

Cardiff storybook author shares her writing technique

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Local storybook writer shares how she's encouraging kids to write their own stories.

Woodland Adventurers, the first set of six short story books planned for the *Little Friends Picture Book* series, was recently published. Written for young kids, the story follows animals taking adventures in the woodlands and making friends there.



Ann's new books: woodland adventure, recently published and she believes these books will attract young readers and encourage them to write

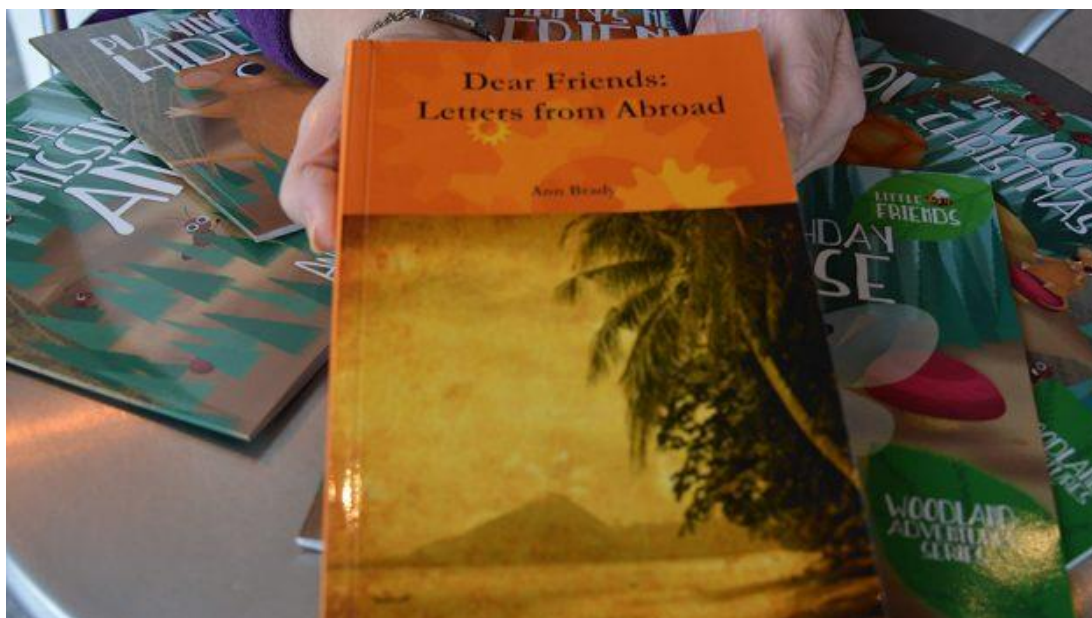
Sitting in the café in Cardiff Millennium Center is Ann Brady, 69 years old and with extensive experience in both writing and editing. She speaks directly, sharing the wisdom she's developed crafting her stories. You may already know her books, but you might not know what she's doing to encourage a new generation of writers.

When she was in her 30s, she did many things, including making pen pals with strange people, traveling around the world, setting up her own company, and creating websites. All these colourful experiences are the basis of her stories.

The writing experience for Ann began after she retired from her own business, a successful online fitness equipment website.

"When I retired, my husband asked me, what will I do? I said I was going write books. And it just came to me that what I used to do when I was a teenager? I used to write letters, and I have pen pals in many places all over the world, including Hong Kong and America. It used to take 6 weeks from England to Hong Kong, then I wrote my first story about twenty letters between two women from different social status. That's my first book," says Ann.

Her first book was, *Dear friends: Letters from Abroad*. For new books, her inspiration partly comes from imagination, but is also based on reality.

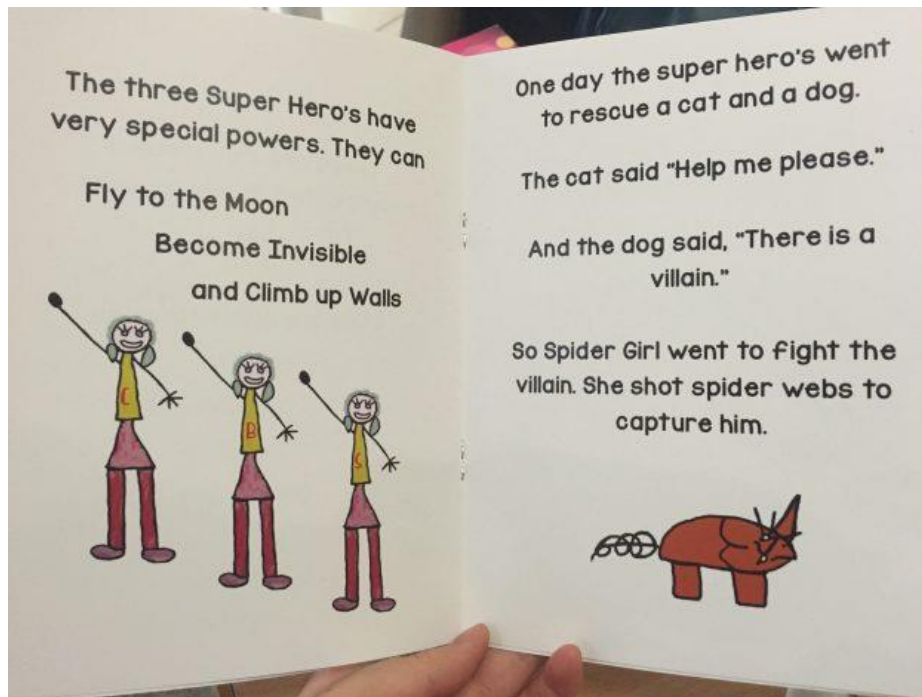


The first book of Ann is a historical book based on Ann's experience with pen pals abroad, telling readers how two girls from different social classes influence each other

"The original inspiration came from my head when I saw some simple thing in my life, especially when there were some children involved. At that time, I thought could I adapt that into my story, using animals as characters and telling stories about life for children," said Ann. "Everything in nature has their own life. And I'd like my books to encourage more kids to read and write their own books. That's what I always keep doing in my organization called *Kids and Kids*."

Young readers are really encouraged by Ann's book. One 5-year-old girl was inspired by her mother to get in touch with the author. Ann worked with her, and the girl wrote, illustrated, and published her own storybook, the *Three Girl Super Hero's*.





A 5-year-old girl is encouraged by Ann and published her own book: The Three Girl Super Hero's, and she signs for Ann in this Christmas holiday

"I have the connection with publishers and writers. And I know how to help them modify their works and publish it. There's nothing better than seeing your own work being published," says Ann, explaining how she helps kids write their dreams.

Ann shared her attitude to life. "I think if you believe in what you are doing now, and you help someone else at least once. If you achieve something, you will help at least one person. You do more than others."

Ann's writing attitudes also affects her granddaughter, who has suffered from anxiety, depression and suicidal tendencies. Her grandmother encouraged her to publish her diary about how she overcame her mental illness.

"I said to my granddaughter, 'if one person read her book, then it helps them understand they are not alone'. Other people suffer the same thing that you suffered. And this makes them feel better. "My granddaughter's book is now recommended reading on an Australian psychology website. She's achieved great things by writing," said Ann. She's deeply proud by how her granddaughter had influenced and helped other people in similar situations with her writing.

Ever since the beginning, Ann has had her own strange- but brilliant - way to write. She doesn't use pen, pencils, or even keyboards. She writes the book in her mind.

"Believe it or not, I actually wrote all these stories in my head every night," says Ann. "I used to stay awake in the evening because I didn't sleep well. For this book, it took me 3 or 4 weeks to organize all things in my mind, and then I sat down and wrote them all down. Then eventually I put them together into book form."

For Ann's new books, a cell phone application sharing their name has been created to help foster new digital interactions with the stories. Children can sit and watch the cartoon in the app, with characters from The Woodland Adventure will talk when touched.



Ann shows how her app works and says how happy her grandson was when he played the app

While this app helps foster new connections between technology and reading, Ann still thinks young people should focus more on real book.

“My application will not keep young people occupied with iPad or iPhone for a long time, it’s just a small app with interaction. Technology is actually a mixture of bad and good. Kids should still sit down with pen and paper. I think we should still read in the old fashion way. Because if we don’t, we are going to forget how to do that. We need to remember the days switch off the electricity,” says Ann.

Now, the app called Woodland Adventure can be downloaded in the [Apple App Store](#) and Ann’s books can also be found in bookshops.