

Kristina Lycett
Publicist
Tel: 512-924-7674
E-mail: kristina.lycett@gmail.com

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Mother-Daughter Duo Explores Cerebral Palsy, Art, and Friendship in New Book

Award-winning author, Shaila Abdullah teams up with her 10-year-old daughter Aanyah Abdullah, to recount a heartwarming tale of a little girl who forms a close bond with a child with cerebral palsy.

Austin, TX— Hailed as “Highly recommended for anyone in the position of mentoring a beloved child through the hard places of life” by critics, Shaila Abdullah’s new book *My Friend Suhana* (ISBN # 9781615992119, January 1, 2014, Loving Healing Press) coauthored with her daughter Aanyah, celebrates special friendships and ways of reaching children with disabilities through art.

Dawn Cruzan, president of Camp Craig Allen for all abilities lauded *My Friend Suhana* for its message of respect, friendship, and support. “As a leader in advocating for the ‘most overlooked’ disabilities, which sometimes include nonverbal communication, this was outstanding in providing these differences,” she said.

My Friend Suhana is inspired in part by Aanyah Abdullah’s second grade essay on her friendship with a child with cerebral palsy at a local community center where the mother-daughter team volunteered. The two later expanded the theme and married it with eye-catching illustrations along with a special message for children everywhere. “Reach out to a child with a disability and get creative with your games and conversations,” says Shaila Abdullah. “Above all, be patient. Not all friendships need words to be perfect. Some are connections of the heart!”

In case of Aanyah, she used her art in reaching out to her special friend at the community center. “My art helps others, especially those who struggle with anxiety or some form of disability,” she says.

Shaila Abdullah is the author of two award-winning books: *Saffron Dreams* and *Beyond the Cayenne Wall*. She has received several awards for her work including the Golden Quill Award, Norumbega Jury Prize for Outstanding Fiction, Patras Bukhari Award for English Language, Reader Views Award, Written Art Award, and a grant from Hobson Foundation. Several academic institutions have adopted her books as course study or recommended reading, including the University of

California, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Indiana University, Boston University, California State University, and George Washington University. *My Friend Suhana* is Shaila Abdullah's first children's book.

Aanyah Abdullah is a creative and compassionate 10-year-old, who is drawn to children born with physical and mental disabilities. She volunteers at a special needs community center on occasion, and she dreams of establishing a special school for children with disabilities one day.

More information is available online at www.MyFriendSuhana.com or www.ShailaAbdullah.com.

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