

The Sachse News

Shining on the community, events and people of Sachse

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Local author writes diverse children's books

By Dustin Butler

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After finding a lack of diversity in children's books dealing with adolescent emotional issues, one Sachse resident took it upon herself to fill the gap.

When Sharon Jones-Scaife became a widow in 2015 she learned she wasn't the only one working through the grieving process. Grandchildren Rihanna and DeShawn, ages 7 and 4 at the time, had a hard time understanding the loss of their beloved grandfather (Papa) to lung cancer so the grandmother looked toward books for help.

Jones-Scaife, a Black business owner, decided to write a book that not only her grandchildren, but other children of color could relate to on a more personal level.

In 2018, Jones-Scaife's first book titled "I Miss you Papa," was published. The illustrated children's book tells the story

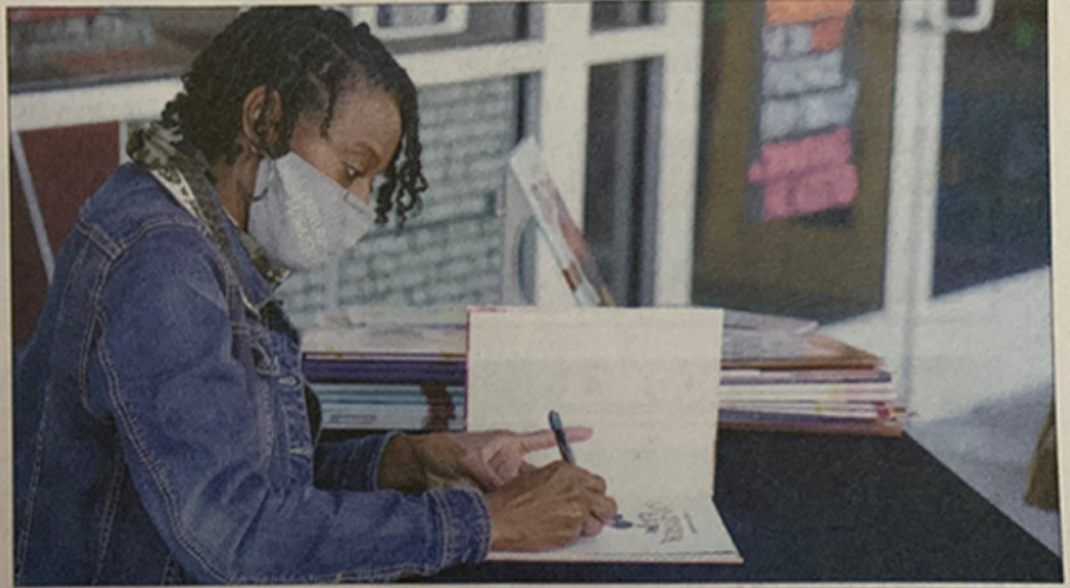
of love and loss through the perspective of her granddaughter Rihanna.

The first book was well-received, says the author, so she decided to continue writing. Since then, she has published five additional books, each dealing with different issues.

"Maddie on a Mission" focuses on germs and helps to explain the COVID-19 pandemic, and "Lil Marco Plays Hide and Seek" is about emergency preparedness.

"It makes me feel good to knowing I'm reaching people," she said. "I'm able to help people deal with some of the same issues I've gone through and my kids and grandkids have gone through."

Jones-Scaife says she takes inspiration from her grandchildren and issues that they are dealing with. They enjoy that she is an author, she said, because they make up many of her books' characters.



Courtesy photo

Local author Sharon Jones-Scaife at a book signing at Half Price Books in Garland. Jones-Scaife began writing books focused on diversity and adolescent issues in 2018.

"A lot of the stories are inspired by the stuff they are doing or going through," she said.

More importantly, though, Jones-Scaife said it makes

her feel connected with them, saying that she thinks she can better guide them through their experiences.

Her next book, due out in

February, deals with affirmation and lets children know their differences – be it skin

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LOCAL

Author has heart for helping children

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color or speech impediment – do not define them.

Growing up in Arkansas as the fourth of 15 kids, the author says reading was a big part of her life and keep her entertained. She read books by several authors, enjoying Judy Blume, Hardy Boys and Nancy Drew.

In addition to children's books, Jones-Scaife has a book of poetry and original illustrations called "Becoming" aimed toward teenagers.

The author has a background in graphic arts and publishing and a heart for helping teenagers.

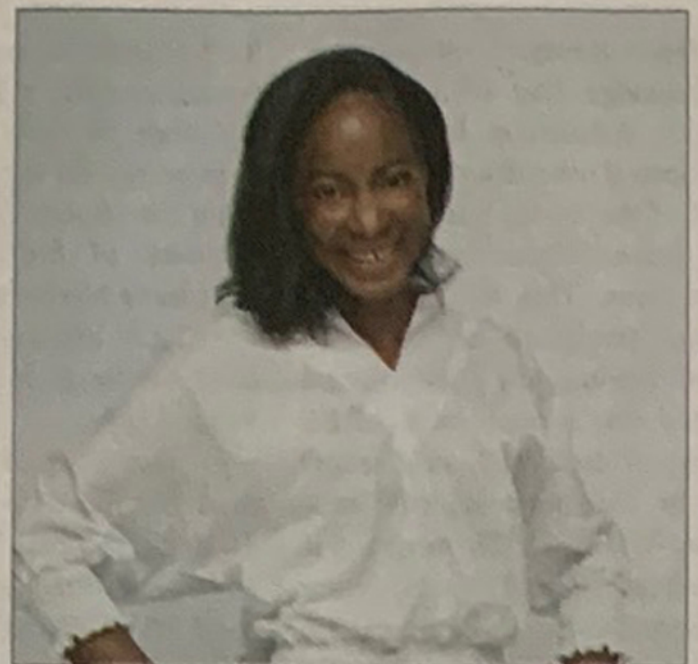
"Young people are just as special as everyone else in the world and it is essential for them to realize that," she said. "They are bursting with untapped potential and sometimes it takes just one person to

bring that out."

In October 1999, Jones-Scaife founded Teens Reaching Teens, Inc. a nonprofit with a focus on providing school resources for teens. She began publishing Teen Graffiti in 2000, a magazine that is a platform for teenagers to voice their opinions on varying issues and provide them with resources, information and advice from professionals, teachers and counselors on adolescent challenges.

Jones-Scaife said she enjoys forming positive relationships and connecting with youth, adding that she started the magazine because she wanted young people to not only have a voice but feel that their voice matters.

"I want the world to look at [young people] rather than put a label on them," she said. "I want their stories to be told, their way, and without distortion."



Courtesy photo

Local author Sharon Jones-Scaife writes children's books for youth dealing with emotional issues such as grief and fear. In addition, she publishes Teen Graffiti magazine as part of her nonprofit organization Teens Helping Teens.