

Follow us on Twitter  
@standardnews

# Camilla hails literacy charity's fifth anniversary

## GET LONDON READING

Evening Standard Campaign

Emer Martin

THE Duchess of Cornwall today praised a literacy campaign that has transformed the lives of thousands of youngsters in London.

Camilla urged charity First Story to continue its "wonderful job" improving literacy and creative writing skills.

The organisation, which celebrated its fifth anniversary yesterday, stages writer-in-residence projects, with acclaimed authors visiting schools to run creative writing workshops, with the results published in anthologies.

Speaking to an audience at Clarence House, the duchess congratulated the founders and those involved.

Camilla, who is patron of the charity, said: "It has been five years since it began and I want it to go on much, much longer."

The charity was launched in 2008 by

former teacher Katie Waldegrave, 32, and the writer William Fiennes.

Author Philip Pullman, also a patron, said writing gives youngsters a chance to make sense of who they are.

Pullman, best-known for his fantasy trilogy *His Dark Materials* said: "When children write, as I did all the time as a young boy, they discover a huge amount about themselves."

Simon Walters, 17, a student at Cranford Community College in Hounslow, where the programme originated, said: "I love the programme. It brings us all together. We talk about our experiences and our journeys."

The programme is aimed at schools where more than 50 per cent of pupils are considered deprived, and other London schools involved include George Green's School in Tower Hamlets, St Augustine's School in Kilburn, St Gabriel's College in Lambeth and Skinners' Academy in Hackney.

The duchess joined the Evening Standard's Get London Reading campaign in 2011 and paid for the first 10 volunteers herself.