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“Sandwich Generation” Mom Releases Children’s Picture Book on Dementia

Families struggling with dementia will soon have a resource to help them explain the illness to young children. The children’s picture book, *Nana Speaks Nanese*, launches on Mother’s Day, May 12, 2019.

Laura Brennan, a writer based in Los Angeles, is launching a children’s picture book to help families who have a loved one with dementia. The book, *Nana Speaks Nanese*, illustrated by Maurício Corteletti Água Viva, centers on a young boy and his loving grandmother, whose behavior is changing because of her illness.

The book was inspired by Brennan’s experiences when her mother came to live with them after a diagnosis of Alzheimer’s. Brennan’s son was three years old at the time, and she and her husband had to come up with creative ways to explain Nana’s changes in behavior.

“There were many ways my mother and my son could enjoy each other’s company,” says Brennan. “My mother loved children, she loved art, she loved music -- those things never changed. But her speech was disappearing and she was in the wandering phase. We needed to help my son understand what was going on, and we also needed to remind ourselves that Mom was more than her disease. That the underlying love was always there.”

According to the World Health Organization, 10 million people a year worldwide face a diagnosis of dementia. For many families, there’s no easy way to talk to young children about what is happening to the adults they love. But not knowing the reason behind the erratic and sometimes unsettling behavior can be frustrating and frightening to little ones.

Nana Speaks Nanese is a sweet and caring story that tackles the confusing changes in behavior brought on by dementia. At the same time, it reminds children of the connection they still share with their loved one. It also provides parents with strategies to talk about the disease in a reassuring way that young children can understand. At the heart of *Nana Speaks Nanese* is the

belief that while names and events may be forgotten, feelings (especially love) are remembered. The delightful illustrations by Maurício Corteletti Água Viva capture the warmth of family bonds.

Brennan hopes the book will help other families open up a conversation with their own children. “Dementia is a devastating diagnosis,” Brennan admits. “But while it’s important not to frighten children, you can’t keep them in the dark. They will know something is wrong. The important thing is to be clear and reassuring, and to let them know they can come to you with questions or fears. *Nana Speaks Nanese* is the book I wish I’d had during those years.”

Nana Speaks Nanese is available widely in both print and E-book editions; wholesale orders can be made from Ingram Spark. Media kit, images, a free audio recording, and other information can be found at NanaSpeaksNanese.com

Book info:

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Illustrator: Maurício Corteletti Água Viva

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About the Author:

Laura Brennan is a screenwriter, novelist, and children’s author. A graduate of Yale University, she has written television, features, theater, and web series. *Nana Speaks Nanese* is the book she wishes she’d had when her own mother developed Alzheimer’s. She hopes it will help other families explain the changes brought on by dementia. Learn more at NanaSpeaksNanese.com

About the Illustrator:

Illustrator Maurício Corteletti Água Viva is floating in the river of life. He discovered love inside of him and now he travels to a lot of places trying to share, receive and understand more about this huge feeling. Drawing, writing and playing music are his ways to express his love, but his favourite art form is being.