

Press release

22 March 2011

New Children's Book Hopes to Raise Millions for Christchurch

A new publishing venture aims to become a million dollar miracle for Christchurch. The new children's book, which will raise funds for the city and help locals to recover from the disaster, is a miracle in itself – it has taken just three weeks from first thoughts to publication.

The project is the brainchild of two children's authors from opposite ends of the country who have never met before and have now banded together to write, illustrate and publish in record speed the new children's book called 'Curly from Shirley, the Christchurch Dog'.

"Obviously living in Christchurch I wanted to help but what is a writer supposed to do in the face of such devastation?" says Christchurch based Emma Pullar who wrote the book. "But I realized I could use the book to spread a little joy and raise some much needed funds to help the city recover at the same time."

Pullar enlisted the help of Auckland based author and editor Jill Marshall and the two decided to work together to make it happen. They say it has been no mean feat to write, illustrate and publish a book so quickly when it can usually take a year or more to bring a new book to the market.

On Monday 28th February they edited the text and then discovered just how many other people wanted to help too. Two days later, designer Cheryl Rowe offered her skills to the project. Two days after that award winning children's book illustrator Victoria M. Azaro agreed to illustrate. The next week Marshall created a new publishing company Pear Jam Books and went about enlisting more help.

Image Media agreed to print at low costs and in amazing time scales. Pindar NZ made the e-book version. Eight year old musical sensation, Christchurch Bob (featured on Close Up) and his mum Julie Gaudin are putting Curly to music.

"The response has been truly amazing. Everyone involved has offered their time and services for free in support of Christchurch. The only costs are the unavoidable ones for materials," says Marshall.

The release date is also timely. The book is on sale from 22nd March, exactly one month after the earthquake. Two Christchurch companies are selling and distributing the books - Nationwide Book Distributors to retailers, and the staff of The Children's Bookshop (which was badly damaged in the earthquake) to New Zealand schools and preschools.

'Curly from Shirley, the Christchurch Dog', is available as a colour picture book, an ebook and as a song.

Official launches are planned for Christchurch and Auckland on Monday 28 March at 6pm. All proceeds go to the NZ Red Cross Earthquake appeal, straight back into the heart of the city. For more information or to purchase the book people can go to www.curlyfromshirley.com

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