

**2009 Children's Peace Literature Award,
Joint Winner Christine Harris - Response to receiving the Award
21 October 2009**

As a member of PEN, a group that works on behalf of silenced and persecuted writers around the world, as a mother, grandmother and writer, it means a lot to me to be joint-winner of the Children's Peace Literature Prize. Freedom of speech is important to the sharing of ideas and beliefs, and we need to treasure and hold onto it. Writers, in particular, have the power to move people to think, cry or laugh. Stories can change people. We've heard a choir singing and there are wonderful artworks on the walls around us by children. Stories are a part of those arts that are a sharing of ideas and they can reach people's hearts.

I try to create characters in my stories that are more than the sum of their parts, and Audrey, from 'Audrey Goes to Town' is such a character. She is so real to us that David (Christine's partner) and I feel we've inherited another child. We half-expect to see her seated at the breakfast table. So I'm proud of my little Audrey.

Thank you to Psychologists for Peace for this award and for helping us all to be part of the bigger 'story'.

Presented at the announcement ceremony for Children's Peace Literature Award 21 October 2009.