

Mermaid series makes a splash

Author, illustrator from St. James publish second book

By David Ambro

Using a trio of mermaids to tell their stories, writer Laura Mancuso and illustrator Jenna Guidi, both of St. James, have published the second in a series of children’s books that are intended to deliver valuable messages to youths ages two to 10 years old.

The Fin-Tastic Cleanup was published last year and **The Fin-Tastic Rescue** has just been released. During an interview this week, Ms. Mancuso said she is working on the third in the series and intends to release the next in the series some time next fall.

In **The Fin-Tastic Cleanup**, mermaids Sara, Alix and Lucy, set out to help clean the ocean. They make a human friend and together they devise a plan to rid the ocean of garbage and debris and they bring garbage they find in the sea to girls on the beach to bring it to the right receptacle for disposal. The story opens with slogans for cleaning the environment and the book closes with a page of facts about pollutants in the ocean and the impact of it.

The Fin-Tastic Rescue once again features Sara, Alix and Lucy living in the ocean and interacting with their human friend Beth. In this story, though, they rescue marine life that has been negatively impacted by eight natural climatological conditions or by debris and pollution in the marine environment.

Ms. Mancuso said the second book is an outgrowth of the first book. “This time, instead of focusing on just pollution, they are saving the animals that are compromised,” she said.

One example is a cold-stunned turtle who is affected by a sudden drop in ocean temperature, which she said is a common occurrence. Others rescued are a flamingo that has plastic wrapped around her nose, a dolphin tangled in fishing lines and a manatee that has been hit by a jet ski. “All the environmental things that happened to these animals, we have a rescue

team that comes together and helps rescue these animals,” Ms. Mancuso explained.

Ms. Mancuso said she has a two-year-old who loves to look at the pictures in the books, but that the reading level goes up to 10 years old. “I do have pre-school kids who hear the story and then they take that message and when they are at the beach and see garbage

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Jenna Guidi



Laura Mancuso





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