

THE VICKSBURG POST TOPIC

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LOCAL EVENTS E2 | SOUTHERN TRAVEL CALENDAR E2 | WEDDINGS E3

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Young author to sign books, give part of proceeds to Paws

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At age 6, Samantha Gronmeyer turned a tragedy into a story of triumph over pain.

Now 10, Samantha and her mother, Jeanna Jinks, both of Petal, will sign copies of their book, "Holly's Halo," next month at Lorelei Books. The plot came out of a true and painful experience.

"We had found two dogs at the pound and brought them home and raised them," she said. "We were outside hanging Christmas lights," when one of the dogs, Holly, wandered away from the house and onto the road. The dog was hit by a truck and died.

"It's just a horrible experience," said Jinks.

She said Samantha had a hard time dealing with the loss of her pet. But, "about two months after that," said Jinks, her daughter came to her one morning and told her she had a dream that Holly had come back. In the dream, Holly had wings and a halo and she and Samantha could fly.

"I said, 'That's an amazing dream and you need to write this down.'"

If you go

Samantha Gronmeyer and her mother, Jeanna Jinks, will sign copies of "Holly's Halo" at 2 p.m. Feb. 9 at Lorelei Books on Washington Street. Part of the proceeds will be donated to Paws Rescue. For information, call 601-634-8624.

Samantha did, and they stuck the story on a shelf in a journal.

About a year later, Jinks' mother read the story again and told the two they ought to publish it. Jinks hesitated at first, but was inspired by Samantha's persistence.

"She said, 'If you're not going to illustrate the book, you're fired and I'll get someone else to do it,'" Jinks said. So Jinks, a painter and math and science teacher who runs a studio in Hattiesburg, got to work.

The book's illustrations are watercolor and include "lots of bright colors to reflect the mood of the dream," said Jinks. "It's a wonderful book for all ages."

With the help of family and friends, the duo got the book published and has been sharing it since. "We've sold about 200



Samantha Gronmeyer and dog Tommy

in just a few months, and that's pretty good," Jinks said.

Now Samantha has a new four-

legged friend, Tommy. Although nothing can bring Holly back, writing about her "feels good

because I have something to show the world, and it gets my feelings out," Samantha said.

While Samantha would like to keep writing, her passion is helping animals—and she hopes to return to her home state of California.

"I might be something like an animal rescuer. I pretty much like to donate my time," to animals, she said.

In fact, Samantha has asked that a portion of the book's proceeds be donated to local animal rescue leagues.

Alissa Armstrong, vice president of Paws Rescue, said Lorelei Books owner Laura Weeks has also agreed to donate a portion of the book's sales to Paws. The local, nonprofit organization operates on donations and grants. Last year, Armstrong said, Paws Rescue found new homes for some 60 dogs and cats.

"Samantha's a big advocate of animal rights—with me always saying we can't pick up another dog or another cat," said Jinks, who is a graduate of Warren Central High School.

Tommy has two other canine friends and a few felines for company at the family's home in Petal, Jinks said.

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