

## Interview with Sandra Magura

### **WHERE DO YOU GET YOUR IDEAS?**

They come from my family and my children's stuffed animals. HippoDuck had to have gotten lost NUMEROUS times in our house, the car, and we thought we almost forgot him in a store. They are always at the upmost need at bedtime and after thinking of the devastation that could actually happen if they did get lost I began to think. I knew charlotte would be heartbroken if they got lost...but how would they feel? I started to come up with ideas and started to writing them down. Hippo and Duck are separate but after some character developing I decided them becoming one would be a more unique idea. My daughter Charlotte at the time referred to them as "HippoDuck" as if they were one....so I went with it.

### **WHAT IS YOUR WRITING PROCESS?**

I like to close my eyes and "become" the character. How do they move? How do they think? How do they speak? I believe the more you become your character the better you can write because you can actually "feel" the emotion of the happenings of the book.

### **WHAT KIND OF RESEARCH DID YOU DO FOR THIS BOOK?**

My first bit of research went into looking for other books that are like this. Stuffed animals getting lost at the airport. Then I started to look into books about airports for children. I took a class on how to write children's picture books and I spent a lot of time developing the character and the story.

### **HOW DO YOU START A STORY?**

I wanted to create the story of HippoDuck as if I was explaining traveling through an airport to my 4 year old. Taking her through the events of how the process would go but through her favorite stuffed animals eyes. I knew airport travel could be overwhelming for children, or anyone of any age for that matter, so why not make it fun but a learning process...and with some cute characters.

Setting up a problem is the first thing I did for this book. Getting lost in an airport which is scary for anyone was my problem.

How did HippoDuck get to that problem was the next step. I then went to the airport and took in all the sights and sounds. I put myself in the actual book.

For a child I thought putting their things on the security belt was kind of confusing. I remember my daughter asking me where things went. Did they come back out?

### **WHAT DO YOU LIKE BEST ABOUT WRITING?**

What I LOVE is seeing my idea come to life! When I got the illustrations for HippoDuck I felt like I was in a dream.

I get to be home with my two adorable kids and soak in their world. Becoming my audience is most important to me. So playing with toys, going on adventures outside, reading books....they all inspire me.

### **WHAT WILL YOU WRITE NEXT?**

I have some ideas and have already started thinking of where HippoDuck can travel next. I am thinking of another book where they get lost on another adventure. Where? I am not sure. But I keep a journal of ideas when I think of them.

### **DO YOU HAVE ANY FAVORITE AUTHORS OR FAVORITE BOOKS?**

I simply adore all the Llama Llama books. I am a huge fan of Tony Ross and The Little Princess Stories. I love the classics like Curious George as well as Corduroy. The Giving Tree was my favorite as a child. We make numerous trips to the library a week (we live within walking distance). We take out at least 12 books at a time. I have new favorite authors probably every visit we make.

### **WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR YOUNG WRITERS?**

Become your audience. You will write best when you know what they want and what makes them tick.