

Local author addresses childhood mental illness

The November meeting of the Perth and District University Women's Club enjoyed an informative talk by Gayle Grass, a resident of Lombardy. Mrs. Grass, who grew up in the Christie Lake area, is the author of *Catch a Falling Star*, a fairy tale from the Iris the Dragon series. This

tale introduces children and their parents to the early warning signs of childhood mental illness in a thoughtful and innovative way. Her hope is to break down the stigma and fear attached to mental illness. Mrs. Grass specifically chose the fair tale format, as it is a non-threatening way to see the effects of mental illness on individuals. It was reassuring to learn that her book has already made a difference in the lives of many families. The book is completely endorsed by medical and educational professionals.

Mrs. Grass has put together a workshop, which she has presented to the Upper Canada District School Board. As teachers are often the first to recognize learn-

ing and behavioural problems, it is important that they recognize early warning signs. Early detection, identification and risk management can reduce, if not cure, the illness.

Mrs. Grass's book, *Catch a Falling Star*, is available from the library in Perth and copies may be purchased at the Valley Book Shop. You may visit Mrs. Grass's Web site at www.iris-thedragon.com.

The Perth and District University Women's Club meets the third Monday of each month in McMartin House and has an interesting group of speakers to address forthcoming meetings. For details, please contact the membership chairperson, Donna Morrow, at 283-7152.



Author Gayle Grass signing her book *Catch a Falling Star* for University Women's Club members at McMartin House

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