

Two Youth Books Produced on Maui

'Johann Sebastian Humpbach' and 'Giraffe Juice'

by Anuheia Yagi

January 28, 2010

Giraffe Juice, The Magic of Making Life Wonderful, written by Mauian Marci Winters and Kauai resident JP Allen, is a story and program advocating nonviolent communication (NVC), and aims to distribute one million copies (either paper or electronic) worldwide by January 1, 2012.

It follows heroine Eva Cassidy, a "freckle-faced strawberry blonde" from Fairtown, South Carolina who loves to play the harmonica and her metallic blue guitar—a guitar that she speaks to as she might to a doll, and has named Blue Shine. One winter morning, in her father's old barn, she discovers a magical talking giraffe nicknamed Marvel, who, through the course of the book, teaches Eva (and us) how to deal with school bullies and be a peaceful communicator.

The story then enters into the lexicon the term "Giraffe Juice," defined as "a powerful energy that bubbles up inside of us when we know we have made life wonderful for ourselves or others."

To help young people, parents and educators learn more, the book closes with five pages of additional resources, as well as a four-page list of words for "feelings" and "needs" pertaining to satisfaction and dissatisfaction, to expand kids' vocabulary in expressing themselves.

With great generosity, the book's author-duo and panel of developmental editors encourage interested readers to share the book—available in its entirety for free, in full color—by downloading it online and forwarding it to others. "Ninety percent of the sales of the physical book (at giraffejuice.com) will be allocated to spreading Giraffe Language throughout the world... the remaining ten percent will be donated to the Center for Nonviolent Communication to support its social change and peace-making efforts." They also say they make "lots of free copies of this book" available for schools and libraries.

That's a good thing, as the paperback affords a bit of sticker shock. Before knowing their altruistic endeavors to distribute the book, seeing a slim paperback priced at \$14.95 is more startling than its chaotic typeset, replete with font changes and swirling onomatopoeia.

All in all, the book latches onto a neat concept and has well-meaning sights. And if but one life in a million is made more wonderful, all its efforts are well worth it.

..... thank you for being bold enough to make such exhaustive leaps into a realm with little grown-up reward (you know, fame and fortune and all that stuff). Thank you for sharing and thank you for creating with a desire to entertain and educate developing minds. I hope to see more local work in our young locals' hands.