

WISE AT HEART CONTRIBUTORS

A selection of biographical sketches of the 228 (and counting!) Global Wisdom Leaders who have shared their insights.

May, 2009

Annie Barrows

Annie Barrows is an author of books for young people, and has received wide recognition for the adult novel *The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society*. This story, about a book club born on the island of Guernsey during World War II, was begun by Annie's aunt, Mary Ann Shaffer, whose failing health led her to ask her niece to help her finish the book. Annie has gone on to publish other titles, including the *Ivy and Bean* Series.

Camila Batmatghelidjh

Camila is the founder and director of Kids Company, a London-based organization that serves the needs of abused, abandoned and at-risk children. She has been a psychotherapist for more than 20 years, and has now trained a diverse staff of over 300 to work effectively with children dealing with dramatic challenges. Camila has created a pioneering approach in delivering services to children, focusing the organization's activities on the needs of the most vulnerable client group without making compromises. Camila speaks regularly at conferences and has contributed to numerous publications. Her book, *Shattered Lives: Children Living With Courage and Dignity*, was published in May 2006. Camila was winner of the Ernst and Young 'Social Entrepreneur of the Year 2005' award and was also awarded 'Woman of the Year' in 2006.

Juana Bordas

Juana Bordas is President of Mestiza Leadership International in Denver, Colorado and Vice President of the Board of the Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership. A former faculty member for the Center for Creative Leadership, Juana is a founder of Mi Casa Women's Center, where she served as Executive Director. Today, Mi Casa is recognized as a national model for women's empowerment. Juana is also a founding President/CEO of the National Hispanic Leadership Institute, the only program in America that prepares Latinas for national leadership. In 2000, she founded The Circle of Latina Leadership to train "the next generation of Latina leaders." Juana recently served as advisor to Harvard's Hispanic Journal on Public Policy and the Kellogg National Fellows Program. A former Peace Corps volunteer, Juana has been honored for her lifelong commitment to advancing communities of color. Her book, *Salsa, Soul and Spirit: Leadership for a Multicultural Age*, has received praise from experts in the leadership field and from Latino, Black and American Indian leaders.

Phil Borges

At the age of 45, Phil Borges left a successful orthodontic practice and declared himself a full-time photographer. At 58 and at the peak of international acclaim, Borges turned his talent to a more purposeful passion -- expanding children's worldview and cultural

knowledge. In 2001, Borges created Bridges to Understanding to get middle and high school students worldwide talking to and understanding each other. His tools: interactive technology, photography, storytelling, and travel. Since its inception, 4,000 students in 30 countries have worked on Bridges to Understanding projects, exchanging stories about everything from families to child labor, water pollution to housing for orphans. Phil is an 2007 Winner of the Purpose Prize. For over twenty five years Phil Borges has lived with and documented indigenous and tribal cultures around the world. Through his photographic work, he strives to create a heightened understanding of the issues faced by people in the developing world. His books and exhibits include *Tibetan Portrait: The Power of Compassion, Enduring Spirit* (a collaboration with Amnesty International to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights), and his current project *Women Empowered*, which introduces some of the extraordinary women in the developing world who are breaking through gender barriers and conventions in order to enhance their well being and the well being of their communities.

Norman Borlaug

Norman Borlaug was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1970 in recognition of his contributions to world peace through increasing food supply. He continues to work passionately as a agronomist and humanitarian. He has been called the father of the Green Revolution. Having received his Ph.D. in plant pathology and genetics, Dr. Borlaug began his long career of developing higher-yielding and more disease-resistant varieties of food grains. In recent decades he has applied innovative methods of increasing food production in Asia and Africa. In 1986, he established the World Food Prize to recognize individuals who have improved the quality, quantity or availability of food around the globe. It is not an exaggeration to say that Dr. Borlaug is in part responsible for saving over a billion people from starvation.

Sandra Boynton

Sandra Boynton has been well-known for several decades for her signature cartoon animal characters, particularly in books for young children. She continues to create characters, always with a humorous point of view, for greeting cards and a wide variety of products from gift wrap to clothing, fabric, calendars, puppets and wallpaper.

Sandra says that she wrote her first children's book at age four; it was called *The Funny Animal*, with this text: "Once there was a funny animal. One day he had a birthday party. All the animals came. They did not like it, so they left. The End." Since then she has written dozens of very popular books for children, and for adults, and has sold about 20 million copies.

With more creativity still to offer the world, Sandra has for over 10 years been writing and producing music. She has written more than 50 songs targeted for younger audiences that have been recorded by various artists and collected into three albums; all four of her children sang on these recordings. She has also written the text for choral music, much of it recorded and performed on some of the world's most prestigious stages.

Today, Sandra and her husband Jamie McEwan live in New England where she works out of a converted barn which sports a hippo weathervane.

Lisa Brown

Lisa Brown is the founder of American Chickens, a business that publishes a magazine, promotes Lisa's books and graphic design work, and furthers the work of the American Chickens Institute. Lisa Brown is the author and illustrator of *How to Be*, which was chosen by the Pennsylvania Center for the Book as one of the thirteen Best Children's Books for Family Literacy in 2007. She is the creator of the *Baby Be of Use* series, a collection of board books for busy parents including: *Baby Mix Me a Drink* and *Baby Do My Banking*. She has also designed and illustrated *How to Dress for Every Occasion by The Pope* under the name Sarah "Pinkie" Bennett and *The Latke Who Couldn't Stop Screaming*, by Lemony Snicket, to whom she is allegedly married. Her next book for children is *Sometimes You Get What You Want*, written by author and preschool teacher Meredith Gary. It is nearly impossible to put Lisa Brown in a box other than to say that her work is always tinged (if not saturated) with humor.

Gennifer Choldenko

Gennifer Choldenko is a Newberry Honor-winning American writer of books for children and adolescents. *Al Capone Does My Shirts* is the book for which she received the Newberry, and another award-winning title by Gennifer is *Notes from a Liar and Her Dog*. She is well known for her sense of humor, and for her creation of independent young heroines.

Joy Cowley

Joy Cowley has been a writer for nearly 50 years. A native New Zealander, Joy travels the world speaking with teachers, children, parents and lovers of stories. She has written short stories and novels for adults, but has specialized in books for children having difficulty learning to read. She has also specialized in offering workshops for writers whose culture is not adequately represented in children's books. Joy is also a mentor of writers and a patron of "Storylines," an initiative of the Children's Literature Foundation of New Zealand, which promotes awareness of the importance of reading for all children, and supports writers and illustrators of children's literature in New Zealand.

Al Etmanski

Al Etmanski has been a leading advocate for people with disabilities and their families for over two decades. He is widely recognized as a visionary thinker in areas of social policy, community development and individualizing services for people with disabilities. Al is an author, an advocacy consultant and social inventor who specializes in finding innovative, non-governmental solutions to social problems. He is President and co-founder of Planned Lifetime Advocacy Network (PLAN), assisting families across Canada and globally address the financial and social well-being of their relative with a disability, particularly after their parents die. He proposed and led the successful campaign to establish the world's first Registered Disability Savings Plan for people with disabilities. Al is currently assisting

advance accessibility and inclusion for people with disabilities in association with the 2010 Vancouver Paralympic/Olympic Games. He has received several international and Canadian honors and fellowships, including the Queen's Jubilee medal.

John Fleming

John Fleming began his career as a Peace Corps volunteer in Malawi and then served as a program analyst for the United States Civil Rights Commission. He was the founding director of the National Afro-American Museum and Cultural Center in Wilberforce, Ohio. He has since served as the Director of the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center and as Vice President of Museums at Cincinnati Museum Center at Union Terminal. Dr. Fleming is now Executive Producer for "America I Am: African American Imprint on America," a traveling exhibition. He was appointed to serve on the National Underground Railroad Advisory Commission, as well as to the National Museum of African American History and Culture Presidential Commission.

Juliana Forbes

Juliana Forbes is Co-Founder and Creative Director of Mothers Acting Up, an organization that advocates for children around the world by motivating women to join together and stand in solidarity to raise the youngest and most vulnerable humans to a better standard of living. Mothers Acting Up is an activist organization that inspires, educates and engages mothers to prioritize children in our corporate and public policies. Juliana and her fellow advocates believe that when mothers lead, generations of global citizens will follow.

Ohki Siminé Forest

Ohki Siminé Forest is a vision-holder and spiritual teacher of Canadian Mohawk descent who has lived in Chiapas, Mexico since 1986 where she works with impoverished Maya people. Trained and initiated by Maya, Mongolian and Canadian shamans, Ohki has taught a unified practice of ancient Native Medicine Wheel ways for over 25 years. She offers seminars in guided meditation, drumming, breathing and movement practices.

Aref A. Gadhi

Aref A. Gadhi is an architectural engineer and urban development advisor in the City of Holy Makkah in Saudi Arabia. He recently served as the acting mayor of the City of Holy Makkah (known in the western world as Mecca).

Donald A. Glaser

Dr. Donald Glaser is the 1960 winner of the Nobel Prize in Physics. He is a retired professor of Physics at the University of California at Berkeley, where his research in the late 1950's focused on experimental techniques to understand elementary particles of physics. This led, over the decades, to tremendous advancements in atomic energy. However, that was just the first phase of Dr. Glaser's career. In the 1960's, he turned his attention to molecular biology and the study of genetics of microorganisms. In the 1970's, Dr. Glaser

and partners founded the first bio-technology company, thus starting an industry that continues to bring valuable applications of molecular biology to medicine and agriculture. Ever an innovator, Dr. Glaser then moved to research in neurobiology and respected findings regarding vision and wiring of the human brain. Given the breadth and depth of his contributions to science over many decades, it is important to recognize that it has been almost 50 years since his receipt of the Nobel Prize.

Mary Gordon

Mary Gordon is the Founder and President of Roots of Empathy, an organization based in Ontario, Canada that provides classroom curriculum that has proven to increase social and emotional competence among children. The lasting effects of this program are that children develop a deeper and stronger sense of empathy for others. Mary is an educator, best-selling author, child advocate and parenting expert. Roots of Empathy now offers programs in Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the United States and on the Isle of Man. Mary also founded Canada's first and largest school-based Parenting and Family Literacy Centers, which have been used internationally as a best practice model. Her 2005 book, *Roots of Empathy: Changing the World Child By Child*, received high praise across the world.

Jaimala Gupta

Jaimala Gupta and her husband Hitesh are the founders and driving force behind a non-governmental organization, Vatsalya, in Jaipur, India. Among their many projects is Udayan, a children's "village" for orphaned and abandoned children. Jaimala holds a Masters in Public Health from the University of North Carolina. She has conducted health research on behalf of organizations such as the World Health Organization, UNICEF, CARE and the World Bank. Her passion to start Udayan in 2000 grew out of her work as a public health consultant for the Indian government. Presently, in Rajasthan, Jaimala is convening international experts to explore Quality Institutional Care and Alternatives for Children.

Lemony Snicket aka Daniel Handler (or vice versa)

Very few authors have so been so thoroughly absorbed by their literary pseudonym as Daniel Handler. At some time during the raging success of his series of books for children known collectively as *A Series of Unfortunate Events*, Daniel decided to allow promoters, and then fans, to refer to him as Lemony Snicket; it was easier than always explaining who he really is. Snicket completed the 14th and final installment of the series in 2006, allowing Daniel to re-emerge and to pursue his many other interests. Daniel is a writer of novels for adults, is politically active, and is a musician and filmmaker. He is an accomplished accordion player who has performed on many albums. Daniel has produced screenplays and was involved in a commentary track for the DVD version of the film Lemony Snicket's *A Series of Unfortunate Events*. In the latter, he performed in character as the "real" Lemony Snicket, criticizing the actor who portrayed him in the film, and being generally difficult about participating in the commentary process.

Tom Hanks

Tom Hanks is a two-time academy award winning actor well known for performances in movies such as *Philadelphia*, *Forrest Gump*, *Sleepless in Seattle* and *Saving Private Ryan* (among many others). He has also won several Golden Globe and Screen Actors Guild awards. Tom is also a director, executive producer and screenwriter, and in addition to film has developed several acclaimed television productions such as the HBO mini-series *Band of Brothers*. His interests also go beyond the entertainment industry. He is a strong proponent of environmentalism, and is an investor in the development of electric vehicles. Tom is a member of the National Space Society and has been active in several productions promoting manned space programs (a passion underscored in his portrayal of astronaut Jim Lovell in *Apollo 13*). He has served as spokesperson and fundraiser for several efforts to honor heroes of World War II. But, that's not all. Tom and his wife Rita Wilson are strong advocates for a variety of organizations that support children and families in need.

Katharine Holabird

Katharine Holabird's first children's book, *Angelina Ballerina*, was published in 1983. The famous dancing mouse celebrated her 25th anniversary in 2008. It is considered a modern classic in children's literature.

As a child, Katharine lived in an imaginary world of fairy tales, princesses, and ballerinas, and loved to perform and dance with her sisters. She went on to receive a B.A. in Literature from Bennington College.

In 1974, Katharine married and moved with her husband, Michael Haggiag, to London, England. Katharine continued to write and also worked as a nursery school teacher until the birth of her three children. Her two daughters' enchantment with ballet and fantasy helped her create her famous little mouse, and her son was the inspiration for Angelina's cousin, Henry.

Along with her passion for the limelight, Angelina's feisty character is familiar to many children, Katharine believes. "Angelina is highly sensitive like many young children. She easily loses her temper and bursts into tears, and then she struggles to get over it and apologize. Nobody is perfect," Katharine continues. "Children are familiar with Angelina's outbursts and emotional upheavals because they experience exactly the same feelings themselves. But no matter how hard Angelina may struggle with her conscience, they know she'll always try to do the right thing in the end."

Jennifer Holm

Jennifer Holm is an author of books for children. Her book *Our Only May Amelia* received the Newberry Honor. This book was also staged as a theater production in Seattle in 2002. Jennifer has also been a broadcast production of television commercials and music videos. She and her husband Jonathan Hamel recently collaborated on a series entitled *The Stink Files* about a British international cat of mystery.

James Howe

James Howe is the author of more than seventy books for children, including the popular series about Bunnica and his friends. Along with these award winning tales, James has written the Pinky and Rex series, The Misfits, Totally Joe and the Sebastian Barth mysteries, all well known to avid young readers. Some of James' inspiration comes from a life-long love of old horror movies (the campy ones), with vampires and mad scientists. He enjoys the art of spoofing such films in his stories.

Maira Kalman

Maira Kalman is an illustrator, author, artist and designer. Born in Tel Aviv, Kalman came to New York City with her family at age 4. Maira has authored a series of children's books about Max Stravinsky, the poet-dog. She is known for many of her works, including covers for *The New Yorker* magazine and the illustrations for the 2005 edition of the classic book *The Elements of Style* by William Strunk and E.B. White. Ever an innovator, Maira has written an illustrated blog, *The Principles of Uncertainty*, that was published as a book in 2007.

Marc Kielburger / Craig Kielburger

Marc Kielburger is a Canadian author, humanitarian and activist for children's rights. He is the chief executive director of Free The Children, an international development and youth empowerment organization. His brother Craig is also active in the organization. Founded in 1995, Free The Children is a youth-driven charity, inspiring an entire generation to stand up and have their voices heard. The organization has built more than 500 schools throughout Asia, Africa and Latin America, providing daily education to more than 50,000 children. Through its Adopt a Village development model, it has established more than 23,000 alternative income projects to assist women and their families in achieving sustainable incomes. Free The Children's latest initiative is a joint project with Oprah Winfrey's Angel Network called O Ambassadors, designed to educate and inspire more than one million young people across North America to become socially engaged and take action to help their underprivileged peers overseas.

Rick Koca

Rick Koca is the founder of STANDUP FOR KIDS, a national non-profit volunteer outreach organization dedicated to going to the streets and making a difference in the lives of at-risk, homeless and street kids. Initially, a team of 5,000 volunteers, including outreach counselors, provide basic necessities such as clothes, hygiene products, and food. It has been working for 15 years and the program now operates in more than 30 cities. The approach is effective because, as Rick notes, "we don't ask for anything in return. We simply tell kids 'we want to help you do what you want to do. What is that?'"

Studies suggest that as many as 90 percent of youngsters who leave home do so because of child abuse. They have been physically, sexually, or emotionally hurt and taken advantage of. STANDUP FOR KIDS believes all kids should have choices when it comes to their personal safety. Sadly, once on the streets, young people are at even higher risk of being

physically and/or sexually victimized. Thirteen kids die on the streets every day from abuse, disease and suicide. Rick notes that if you talk to a street kid who has been on the streets for any period of time, they will tell you that after a while, they don't recognize who they have become, and worse yet, they don't care.

STAND UP FOR KIDS has been recognized by the White House on three occasion, the U.S. Justice Department, Supreme Court Justice member Ruth Bader Ginsburg, and has been awarded the JCPenney "Golden Rule Award," as well as many other awards and letters of proclamation and commendation.

Talia Leman

New York Times writer Nicholas Kristof recently wrote about someone he plans to endorse for President of the United States in 2044: Talia Leman, an eighth grader in Iowa who loves soccer and swimming, and whose favorite subject is science. When Talia was 10 years old, she saw television clips of New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina and decided to help. She galvanized other kids and started a movement to trick-or-treat at Halloween for coins for hurricane victims. The movement caught the public imagination, Talia made it on the *Today* show, and the campaign raised more than \$10 million. With that success behind her, Talia organized a program called RandomKid to help other young social entrepreneurs organize and raise money. At www.randomkid.org, young people can link up with others to participate in various philanthropic ventures.

Trudy Ludwig

Trudy Ludwig is an award-winning author who specializes in writing children's books that explore the colorful and sometimes confusing world of children's social interactions. Her first book, *My Secret Bully*, grew from her daughter's painful experiences. She is well known for her passion and compassion in addressing relational aggression. Trudy is a member of the International Bullying Prevention Association and collaborates with experts and organizations such as Putting Family First and the Hands & Words Are Not For Hurting Project.

Lesley Max

Lesley Max is the CEO of Great Potentials Foundation in Auckland, New Zealand. She was also the CEO and co-founder of the Pacific Foundation. She introduced the Home Interaction Programme for Parents and Youngsters (HIPPY) to New Zealand, as well as devising the Family Service Center model of primary school-based one-stop-shops for parents and children. Lesley's career has always focused on assisting under-privileged children and includes having written a book *Children - Endangered Species?* She has successfully lobbied for the introduction into New Zealand of Family Start, an intensive prevention program for families at risk, and has collaborated on a large scale mentoring program designed to assist low-income and Maori and Pacific young people gain equitable access to university while avoiding excessive student debt.

Marisa Montes

Marisa Montes is a prolific author of books for children, but is also an artist, lawyer, humorist, motivational speaker, and an advocate for feminism, affirmative action and rights for persons with disabilities. She was born in San Juan, Puerto Rico, but lived many places as a child because her father was in the army. This had a significant impact on her perspective about speakers of other languages living in the United States. Her books for children are filled with diverse characters and tinged with mystery and the supernatural. Her most recent book, *Los Gatos Black on Halloween*, has won several awards for its promotion of bilingual proficiency and its illustration, and was chosen a Notable Book by the American Library Association.

Yuyi Morales

Yuyi Morales is an illustrator and author from Xalapa, Mexico. She has written and/or illustrated several books for children in Spanish and English. Yuyi came to the United States after she married and spoke only Spanish, and lived with her husband's family who spoke only English. She says that she discovered a "universal language" when she discovered the children's section of the public library. *Harvesting Hope: The Story of Cesar Chavez* by Kathleen Krull, was the first English language book that Yuyi illustrated, and it received several awards. The first book she both wrote and illustrated, *Just A Minute: A Trickster Tale and Counting Book*, also garnered extensive recognition.

Greg Mortenson

Greg Mortenson is the co-founder (with Dr. Jean Hoerni) and Executive Director of nonprofit Central Asia Institute. Since a 1993 climb on Pakistan's K2, he has dedicated his life to promoting community-based education and literacy programs, especially for girls, in remote mountain regions of Pakistan and Afghanistan. Mortenson is also founder of Pennies For Peace and co-author of the #1 New York Times best-seller, *Three Cups of Tea: One Man's Mission to Promote Peace...One School At A Time*.

Joseph E. Murray

Dr. Joseph E. Murray is the most recent surgeon to receive the Nobel Prize in Medicine. In late 1954, he performed the first successful human renal transplantation between identical twins. It was this accomplishment and his decades of perfecting this surgical technique, for which he won the Nobel Prize in 1990. As with many Nobel laureates, Dr. Murray's life is much more than that one aspect of his career. He is also well respected for his work in medical ethics, including his participation in the debate regarding the definition of death. He is a strong advocate for support for scientific research, and a leading voice encouraging collaboration between clinical surgeons and basic scientists, believing it is imperative that each professional understand and respect the other's discipline.

Naomi Shihab Nye

Naomi Shihab Nye is the child of a Palestinian father and an American mother who went to elementary school in the American Midwest, to high school in Ramallah, Jordan, the Old City in Jerusalem and Texas, and to college at Trinity University in San Antonio. She is the author of numerous books of poems, often about her experience as an Arab-American woman. She has won several prizes for her poetry, and is frequently noted for her warmth and human insight, and her sense of peace that overflows with a humanitarian spirit. Ms. Shihab Nye frequently travels throughout both the U.S. and the Middle East, promoting international goodwill through the arts.

Katherine Otoshi

Katherine Otoshi is the founder of the KO Kids Books line of stories for children. Katherine graduated with degrees in graphic design and painting, and worked for many years at George Lucas' Industrial Light and Magic as the Graphic Design Art Director. *What Emily Saw* was Katherine's first title under the KO Kids Books brand. She has since written *The Saddest Little Robot* and *Simon and the Sock Monster*.

Teachers, counselors and parents have highly praised Katherine's book *One* about different colors not getting along, until *One* comes along and helps out. It has been called a "deceptively simple color and counting book," that is really about bullying and the importance one person can make in creating a better world for everyone.

Katherine is active in publishing associations, especially in the San Francisco Bay Area. She also leads writing workshops for aspiring authors.

Gill Pittar

Gill Pittar is a New Zealand author of 78 children's books around the adventures of Milly and Molly and their multi-cultural friends. She began her life as a farmer (both as the daughter of a farmer and as an adult) and raised four children. She moved to Auckland and opened "Rural Delivery," a specialty shop for New Zealand-made products. One product was a "topsy turvey" doll – one that turns inside out to be two dolls in one -- that inspired "Milly, Molly," the central characters in her picture books. Gill resolved to use the doll to promote acceptance of diversity while indigenous people worldwide (and especially the Maori of New Zealand) were struggling to reinstate their place in a changing world). Gill's books have been the subject of two television series and have been released in 1001 countries in 23 languages.

Sharon Rohrbach

Sharon Rohrbach was a neo-natal nurse for 16 years in St. Louis. She watched too many newborns leave the hospital, then return with life-threatening medical conditions. In 1992, she took action by founding the Nurses for Newborns Foundation to bring experienced nurses into the homes of mothers whose social-economic, personal or health status put their

infants at high risk. In the years since, the Foundation has documented that this low-cost, high-impact program reduces infant mortality, prevents child abuse and neglect, strengthens families and provides parenting education. The Foundation also provides basic supplies, including food, blankets and diapers. Nurses for Newborns now operates in several lower Midwestern states. For her work on behalf of our most vulnerable children, Sharon is a recipient of Civic Ventures' Purpose Prize.

Susan Roth

Susan Roth is the author/illustrator of over 35 books for children. While her writing and artistic gifts are obvious, Susan points out that she does not paint! She has developed a unique collage technique that makes her books very distinctive. Susan's books include dozens of titles including *Great Big Guinea Pigs*, and her demonstrations include collage workshops and strategies to take one's one creative idea and lead it through story writing and illustration to publication. One of Susan's most ambitious projects is a book she wrote and illustrated, *Do Re Mi: If You Can Read Music, Thank Guido D'Arezzo* that, in association with Angelo Mafucci, became an oratorio, with the text serving as the libretto.

Lissa Rovetch

Lissa Rovetch is an author of books for children. Originally from Boulder, Colorado, she now lives in the San Francisco Bay Area. Her books include the very popular *Hot Dog & Bob Adventures* series about a boy (Bob) and a talking hot dog (who says he is from another planet and is here to save Earth). Lissa is known for being wildly imaginative in her storytelling, a quality that her readers greatly enjoy.

Especially when she meets children at schools, Lissa often goes by her pen name, "L. Bob Rovetch," an investigative reporter specializing in extraterrestrial activity. L. Bob is also the founding member of SQUISH – the Society that Questions Unusual Intergalactic Space Happenings.

"Sometimes," Lissa says, "I'll write a story over and over again. And even though it can take a lot of time, I love watching it get better as I go. My favorite part is when I've really gotten to know my characters, and all I have to do is sit back and type while they tell me what happens next."

Synthia Saint James

Synthia Saint James is a woman with a breadth of creative talent: she is a fine artist, an architectural designer, an author, a songwriter and a speaker. She is the designer of the United States Postal Stamp for the Kwanzaa holiday, has to date written and or illustrated 13 children's picture books, three poetry and prose books, four children's activity books, a cookbook, and a postcard book. She is the recipient of The Woman of the Year Award for the 26th Senate District, and she has garnered numerous other awards including a Parent's Choice Silver Honor for her book *Sunday*, a Coretta Scott King Honor Award for illustrating *Neeny Coming...Neeny Going*, and an Oppenheim Gold Award for the book *To Dinner For Dinner*, which she illustrated. Her architectural designs include large scale

ceramic tile murals, elevator doors at the California State Capitol, and stained glass windows. Saint James' work hangs in public spaces throughout the United States and her paintings grace the covers of several best-selling books.

Daniel San Souci

Daniel San Souci was born in San Francisco, and grew up across the Bay in Berkeley, California. He attended the California College of Arts and Crafts in Oakland, California. Over his twenty-year career as an author and illustrator, he has published nearly fifty children's books, including thirteen with his brother, Robert.

"There was real excitement about literature in my family when I was growing up," says Daniel. "When I wasn't running around with my friends, I could usually be found lying on the rug in my room with all my books." When he started reading on his own, his parents gave him a set of the Scribners Classics. It was at this time that he discovered the great illustrators, N.C. Wyeth and Howard Pyle. "The moment I saw their paintings adorning the pages of those adventure books, I knew that I, too, wanted to be a book illustrator," he says.

In 1978, Daniel illustrated his first book, *The Legend of Scarface, A Blackfeet Indian Tale*, which his brother Robert retold. Daniel's books cover a variety of subjects, but his wildlife books are his favorites. He has just completed *Antelope, Bison, Cougar: A National Park Wildlife Alphabet Book*.

Daniel lives in the East Bay hills with his wife Loretta, who is a children's librarian. They have three children.

Gail Schoettler

Gail Schoettler continues to pursue a varied career in business, ranching, politics and journalism, among many other passions. With her husband, Dr. Don Stevens, Gail runs eGlobal Education, an executive travel business, which take business and community leaders overseas to meet their counterparts and to experience first hand the cultures, economies and history of other parts of the world. They have visited over 70 countries. For over a decade, Gail has discussed politics, business and critical issues in her bi-weekly column in the Denver Post. She has been a United States Ambassador, Lieutenant Governor and State Treasurer of Colorado. Gail is one of the rare few who have climbed all 56 of Colorado's peaks above 14,000 ft., and recently climbed Mt. Kilimanjaro.

Joan Siff

Joan Siff runs W.A.T.C.H., an organization that stands for a World Against Toys Causing Harm. She is passionate about the number of choices and challenges parents face in the choice of appropriate toys for their children. W.A.T.C.H. works to inform parents about the hazards of children's products. Part of Joan's mission is to educate parents that safety must be an integral part of the fabric of a home, and that parents must be proactive, not reactive, when looking to prevent injuries. At the heart of her work is Joan's desire that children be empowered to speak from their hearts, to draw pictures from their own

imaginations, to show gestures of compassion and to know that each and every child has the power to change the world.

Marcy Smith

Marcy Smith is the founder of Madisons Foundation, which she established as a result of her frustrations in finding useful information when her daughter Madison faced a life-threatening disease. The Foundation is dedicated to improving the quality and quantity of information available to parents of children with serious diseases and to facilitating effective communication among parents, physicians and medical experts.

Madisons Foundation donates to medical research and program development in support of efforts to treat and cure rare pediatric diseases. It also donates significantly to the Emerging Therapies Initiative in Pediatric Oncology at the Jonsson Comprehensive Cancer Center, helping provide clinical trials for children. Marcy's leadership has been key to creating the Connecting Parents program, a personal network of support for parents whose children have the same rare disease. This free, online community has a growing database of information that is updated by UCLA medical professionals.

Zilpha Keatley Snyder

Zilpha Keatley Snyder is the recipient of Newberry Honor Book awards for three of her books for children, *The Egypt Game*, *The Headless Cupid*, and *The Witches of Worm*. These three books have also received several other of the highest international honors for excellence in children's literature. She has written 40 books, mostly for children ages 9 to 13, but also books for young adults, picture books and a book of poetry. Zilpha's books have been published in translation in 13 foreign countries.

Katy Tartakoff

Katy Tartakoff is a photographer in Denver, Colorado. She specializes in portrait photography, but has expanded her work to include images from her travels to the developing world. Katy is the Founder of the Children's Legacy, an organization that helps seriously ill children and their families write their own stories by providing books that guide them along, including *My Stupid Illness*, for sick children, and *Let Me Show You My World*, for their siblings and parents. For those children who die, the books help their families cope. For those who survive, the books help them heal emotionally.

Mark Teague

Mark Teague is a writer and illustrator of 11 books for children and the illustrator of more than 20 others. Some of his most popular titles are *Pigsty*, *Barber Tamer* and *One Halloween Night*. He is also the illustrator of the beloved *Poppleton* series by Cynthia Rylant and the best-selling books by Jane Yolen, *How Do Dinosaurs Say Goodnight* and *How Do Dinosaurs Get Well Soon*.

Uzo Unobagha

Uzo Unobagha was born in Nigeria and came to the United States in 1995. Her first book published in the U.S., *Off to the Sweet Shores of Africa and Other Talking Drum Rhymes*, is a collection of more than 75 original nursery rhymes based on the author's Nigerian heritage. Her most recent book, *Grandma, How Do You Say I Love You?*, is about the relationship between a girl whose Nigerian grandmother comes for a visit. In addition to several awards for her writing, Uzo has a degree in History from the University of Nigeria, two law degrees from the University of Southampton, England, and is currently a public school teacher in the Utica City School District in New York.

Judith Van Ginkel

Dr. Van Ginkel has a distinguished career as a champion for women's and children's health and for supporting program initiatives with sound research. She is presently professor of pediatrics at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center and president of Every Child Succeeds (ECS), a program based upon the knowledge that early brain stimulation is critically important for a child's long-term development. The program serves first-time, high-risk mothers and their infants from the prenatal period until the child is three years old. During the first nine years of operation, Every Child Succeeds has served more than 13,700 mothers and babies with over 268,000 home visits. She has been honored by several national organizations for her work, and is highly regarded for her extensive service to many nonprofit organizations. Judy is a passionate adventurous traveler and has visited most countries in the world. She has written travel articles and won a national award for a travel series on destinations. Her popular book, *Life Begins and Ends with Girlfriends*, was published in 2007.

Dennis Van Roekel

In 2008, Iowa native Dennis Van Roekel was elected President of the National Education Association. Mr. Van Roekel is a former math teacher from Paradise Valley High School in Phoenix, Arizona, and has served in numerous key Association offices. His accomplishments include dramatic increases in membership and voluntary political action committee contributions while president of the Arizona Education Association. Mr. Van Roekel was born in LeMars, Iowa, and earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Iowa in Iowa City. He earned a master's degree in math education from Northern Arizona University in Flagstaff.

Judith Viorst

Judith Viorst is a writer of fiction and non-fiction for children as well as adults. Her best known children's book is *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day*. After receiving a Bachelor's degree from Rutgers University, Judith began her career as a poet, then moved on to longer works of prose. She is often recognized for her book *Necessary Losses*, which appeared for almost two years on the *New York Times* best-seller list. Judith lectures widely on a variety of topics, ranging from the subjects of loss and control to children's literature.

Lisa Yee

Lisa Yee is the author of several books for older children. Her books feature young teen girls and boys facing experiences common for kids of this age, including how to deal with being “too smart,” being athletic but not academically inclined enough to make the team, and wrestling between following one’s passions and keeping close ties to family. Another common thread in Lisa’s books is her championing the ethnicity of her heroes and heroines. Lisa’s most recent books is *Absolutely Maybe* about a remarkable girl who embarks on an amazing journey to learn about herself and her heritage.

Jane Yolen

Jane Yolen is an author of children's books, fantasy, and science fiction, including *Owl Moon*, *Devil’s Arithmetic*, and *How do Dinosaurs Say Goodnight?* She is also a poet, a teacher of writing and literature, and a reviewer of children's literature. Jane's books and stories have won the Caldecott Medal and almost another dozen prestigious honors. She sold her first book on her 22nd birthday and has written over 280 books since.

Joel Zwick

Joel Zwick is a well known producer, writer and director for many respected films, television shows and theatrical productions. Movies that Joel has had an important part in bringing to the big screen include *My Big Fat Greek Wedding*, *Fat Albert*, *Second Sight*, and *Elvis Has Left the Building*. Joel has directed over 500 episodes of television series including *Full House*, *Mork & Mindy* and *Love Boat*. He has also acted in and directed a wide variety of Broadway, off Broadway and regional theater productions.