

Q&A with Michael Panzner, author of *Josie, Johnnie and Rosie and the Ocean Rescue!*

What inspired you to begin writing books for young children?

As a dad, grandfather, and long-time freelance writer, I've recently felt a calling: I wanted to create tales that ignite the imagination and instill good values. Sharing countless stories with loved ones made me want to do the same with other young readers.

What do you find most rewarding about the writing process?

Knowing that my stories can open young minds and touch hearts is deeply gratifying. Hearing that my tales have sparked the imagination, elicited laughs, and provided comfort would also mean a great deal. I think most authors cherish the moment when readers genuinely connect with their characters and narratives.

What was the creative process like when you developed your first book, *Josie, Johnnie and Rosie and the Ocean Rescue!*?

Quite simply, I drew inspiration from the stories my kids—and grandchildren—loved growing up. I aimed to craft an engaging adventure rooted in friendship and magic, with characters young readers could relate to. The environmental theme emerged somewhat organically, inspired by a desire to encourage stewardship of nature's gifts.

***Josie, Johnnie and Rosie and the Ocean Rescue!* highlights themes such as altruism, teamwork, and strength of character. What message are you looking to convey?**

I hope to elicit compassion and empathy and empower young readers to make a real difference—for themselves, for others, and for the world at large. I believe that considerate, caring and purposeful acts, no matter how small, can have a ripple effect benefiting all involved.

Can readers expect to see more adventures about the little red-headed girl and the twin unicorns?

Absolutely! As I see it—and I hope my readers agree—the journey has only just begun. I have more stories to share, and our young heroes have other exciting adventures ahead of them. Stay tuned for more magic, camaraderie, and lessons in the “*Josie, Johnnie and Rosie*” books to come!

What book will you be working on next?

Actually, I'm writing two more children's picture books. They have distinctly different characters, settings, storylines, and graphic styles, but each tells a similarly engaging tale.

They serve up a mix of fantasy, adventure, and themes that are relevant to kids' lives, including kindness, courage and perseverance.

Your biography mentions that you've lived in various places. How have these diverse experiences influenced your storytelling?

Every place I've called home has enriched my perspective and broadened my worldview. From cosmopolitan London to the dynamic US Northeast, the serene vistas of North Carolina, and the coastal vibrance of Tampa, where I live now, each locale has added layers to my narratives, hopefully enhancing their universal appeal.