



Story Time

Mom fulfills her dream by writing her first children's book

By Jessica Laskey

Kate David is a working mother, but you won't find her hanging around the water cooler or taking meetings in the conference room. Most likely, you'll find her racing around the Land Park home she shares with her husband Jeff, swaddling baby McKenna or reading to 2-year-old daughter Murphy—and finding time to write, edit and self-publish her first children's book, of course.

"The balance is really challenging," David says, cradling a nursing McKenna while she deftly signs a copy of "Murphy and the Magical Hat," the first in her children's book series. "Taking care of two and finding the time to do what you want in life is so important to me."

David seems like she's perfectly cut out for the balancing act that is motherhood, considering she moved to New York City for her husband's work with the NBA when she was 36 weeks pregnant.

"When Murphy was first born, she was so tiny that we walked everywhere," David recalls. "I started imagining what we could do together in the city, and that sparked my desire to write the first book—with her name in it, of course. I figured I had to start somewhere."

Truth be told, David had started on her writer's path years ago. In high school, her senior thesis consisted of a series of short stories inspired by photographs she'd taken of old doors. In college, she took creative writing courses at Ohio University, where she eventually earned her bachelor's degree in journalism.

"I always knew I wanted to write a book," David says. "I just never thought it would be a children's book." Perhaps her perspective shifted when she met and married Jeff, a fellow Columbus, Ohio, native whom she followed to Sacramento when he went to work for the Sacramento Kings.

"We dated long distance for a while to see if it worked," David says. "It worked! I was doing sales at the time, and I figured I could do that anywhere, so I moved out here and we got married."

Though the transition from Ohio to California's capital wasn't exactly seamless—"It was a lot of adjustment, for sure," she admits—David found that Sacramento wasn't an entirely alien environment.

"The people here are fantastic and friendly, which really reminds me of the Midwest," David says. "When people ask how you are, they mean it. It immediately felt like home."

Which could explain why, after their stint in New York City, the couple immediately found their way back to Sacramento. But not before Manhattan and the birth of their first daughter made a lasting impression on David.

"When Murphy was born, I thought it was time to meld my passion and my dream [of writing a book]," David says. "The possibilities in New York are endless, and I realized I could tie in the city with the importance of using your imagination, which my mom had instilled in me and my little sister growing up. In the book, the little girl can't go out on a rainy day, so her mother gives her a magical hat to spark her imagination. If you're familiar with New York City, you can actually recognize the carousel in Central Park where the little girl ends up going."

The carousel, as well as all the other illustrations in the book, are beautifully rendered by Helen Turner, an artist from the United Kingdom with whom David communicated primarily via e-mail.

“As the world is these days, we did almost everything on-line,” David says. “We e-mailed drawings back and forth, and I ended up publishing the book myself through Outskirts Press. Self-publishing is a very popular way to go these days.”

But what about David’s dream of having a wider audience for her work someday? “I got a lot of great feedback about the book, but no literary agent,” David says. “I figured it was more important to fulfill my dream than be famous. If millions of copies sell, great, but it’s more important to me that I got to accomplish my goal and that people get to read it.”

After a process David calls “intensive”—which involved careful self-editing, the input of trusted outside individuals and an estimated 50 drafts—the book is now available online through Amazon and Barnes & Noble, as well as in local children’s stores like Koukla Kids and Puddles Children’s Shoppe.

And now that David has achieved her authoring aspirations?

“I’m writing a second book—I have a second child to write in!” David says. “And now that I have both girls, I think the message for this next book will be sharing.”

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