

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **For Immediate Release**

## **Belle's Star Activity Book Helps Children Overcome Bullying and Abusive Behavior**

Belle's Star, a youth novel by Farmington, New Mexico author Connie Gotsch, empowers children ages 8 to 12 to build new lives after escaping bullying and abuse or other difficult situations. Written in the first person from a dog's point of view, Belle's Star is full of adventure and colorful characters to help these children face painful issues, and find the strength to heal.

Now, Artemesia Publishing has released an activity book designed to be used with the novel. The activities were developed by award winning journalist and retired Farmington elementary school counselor Margaret Cheasebro. Margaret says, in the introduction to the Activity Book, "Whether children have experienced bullying or abusive behavior, witnessed it happen to others or been the perpetrators themselves, they can benefit from the activity book's positive, constructive focus. Parents, teachers and other youth leaders will find practical tools for helping children overcome the impact of negative behaviors that, if left unchanged, could create lifelong scars."

### **Why are Bullying and Abuse Important to Combat?**

- According to Childhelp, a nationwide resource for abused children and their caregivers, 4 children a day died of abuse in 2006. That's 1,500 for the year. An estimated 906,000 American children were victims of abuse and neglect. Three-million cases of child abuse were reported. See [www.childhelp.org](http://www.childhelp.org)
- The UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre reports that child abuse leads to 3,500 annual deaths in developed nations. The American rate of death from abuse is 10-15 times higher than European countries.
- According to a 2003 Nevada Survey, an estimated 906,000 children were determined to be victims of child abuse and neglect in the United States. This equates to a victimization rate of 12.4 per 1,000 children in the population.
- According to the same study, approximately 2.9 million referrals concerning the welfare of an estimated 5.5 million children were made to child protective service agencies.

Margaret says, "Belle's Star would be a great tool for counselors who want to help elementary school students understand abuse and deal with it effectively. Belle's Star is a great tool for home school

teachers. It's also helpful for parents who like to read to their kids and have meaningful discussions about the story. The discussion questions and activities at the end of each chapter make this book very helpful for use in small group counseling and classroom guidance activities. In addition, the learning activities provide wonderful opportunities for families to work together on a joint project that promotes stronger family ties and benefits the community.”

The activity is available to download for free from the publisher's website:  
[http://www.apbooks.net/BellesStar\\_Activity.pdf](http://www.apbooks.net/BellesStar_Activity.pdf)

Ms. Gotsch is the author of two award-winning adult novels. In 2007 she received the New Mexico Press Women's Communicator of Achievement Award and has been chosen to speak at the second annual New Mexico Women Authors' Book Festival on September 26, 2009. She holds an Ed.D in Leadership and Policy Studies with an emphasis on educational media from Northern Illinois University, and works in public radio. Ms. Gotsch is available for interviews about Belle's Star and the topic of bullying and abuse and how the novel addresses these important issues.

About the Publisher: Artemesia Publishing is a small publishing company located in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Currently with 7 titles in print, including Belle's Star, Artemesia Publishing works to publish high quality books from select authors that will educate, inform, and entertain the reader. Belle's Star is the latest title to be published under the Kinkajou Press imprint of Artemesia Publishing. For more information about the company or our other titles please contact Mr. Habiger at the address above.