

# PRESS RELEASE

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Virginia Parent-advocate Becomes Award-winning author, 2021 Moonbeam Children's Book Awards

**When Valerie James Abbott's daughter mysteriously lost her hearing, her family panicked but never lost hope. 12 years later, her debut children's book about pediatric hearing loss has been recognized by the Moonbeam Children's Book Awards.**

[Richmond, Virginia] On Thursday, October 14, 2021, Valerie James Abbott's debut children's book, *Padapillo*, was recognized as a bronze medal winner of the [15th Annual 2021 Moonbeam Children's Book Awards](#). Launched by the Jenkins Group in 2007, the competition seeks stories that inspire wonder, exploration, and inclusivity. Awards are given to the year's best children's books and bring increased recognition to authors, illustrators, and creative teams.

The illustrated children's book *Padapillo* is based on the Abbott family's true account and is thoughtfully narrated through the lens of an incredulous, yet observant older sibling who discovers her younger sister has lost her hearing and no one has noticed. The story was selected from nearly 1,500 entries from all over the U.S. and 22 countries around the world. The competition was judged by expert panels representing youth educators, students, librarians, booksellers, and other members of the book and literacy industry.

"My family and I are beyond overjoyed to receive this award. Having our story about childhood hearing loss recognized by the Moonbeam Children's Book Award program is surreal. I'm so grateful," Abbott said.

*Padapillo* was published on May 4, 2021 through KWE Publishing, Inc. and quickly hit the #1 New Release list on Amazon.

"Valerie is a very motivated parent-advocate and she has taken her family's experience with postnatal hearing loss and leveraged it to improve things for other families of children who are deaf and hard of hearing," said Dr. Johnnie Sexton, Au.D., Executive Director and Founder of The CARE Project. "Her characters in the book explore the emotional part of a hearing loss diagnosis and I am not surprised that people are connecting to it."

The awards ceremony, which has historically been hosted in Traverse City, Michigan, will take place online this year due to COVID-19 concerns, but program officials hope to attract guests of the authors and other book lovers who might not otherwise have been able to join an in-person celebration. At a time when authors, publishers, and booksellers continue to promote books through virtual book launches and other online events, literary awards such as the Moonbeam Children's Book Award program continue to spotlight great new titles and inspiring writers.

For more information, visit: <https://moonbeamawards.com/>

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## Contact

For more information, photos, images or interview requests, please contact: Valerie James Abbott, [valeriejamesabbott@gmail.com](mailto:valeriejamesabbott@gmail.com) or 804-241-9041.

### **About the Book**

*Padapillo* is an illustrated children's storybook, offering hope and information to families experiencing early childhood hearing loss. Little Bridget is acting strangely and no one seems to notice - except her older sister. She notices everything. When the rest of her family finally realize that Bridget has been ignoring the world around her and inventing weird words, it leads to a startling diagnosis no one saw coming. In this touching story, narrated by the attentive, yet incredulous, older sister, readers are led through a mystery and into the real-life emotional process family members often experience when a young child is unexpectedly diagnosed with hearing loss. The book is available online at Barnes and Noble, Books A Million, Amazon, and other online and local booksellers.

### **About the Author**

Valerie James Abbott is an active parent-advocate and champion for early hearing detection and intervention and parent-to-parent support organizations in Virginia. She has served on the board of Virginia Hands & Voices, is the first parent co-chair of the Virginia EHDI Advisory Committee, and has received the Governor's Award for Civilian Excellence for Virginia Fire Safety, spearheading special programming for families of children who are deaf and hard of hearing. She is also co-founder of National Late Onset Hearing Loss Awareness week, which was established in May 2021 with Justin Osmond, CEO of the Olive Osmond Hearing Fund. Valerie is a guest blogger for the Center for Family Involvement and has published several articles online and in print about raising a child with a disability that have gained nationwide attention. *Padapillo* is her first book.

Read more at [www.valeriejamesabbott.com](http://www.valeriejamesabbott.com)

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