

## Children's book helps kids understand pandemic

The pandemic has caused a lot of stress for everyone.

While adults have found ways to cope, children are more vulnerable and have many questions.

A King resident has created a children's book, entitled "Patty and the Pandemic," which aims to alleviate some of those stresses.

Nicole Crimi said she hopes the book will educate and empower children 3-8 years old.

She wrote and illustrated the book and it has been peer reviewed and edited by specialists.

Crimi said 100% of the profits made from book sales are being donated to Face the Future Foundation, which provides life saving/changing surgeries for children in developing countries.

"This project is very close to my heart, and has been incredibly impactful thus far, selling over 4,000 books in just over a month, and receiving amazing endorsements and feedback from schools, families, children, and even Premier Ford and Minister Lecce," she said.

Currently a medical student at McMaster University, Crimi said she found knowledge and awareness of her own health to be incredibly empowering. This became even more true when COVID-19 resulted in major lifestyle changes, and instilled a lot of fear.

"I felt incredibly privileged to have access to reliable health-education resources, and empathized with the little ones who were essentially having their lives turned upside down with little explanation as to why. The common argument to not explaining it in depth to young children is that it might result in unnecessary anxiety. I wanted to create a reliable resource that would not only educate children, but also be fun and empowering so that children can feel in charge of their own health."

Crimi said she always wanted to write a book and dreamed of being an author as a child.

"As an artist, medical student, and someone who loves writing, when I realized this gap in resources available to children, creating a book seemed like a natural and exciting solution."

Creating this book really put her outside her comfort zone. She admitted she's more of a traditional oil painter, and the process of making her artwork digital and then styling and formatting a print-ready book was an incredibly steep learning curve.

Something significant she learned about the process is the importance of your intention.

"Creating the book started off as something fun. I literally created the first draft jokingly by a bonfire. It quickly became all-consuming, and at times very stressful since I was also in school full time."

She constantly asked herself why she was doing this and what she hoped to gain. It was the purpose that motivated her to keep creating, work harder and make the sacrifices necessary to get the book out in a timely manner.

"I realized that for myself, my intention was to spread kindness and hope in a challenging time, which is what led me to donate all of the profits to Face the Future Foundation.

"The awareness of my intention not only enabled me to persevere and challenge myself to work outside my comfort zone, but it is what made my project meaningful and gratifying to me, because now I can smile knowing that not only are kids enjoying this book, but someone in some other country will have their life changed by a free surgery thanks to this book and the supportive community

that it formed.?

The tone is very light, fun and empowering. Each page has rhyming verses that at times may even make readers giggle. The theme, she said, is that we do not need to be afraid. With education and teamwork, we will get through this together. It emphasizes Patty's pals and encourages readers to be one of them, working with Patty to defeat the "bad bug".?

Patty has generated quite a lot of interest, from across Canada and the U.S. Many are purchasing the book and sending it to family abroad.

The book is not only a hit with families, but those who operate day cares, clinics catering to children, hospitals, etc.

"Teachers have expressed that Patty has been an excellent learning tool and a great discussion starter, even sending me photos of them creating lessons based on the book! People have reached out to me to share stories of how they sent Patty in care packages to children who had bad experiences with COVID.?"

Crimi said she's "incredibly pleased" with the results. Despite all of the current social isolation, she says she feels so connected to her community.

"All of the positive responses, and heart-warming stories about how people are using this book to help others have made me feel incredibly empowered.?"

But that's not all. The sales raised a significant amount of money for Face the Future Foundation.

"I could not have dreamed of a better outcome.?"

Started by Toronto's Dr. Peter Adamson, Face the Future includes a team of noted medical professionals and surgeons who provide facial plastic reconstruction services to children in developing nations.

"Patty and the Pandemic" is available for purchase at [www.pattyandthepandemic.org](http://www.pattyandthepandemic.org), as well as Amazon.

To learn more, visit [www.pattyandthepandemic.org](http://www.pattyandthepandemic.org), or @pattyandthepandemic on Facebook or Instagram.

**By Mark Pavilons**