

Celebrating Roche People -- June - July 2008

Patient Stories

CellCept Patient Pens Puppy-Powered Children's Books

Two-time organ transplant recipient Stacy Raye Waibel was an artist before losing her sight to diabetes at age 19. So, the inspiring, upbeat Minnesota woman turned her talents to writing and has authored more than 30 children's books starring her beloved toy poodle, Rudy, who most recently helps families deal with transplantation in "Rudy Gets a Transplant."

Even though she can't see, whenever Stacy Raye Waibel does a book signing or gives a talk at a church, library, school or other venue, she knows most eyes are on Rudy, her adorable black curly sidekick.

"He's got a little personality going. Plus, he really loves the spotlight," said Stacy with a laugh, adding that her other three dogs, Dexter, Kirby and Dito, who stay home during these outings, take it all in stride.

After all, they aren't the leading character in more than three dozen books written by Stacy.

It all started when the creative 44-year-old tried adding some levity to her annual Christmas letter, writing it from the perspective of her then-new tiny black puppy. It was such a hit that friends and family encouraged her to keep writing.

Thus began the adventures of Rudy in [Rudy's Little World](#), which soon grew into a series of informative, educational, entertaining and heartwarming books dealing with such subjects as blindness, death and diversity.

"Children are interested in things they don't know about. Rudy's stories also include fun and humor so they aren't overwhelmed," said Stacy, who lost her sight at age 19 following complications from diabetes.

At age 30, she underwent a kidney transplant, a gift of life she received thanks to her sister-in-law, Tammy Waibel. Eight years later, in 2003, her diabetes resulted in her also needing a pancreas transplant.

Following her second transplant, she was put on



Minnesota author Stacy Raye Waibel participates in a book fair to promote her children's book, *Rudy Gets a Transplant*, the latest of more than 30 stories starring her toy poodle, Rudy.



"He [Rudy] has a little personality going. Plus, he really loves the spotlight!"
Stacy Raye Waibel

CellCept[®]
(mycophenolate mofetil)
250 mg capsules and 500 mg tablets

"CellCept made a huge difference. I wished I could have been on it sooner."
Stacy Raye Waibel

CellCept (mycophenolate mofetil) and credits the drug for helping her "feel stronger and better."

"It made a huge difference. With CellCept, I didn't have the side effects I had with my other drugs. I wished I could have been on it sooner," she said.

Transplant Tale

When her pediatric social worker and friend, Kathy Weck, suggested she write a children's book that discussed the transplant process, Stacy agreed that it would be a perfect Rudy adventure.

"There was nothing like it out there and there are a lot of people afraid of the transplant process," said the author, who admitted she, too, wanted more information and was fearful about her own transplant.

Kathy introduced her to then 11-year-old Ali Gratz, a young Minnesota transplant recipient who drew all the illustrations for *Rudy Gets a Transplant*, which was released last September (2008).

"I have received a really good response from the medical community and kids find it interesting, too," said Stacy, who uses the book at her community speaking presentations as a springboard to advocate for organ donation.

Along with Rudy, she credits her success with writing and outreach to her husband, Wayne, who she calls "truly a blessing." The pair met in college and married 24 years ago after she graduated magna cum laude with a degree in speech communication-psychology.

While she has plans for more presentations and books, including *Rudy Gets a Check-Up*, Stacy has to put things on hold while she deals with another set-back -- her transplanted kidney needs replacement. She is in the process of looking for a living donor because there "is no way" she would survive the average five-year organ donation list.

"It is happening sooner than I hoped," she said. "But I know everything will work out because I still have a lot to do on earth."

"I have my husband and my puppy boys who love me, and I love them, and I want to keep spreading the word about organ donation. I have to remain positive, so I can do things for the good, not sit in the corner and cry about it," she added.



Stacy frequently talks about organ transplantation to school and community groups.



Stacy poses with Ali Gratz, a young Minnesota transplant recipient who drew all the illustrations for *Rudy Gets a Transplant*.



Stacy relaxes with her husband, Wayne, and their three dogs.