

Authors

Education

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Young author publishes first book

By CAROLYN STRANGE
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CAPITOLA — Rami Vissell's book has just come out and she has already had her first book signing. But the sudden fame has not gone to her head — her first concern is still getting her homework done on time. Rami, 12, is in the sixth grade at New Brighton Middle School.

Writing and illustrating her book, "Rami's Book: The Inner Life of a Child," took up her entire eleventh year. Rami's parents, Barry and Joyce Vissell, encouraged her wholeheartedly. They were teaching her at home and the book became a home-school project.

"I love how it turned out. I'm just so happy," Rami said Thursday. Her book signing was last Sunday at the Unity Temple of Santa Cruz.

Although this is Rami's first book, it is not the first time her work has been published. Her parents have written two books and Rami helped. She illustrated her parents' first book, "The Shared Heart," when she was 7.

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— Rami Vissell, age 12

Then she wrote several stories and a full chapter for her parents' second book, "Models of Love," before she was 10.

Children and adults all over the world enjoyed Rami's work and wrote letters asking her to write more, according to her parents. Then, on her 11th birthday she announced she wanted to write and illustrate her own book.

"The chapters just sort of came to me," Rami said. After working out the nine chapters, she drew pictures to illustrate her favorite parts. Drawing the pictures was especially enjoyable, she said.

What kinds of chapter ideas come to an 11-year-old girl? Rami wrote about her family and her feelings when her little sister, Mira, arrived. She wrote a chapter about

angels and one called "My Sister in the Heaven World," where she tells about the death of her unborn sister and how she coped with her grief.

Another chapter is about animals, and one is about learning to be brave.

In a chapter called "The Hidden Blessing" Rami wrote about how breaking her arm on a family camping trip helped her overcome shyness. People continually asked her about her broken arm, and in answering them she learned to talk to strangers.

"I felt that the broken arm had really helped me a lot. I realized that there had been a great hidden blessing for me in breaking my arm. There must be a hidden blessing in everything that seems bad."

The book was published by the Vissells' publishing company, Ramira Publishing in Aptos. Approximately 5,000 copies of the book were printed in Singapore, and waiting the three months it took before seeing the finished product was Rami's least favorite part of the whole process.

Initially, the Vissells thought that Rami's book would be more of a pamphlet. Then they added photographs and decided to reproduce the crayon drawings in full color. "It just grew," Joyce said.

The Vissells hope the book will help other children express their feelings. "We think all children have these inner feelings, but they are hesitant to express them," Joyce said.

Rami doesn't have any immediate plans to write another book. She's too busy with school.

"Rami is having a great year," Lisa Carlton, Rami's teacher said. "She hasn't just written a nice book, she's a great writer and a real inspiration to the other students."



Rami Vissell says she's happy with her book.

Bill Lovejoy/Sentinel