

Six Stories to Inspire Hope

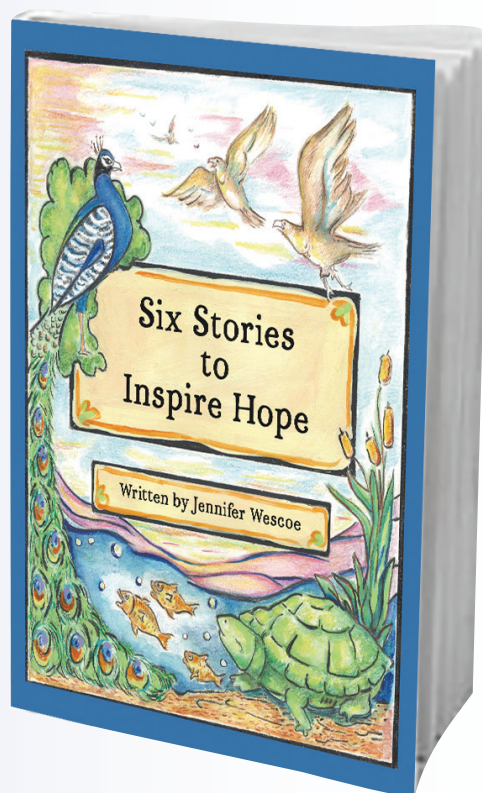
Book Sub-Title

In our rapidly changing world, many of us find it increasingly difficult to connect with one another. Retreating into our electronic devices has become the norm, and they have significantly impacted how we communicate. As a result, we may find it difficult to stay present and open to growth opportunities that lie just beyond our periphery. *Six Stories to Inspire Hope* invites readers of all ages to engage in universal and timeless adventures that we all can relate to on some level. By joining the characters on their journeys, the life lessons they learn will spark meaningful conversations that create shared experiences of our own. These stories provide an engaging way for us to explore the wonderful possibilities of genuine human connection.

The art of storytelling has played an integral role in Jennifer Wescoe's life for as long as she can remember. Whether taking the form of written or spoken word, she loves getting lost in the lives of characters. Some of her favorite childhood memories include trips to the library with her mother and sister. Excitedly wading through piles of books, Jennifer loved learning about different names, places, and perspectives. She credits many amazing teachers for inspiring her imagination and encouraging her creativity. Jennifer's first book, *The Magic Shoes*, was published after winning the Bethlehem Public Library's "Write Your Own Book" contest when she was in third grade.

A native of Pennsylvania, Jennifer received both her undergraduate and graduate degrees from Lehigh University. She has served as an English, Theatre Arts, and Gifted Seminar educator for more than twenty-five years. Jennifer is passionate about helping learners of all ages find their voice through reading, writing, creating, and performing. As director of the Freedom High School Theatre Company, she was featured in the documentary *Most Valuable Players* and appeared on the Oprah Winfrey Network. Jennifer and her students were also the subject of the WB's web series *High Drama 2: Against All Oz*. When Jennifer is not in the classroom, you can find her enjoying the company of her family, friends, and dog, Theo.

Barbara Kozero's dual passions for art and education have guided her professional career. Her artistic interests began when she was a child, when she started sketching pictures of mice and cats in school notebooks. Since then, she has produced a whimsical and unique body of work, including mosaic reliefs, fanciful clocks, and a series of "imagination drawings." For nineteen years, she worked as an art educator for elementary and middle schoolers, instilling in them the same love for unique expression that has been so important in her life. She has also enjoyed the opportunity to combine her artistic and educational callings as the author and illustrator of *Finding the Magic in Me*, a magical story she wrote for her granddaughter. Barbara is delighted to illustrate *Six Stories to Inspire Hope* for her good friend and fellow educator Jennifer Wescoe. She hopes that her drawings will help bring Jennifer's stories to life in the minds of readers and encourage them to embrace who they are.



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