

Storyteller revives history

By **PAUL GRONDAHL**
Staff writer

CLIFTON PARK— Storyteller Kate Dudding has received national recognition for giving voice to overlooked or forgotten human rights champions and for sharing their inspiring tales with children.

"I try to bring history to life for children," she said. "Through storytelling, I hope to show my listeners that there are many good people in the world."

Dudding, who lives in Clifton Park, is a recipient of a 2010 Storytelling World Resource Award for best stories for pre-adolescent listeners in recognition of her latest CD, "People Who Made a Difference."

Story time

To learn more about Kate Dudding's storytelling or her new CD, "People Who Made a Difference," go to her Web site at www.katedudding.com.

On her CD, Dudding recounts the stories of little-known or overlooked historical figures including:

- Leopold Page, No. 173 on "Schindler's list," who led a campaign to honor Oskar Schindler, the German businessman who saved his life and the lives of 1,300 other Jews during World War II. The story of Schindler was recounted in an acclaimed book and movie.

- Iqbal Masih, a 12-year-old who worked in terrible conditions in a sweatshop factory in Pakistan and through his activism helped gain the freedom of exploited child laborers.

- Lt. Col. Frances M. Liberty, of Watervliet, a battlefield nurse who spoke the truth despite personal consequences while serving as an Army nurse during World War II, the Korean War and the Vietnam War.

"I chose these stories because I felt they were ones I wanted people to hear and that children in particular could draw inspiration from



People Who Made a Difference Volume 1
True Stories Told by Kate Dudding



them," she said.

Dudding, 59, started telling stories as a hobby in 1995. She left her job as a computer scientist at the General Electric R&D Center

KATE DUDDING tells a story at the Saratoga Springs Public Library. Her new CD, left, "People Who Made a Difference," won a 2010 Storytelling World Resource Award for best stories for pre-adolescent listeners.

seven years ago to pursue storytelling full-time. She has released two CDs and has performed at festivals and in schools. In 2007, Dudding's first CD, "Lighting the Way Home: Stories of Lighthouses and their Keepers," won a Parents' Choice Approved Award.

"She has a real passion for storytelling and it's something she always

wanted to do, even when she was working in computer science for 20 years," said her husband, Jerry. "She had some natural inhibitions about public speaking at first, but she's really taken off as a storyteller and performer."

Dudding is an organizer of the Riverway Storytelling Festival, now in its eighth year. It runs from April 19-25 and includes free performances in and around libraries in Albany and Rensselaer counties.

In addition, Dudding volunteers her time telling stories at a nursing home and a program for Alzheimer's patients in Clifton Park.

"Storytelling is the first art form," she said. "Before we were painting on caves, we were telling stories."

Dudding follows simple rules for choosing the stories she performs publicly: "Only tell stories that you love, stories that you want other people to hear and stories you can't wait to tell other people."

She has learned to tailor her stories to each particular audience and, because they aren't fully memorized, they morph over time and based on the listeners.

"You have to watch the faces of your audience," she said. "For young children, I always have some kind of participation in the story or sound effects or a repeated phrase. I want them to join in and become a part of it. I think of it as channeling their energy to help the story."

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