

People of the Community:

Karen Kelloway, Author, Business Coach, and Parent Volunteer

By Andy de Champlain



Karen Kelloway

At Grosvenor Wentworth Park Elementary School (EGWS), Karen Kelloway, author and mother of two, takes parent volunteering to the next level, literally. She is using signed copies of her award-winning middle-grade fiction book, *Raphael's Riddle*, as a fundraiser for the school's Healthy Snack program.

I asked her about her involvement with the Healthy Snack program. She was on the local board of Breakfast for Learning for a number of years and, she told me "one of the issues at the time was how to create universal breakfast programs so that children aren't stigmatized by using the program. What I love about Grosvenor's Healthy Snack program is that they've made it accessible for everyone. And they've made it fun – like bringing in a guest chef to make art with food. I'm excited that my book can be part of raising money



for the program. We are running a campaign from now until the end of the school year that you can purchase a signed copy of *Raphael's Riddle* and \$5 from each purchase will go the school's Healthy Snack program."

Raphael's Riddle is a time travel adventure based on one of the five Greek legends of Saint Nicholas. Kelloway travelled to Turkey to research the novel where the fourth-century Saint Nicholas lived and worked, doing good deeds as then Bishop of Myra.

I asked Karen what inspired this creative story idea. "While I was working in St. John's," she told me, "I used to visit different churches. The architecture is so beautiful. I was attending a Dec 5th service when an actor depicting fourth-century Bishop Nicholas of Myra told

his story and how he became Saint Nicholas. I was so enthralled with the story that I travelled to Turkey to visit where he lived and worked. It was the Greek legend of how he saved three girls from slavery that inspired the story, but *Raphael's Riddle* is a time travel adventure. I had to figure out how to get Raphael back in the fourth century. I interviewed a Dutch woman who shared her childhood experiences of celebrating Sinterklaas Eve on Dec. 5th and how they wrote Surprise (pronounced supreeze) poems to hide gifts. That gave me the idea for the riddle."

I asked Karen about her other activities with the school. She was on the School Advisory Committee for several years, she told me, "but what I most enjoy is chaperoning my kids' class trips. From visiting the Halifax Citadel to the Maritime museum, we've had some great outings. My kids are both active in sports and music, so like most parents these days it seems like we're constantly on the move."

Karen grew up in the Valley and did her Bachelor of Public Relations at the Mount. She and her husband then lived and worked coast to coast, from Whistler, BC, to St. John's, NL, before settling back in Halifax 18 years ago. Their children are 10 and 12.

In her career she transitioned from PR to executive and career coaching in 2004. "I coach professionals to have greater impact through influence and focused results, which means we look at what they are doing well, what they need to improve, and then I help



Preparing for the healthy snack program

create a plan to get there. My book, *NAIL IT! Six Steps to Transform Your Career* is a trade-marked career management program and has been a great resource for individual career reflection and planning as well as for companies wanting help with succession planning."

Karen is already working on her next middle-grade fiction novel, "a supernatural adventure that takes place in Brigus, Newfoundland & Labrador. I'm excited about this book because it has a boy as a main character. My son is an avid reader and I know many parents who are looking for books to get their sons reading."

Thank you for taking the time to talk to me, Karen, and for the dedication to your school and community!

To participate in this latest fundraiser for the Healthy Snack program, you can purchase a signed copy of *Raphael's Riddle* for \$10 online by visiting www.karenkelloway.com/bookstore.