



Students Publish Children’s Book, Inspire Healthy Habits

With colorful illustrations and a simple yet profound message, “Brushtime, Bedtime,” a board book written, illustrated, and published by a group of Penn Dental Medicine students, is teaching young children and inspiring their parents to build healthy oral care and bedtime routines.

“I jumped at the chance to write this text, because it seemed like the perfect vehicle to not only promote healthy brushing habits and create positive dental associations, but to also encourage kids and parents to read aloud together more,” says Ashley Abraham (D’16), who wrote the book with fellow DMD students Kelby Okada (D’16), and Giselle Galanto (D’15), with Liz Freund (D’16) doing the illustrations. “I started to understand the role of reading aloud in early childhood development when one of my nephew’s first words was “honey” after the number of times “The Big Honey Hunt” was read aloud to him. Engaging images, rhymes, and simple language, can impact a developing mind, especially when read aloud by parents and caregivers.”

The book project is building upon the Books, Brushing and Bedtime (BBB) program within the School’s Pediatric Clinic, an oral health education and literacy program developed last year by former pediatric resident Dr. Stephanie

Rashewsky (GD’14) and currently run by second-year resident Dr. Jessica Lee (GD’15). Through BBB, an age-appropriate, dental-relevant book is given to children between the ages of 1 to 5 years at their six-month recall visits to reinforce healthy bedtime routines – tooth brushing and reading. Geared to toddlers, “Brushtime, Bedtime” will join the selection of books given out to the younger children within that one-to-five-year age range.

The first print run of 1,000 books was delivered in April — the culmination of a yearlong production process for Abraham and the others involved in creating the book. In addition to the writing, illustration, and design, they applied for and received copyright through the Penn Center for Innovation, applied for an ISBN in the event the book was sold at some point commercially or placed in a library, and researched an online printing vendor to produce the book. Funding for the book came through a grant from the Dental Trade Alliance Foundation, awarded

to Dr. Rochelle Lindemeyer, Director of the Pediatric Residency Program, who also served as faculty advisor for the project.

Abraham, Okada, Galanto, and Freund will be making a poster presentation of the project in the My Kids Dentist Research Poster Competition at the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry’s Annual Session 2015 in Seattle, Wash., May 21–24, 2015.

Presently, the book is not available for purchase, but it may be in the future. “We’ve had interest from alumni and practicing pediatric dentists who teach in the clinic and have seen the book,” says Abraham, “so we may explore making it available for purchase at some point.”

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ASHLEY ABRAHAM (D’16)

ABOVE LEFT: Students Ashley Abraham (seated), Giselle Galanto (center), and Kelby Okada (right) co-wrote the book and Liz Freund (left) did the illustrations. ABOVE RIGHT: The cover and one of the interior page spreads of the board book.