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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

'Falling' Into New Children's Book, Lesson

Mt. Pleasant, S.C. (Feb. 3, 2008) – Children's author and educator, Susan K. Mitchell, can credit her daughter and her wild imagination for literally falling into the idea for her newest picture book, *Kersplatypus*.

"My youngest daughter fell one day when she was just a toddler. I scooped her up, dried her tears and said, 'Oh baby, did you go kersplatypus?'" explained Mitchell. "The proverbial light bulb blinked on over my head – I thought 'Hey! That might make an interesting story!'"

That one made-up word inspired a story about a platypus' journey to find his place in the world and how he sometimes falls flat (or "Kersplat!") along the way. When a strange creature appears out of nowhere after the big rains, Australian animals wonder what in the world he could be! His fur, feet, tail and duck-like bill remind each animal of something different. With help from his new friends, the young platypus learns to pick himself up when he falls and keep on going – a great lesson for all young ones. Digitally painted by Sherry Rogers, *Kersplatypus* uses vibrant colors that create an almost 3-D effect.

A self-declared "overgrown kid," Mitchell says having children was the best thing to happen to her. "I love to make my kids and myself laugh – crazy characters, sentences and story ideas are always popping into my insane imagination." Those brainstorms certainly seem to be working to her advantage.

Sylvan Dell Publishing in Mt. Pleasant, S.C., quickly picked up her manuscript for *Kersplatypus*. They also published Mitchell's first picture book, *The Rainforest Grew All Around* (2007), which has already won *Learning Magazine's* 2008 Teachers' Choice Award for Children's Books and a NAPPA Honors. Endorsed by the Rainforest Alliance, the book was also a short-list finalist for The Green Earth Book Award.

Surrounded by kids all day, every day as an educator and mother of two, Mitchell says she has no shortage of story ideas. In addition to her books with Sylvan Dell, she has written *Stone Pizza* and more than 14 non-fiction chapter books for older readers.

"I've been incredibly busy learning to run my own 'business' as an author, but I am never happier than when I'm on a school visit and reading my books to kids," said Mitchell before pausing. "OK, that's not entirely true. Having my own kids think their mom is cool tops everything else – it makes everything worth it."

Readers interested in learning more about Susan Mitchell and her books can visit her Web site, www.susankmitchell.com. A matching platypus stuffed animal, ordering information and free supplemental materials – such as audio readings, activity ideas, learning links, quizzes and more – are available at www.SylvanDellPublishing.com.

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Visuals & Other Requests:

For cover art or Mitchell's headshot, visit <http://www.sylvandellpublishing.com/ImageGallery.htm>.

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