

Author discusses "Benny the Bald Eagle"

Heather Leigh Wallace, author of *Benny the Bald Eagle*, answers questions about her book and her career as a writer.

Q: What makes your book a top pick for parents?

A: This book makes learning fun. Parents will also appreciate reading the interesting facts about bald eagles while enjoying a fictional story about the life of a growing eagle in today's environment. Throughout the story, there are many areas where I purposely put Benny the Bald Eagle into situations that children can relate. Benny desperately wants to start flying and is told that he must continue to practice and eat right. Additionally, there is a time that Benny has to face fears and deal with bullying.

Q: Are experiences based on someone you know, or events in your own life?

A: Benny's character and personality was created based upon my niece, Kylee Babe Herring. She has a cute, comedic, and whimsical personality that could turn watching paint dry into a fun activity. The story is fictitious, but comes with intriguing facts about the bald eagle. Thus, the creative design of the book provided an exciting and engaging way for children to learn.

Q: What prompted you to write about the plight of bald eagles?

A: The story ends with the eagles finding refuge at Jordan Lake, which is the largest summertime home for the bald eagle on the East Coast. I have enjoyed taking my dog to the eagle observation deck at Jordan Lake and enjoy watching the eagle nest cam at home. The 'Did You Know' boxes alongside of the pages of the book are filled with facts of the bald eagle that I did not know. I think parents will enjoy reading this book to their children.

Q: When did you first realize you wanted to be a writer?

A: I have always wanted to be a writer. Upon graduation from high school, I received an award for my writing ability. I am also a full time writer in my professional field within the pharmaceutical industry.

Q: What was one of the most surprising things you learned in writing your book?

A: When writing the story, I had shared with friends some of the bald eagle facts within the book and each time they responded with surprise and curiosity to hear more. For example, did you know that bald eagle's nest is 8 feet wide by

11 feet deep? Shocking, isn't it?

Q: What was your favorite book(s) when you were in third grade?

A: My favorite books were written by Judy Blume and Shel Silverstein.

Q: How does your current career play in to this children's book?

A: I am a professional full-time medical writer in the pharmaceutical industry. My day job requires that my writing be black and white, factual, and without opinion, which is quite the contrast to my children's books.

Heather Leigh Wallace is a Drug Safety Medical Writer in the pharmaceutical industry and is also a part-time author. Benny the Bald Eagle is the first in series of books dedicated to children's environmental education. This is Heather's 3rd book preceded by Saxapahaw and Jordan Lake, which are both North Carolina books that share history through vintage photographs. Additionally, Heather wrote a chapter for a reference book entitled New Drug Discovery and Process. Heather has a Bachelor's degree in Business Management, a medical technology certificate, and is currently pursuing her Master's degree from Arizona State University in Clinical Research Management.

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Chatham County Democratic Party
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"In this story, we follow Benny the eaglet and his extended family on their southward journey to a place in North Carolina where many eagles have found a good home. Along the way, Benny finds his sense of humor and bravado to overcome a fearful moment – something we can all relate to. And we learn a bit about eagles and what makes a good home for them. The author mixes a bit of that whimsy, and humor, with science sides, and blends in a little sadness, tension and relief, to give us a good birds' eye view."

John Gerwin, MS, Curator of Ornithology, North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences

Meet Benny at PeakFest, May 3
outside of All Booked Up book boutique in Apex
Benny the Bald Eagle can be purchased at All Booked Up
or at www.peakcitypublishing.com

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