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Why(r)us the Virus

A reassuring tale for preschoolers about COVID-19 safety precautions

Leesburg, VA (August 18, 2020) – Local author and illustrator Kathleen Finnegan has released her first childrens’ book, *Why(r)us the Virus*. Written to help preschoolers understand some of the changes created by the pandemic, *Why(r)us the Virus* provides gentle reassurance and simple explanations for the need to wash hands and wear a face mask during a pandemic.

“Separated from my grandchildren due to the pandemic travel restrictions, I was reading to them via the internet,” Finnegan said. “They were asking a lot of questions about why we couldn’t visit. I thought it would be fun to create a book that would answer their questions and reassure them that life wasn’t going to be like this forever.” The book incorporates aspects that keep captive a child’s interest, including a simple rhyming song, and objects hidden within the illustrations for them to look for as the book is being read aloud.

“It was the reaction of my grandchildren that spurred me to publish” said Finnegan. “Both of them sang the song often. My grandson sang it while he was waiting in their car for their COVID-19 test. That moved me, but it was when he asked me if I really believed that the Whyrus would go away that I decided to publish. I was able to turn to the page that talks about the nurses and scientists and farmers who are all working to keep us healthy and reassure him that many people are working hard to make that happen. Hopefully the book will help reassure others as well.”

The book is available in ebook, paperback and hardback formats at most online book retailers. Finnegan has pledged to donate a portion of the profits from the sale of the book to Mobile Hope of Loudoun, a non-profit that assists homeless and at-risk children, where she had been volunteering prior to the pandemic. She plans to translate the book into additional languages to make it accessible to as many people as possible.

Finnegan and her husband have lived in Leesburg for over 20 years, but prior to that lived around the world during his career as an Air Force officer. They raised 4 children who all graduated from Loudoun County Public Schools. She worked at Dodona Manor (the George Marshall House) during its restoration, then worked in IT for both Loudoun County Public Schools and the Town of Leesburg before retiring in 2018.

For more information, please visit <https://www.whyrusthevirus.com/>.

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