

LOCAL



Photo by Christina Tatu/New Jersey Herald

Stanhope author Diana Tuorto is seen at a book signing at Botanical Bay Bookstore in Netcong. She recently released a middle-grade children's book called "Luck of the Draw."

Local author releases third children's book

By CHRISTINA TATU
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NETCONG — Since she was 2 years old, Stanhope author Diana Tuorto has had a passion for horses.

"Every year, since I was 2, I asked my parents for a horse," she said.

Tuorto was 19 when she got her first horse, but she didn't wait that long to be near the majestic animals she loved.

When she was 15, she began volunteering and rescuing horses with Mylestone Equine Rescue in Phillipsburg. Tuorto credits the facility and its horses for providing her with inspiration for many of the stories she writes today. Thirteen years later, Tuorto continues her mission to provide for horses in need by donating the proceeds of her writings to various national and local equine organizations.

Last week, Tuorto, 28, released her third self-published children's book, "Luck of the Draw," a story about Lucky, an unsuccessful race horse trying to find his place in life.

"He's bad at racing so he tries dressage and show jumping. He's trying to figure out his goal in life," she said. "The message is that you don't have to be a gold medalist to be successful."

On Saturday, Tuorto and her husband, Dave, held a book signing for the new novel at Botanical Bay Bookstore in Netcong. All proceeds from the book will go toward ReRun Inc., an adoption agency that finds homes for retired thoroughbred racing horses from New Jersey, New York and Kentucky.

"I've always said if I sell over a million books, then maybe I'll keep some of the money for myself. Right now, I'd rather give back to rescues and charities."

Since its release last week, the

At a glance

Tuorto's books include: "My Desert Sun," "Janie's New Legs," "Luck of the Draw," and a book of poetry called "Let the Horses Die."

The books are available on Amazon.com and at Tuorto's Web site, <http://cayuse.8k.com>.

book has sold more than 100 copies and raised more than \$400 for ReRun Inc. It was published through BookSurge, a brand of On-Demand Publishing LLC, a subsidiary of Amazon.com.

Earlier this year, Tuorto raised more than \$1,000 for the Somerset Hills Handicap Riding Center in Oldwick when she released her second book, "Janie's New Legs," a story about the bond between Janie, a young girl paralyzed in a car accident, and Silver, the abused pony she befriends during her therapeutic riding program.

All of Tuorto's stories are narrated by their horse characters, a style she says was inspired by "Black Beauty," an autobiographical novel of a horse named Black Beauty, told from the beginning of his life on an English farm, to the abuse and neglect he receives during his time as a carriage horse, to his happy retirement in the country.

"Black Beauty is the reason I write books. If the story is about horse abuse, it makes sense to have the horse telling the story," she said. "My books are like 'Black Beauty' updated."

Tuorto currently has three children's novels and a book of poetry for sale. In 2009, she hopes to re-release her first novel "My Desert Sun," about an abused mustang.