

# New book helps children understand Alzheimer's

Book launch this Saturday with local author and illustrator -- for a good cause

**By Andrea Macko**

STAFF REPORTER

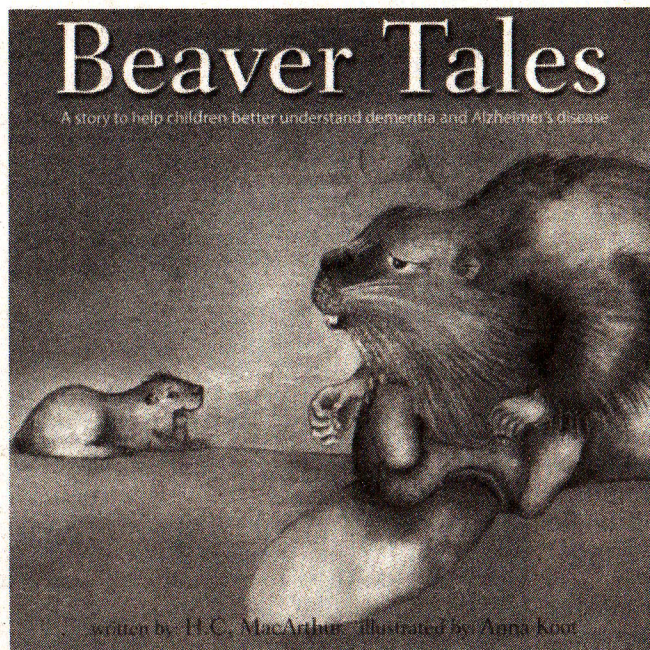
Henriette MacArthur's publishing company may be called More than Words, but it's words that this area author relies on to help children and families deal with difficult issues.

The Kintore-based mom is celebrating the release of her second book, titled *Beaver Tales*. It's the tale of a young beaver named Howard, who notices that his grandfather begins forgetting things, as well as becoming confused, after he came to live with Howard and his family.

Howard's grandfather is developing Alzheimer's disease -- but that term is deliberately never used in the book, which MacArthur says is part of her "gentle approach" to the issue.

That gentle approach has been developed through MacArthur's long experience working with Alzheimers' patients through the VON Day program; aside from working with the patients, she's also been involved with outreach programs to elementary students.

"It's about taking the fear away," says MacArthur of her work experience and book. "There's a need for it," she says, adding that "children are not scared to approach these people (once they know what to



**The cover of Kintore author Henriette MacArthur's newest book, *Beaver Tales*, which tells the story of a young beaver who begins to notice changes in his grandfather.**

*(Contributed photo)*

expect)."

The storyline of *Beaver Tales* answers some of what MacArthur says are common questions that children have about Alzheimer's disease, including if

it is contagious, if there is a cure, and if all seniors get the disease.

MacArthur says that she made the decision while writing her first book (called *Henry and Harriet*, about dealing with the death of a loved one) to use animals, and not humans, as her characters. "Animals are easier to relate to, for children," she says, explaining that children tend to be more literal than adults, and may not be able to relate to a story of a grandfather becoming ill if it is their own grandmother that is affected.

The book is illustrated by Anna Koot, another local face. "Anna brings these stories to life," says MacArthur of Koot's soft, soothing watercolours.

"If you get the right book for a kid, they read it when they want -- and as often as they want to," says MacArthur, noting that the book can also serve as a conversation starter for families -- which may be too emotionally difficult to bring up otherwise.

## Meet the author

*Beaver Tales* was approved by the Alzheimer Society, and there is contact information at the end of the book for families looking for more information. A portion of the proceeds from the sales of the book does go to the Society, but this Saturday, Sept. 20, there will be an official book launch and signing at the Flower Shop and More. The event, which runs from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., is an Alzheimer Society Coffee Break fundraiser.

Koot and MacArthur will be present to sign and sell copies of *Beaver Tales*, as well as *Henry and Harriet*.

The books are also available online at [www.morethanwordsbooks.ca](http://www.morethanwordsbooks.ca).