

Hans Christian Andersen Awards 2020

Congratulatory Message for the IBBY World Congress

Good Evening

I felt so sorry when the IBBY World Congress in Russia was postponed due to the pandemic in September 2020. It's already been a year since then and during that time COVID-19 has continued to plague us, cutting off relationships between people.

I'd like to congratulate you on successfully holding the IBBY World Congress, on a small yet impressive scale, despite the difficulties caused by COVID-19.

I'd also like to express my heartfelt congratulations to Jacqueline Woodson and Albertine, both of whom were awarded the Hans Christian Andersen Award.

On Nami Island, we have also experienced difficult times during the pandemic.

But even during these difficult times, we are already preparing for a brighter, post-pandemic future for Nami Island. Of course, our preparations include supporting IBBY in its efforts to support children all around the world.

Before sitting down to write a congratulatory message, I always read "A Bridge of Children's Books" by Jella Lepman. This is a moving autobiography of a woman who gave strength and hope to children around the world after they experienced the horrors of war. Every time I read it, I think about what we should do for the children at Nami Island. I ask myself how I can contribute, even a little, to making the world a happier place for children so that they can harbor hopes and dreams.

Several years ago in Budapest Hungary, I saw Syrian refugees walking in lines with the children holding their parent's hands, or held in their parent's arms, and this is still a very vivid memory for me. Even now, seeing children crying in Afghanistan are breaking our hearts again.

When will the day come when these children can dream of a new future, like the hope offered by Jella Lepman?

I hope that the works of children's authors and illustrators around the world, including this year's recipients of the Hans Christian Andersen Award, will offer hope of a happier future to children.

Again, I'd like to congratulate the two award recipients, and express my infinite gratitude and support to IBBY and especially to those who prepared this year's IBBY World Congress in Russia.

Thank you.

Lee Kye Young
Vice President
Nami Island Arts & Education Inc.

37th IBBY Congress, Moscow, Russia, Saturday, 11 September 2021