

MULTILINGUALISM & MULTICULTURALISM

Author & Diversity Matters Founder, Gina Valle Talks Differences, Open Minds and Her New Book

The Best Of All Words



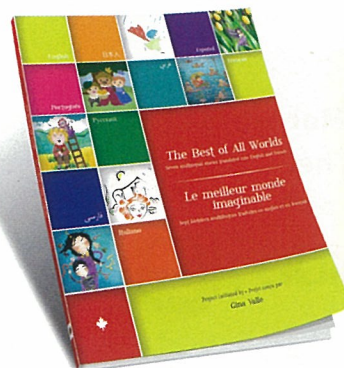
In Canada, it isn't strange to hear five or six different languages spoken on the subway or playground. After all, Canada is one of the most multicultural countries in the world. Diversity is an urgent issue for any country at any level of development. One of the non-governmental organizations that have taken the fight for bringing diverse ideas and people together is Diversity Matters, which has its primary aim of addressing not only the personal but also the national challenges that come with living in multicultural country.

Over the last two decades, Diversity Matters founder, Gina Valle, has tried to understand how the human spirit engages when confronted with differences in race, religion, status, and abilities. Is it with contempt and fear, or an open heart and mind? Valle, whose parents were post-war immigrants to Canada from Italy, ultimately believes that what we have in common must take precedence over that which is different.

"Without a doubt, each one of us brings different strengths and richness of experience to the dialogue, in the hopes of reducing barriers and increasing understanding," says Valle. "In the work I do, I try to encourage each one of us to think, see, and feel outside of the box, and to build on what is common between us as citizens of this country and beyond." In her quest for ways to make diversity meaningful for Canadians, Valle authored *The Best Of All Worlds*, a new book that celebrates multilingualism in children's literature and brings together cultures and languages like no other.

"This book is not only for children however. It is also for parents and grandparents who understand the value of teaching their family about other cultures, languages, ideas and people. It is fitting that *The Best Of All Worlds* would have a home in Canada, in a country where we continually strive to make meaning of diversity, where we champion multilingualism and multiculturalism in our communities, our homes and our schools," adds Valle.

A great book and originally written in Arabic, Farsi, Italian, Japanese, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish, each story is translated into English and French, and have illustrations. In order for diversity to thrive here and elsewhere, Valle shares that we need to move beyond the rhetoric, the policies and procedures, and talk to people in our community and to those who are our neighbors and have experiences different than ours.



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