen career. As Artistic Director of the St. Marys Storytelling Festival, I have invited him to be one of our paid professional featured storytellers this fall. Other featured storytellers include people who have told stories professionally for 25 years. With engaging storytellers like Ben, people of all ages are invited to enter their own imaginations and be transported, without screens and electronics, to other times and places, thereby enriching their own lives and strengthening their connections with each other.

Sincerely,

Nancy Vermond
President, St. Marys Storytelling, Inc.

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