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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

LOCAL AUTHOR WINS MOONBEAM AWARD FOR CHILDREN'S BOOKS

Mount Pleasant, S.C. (Oct. 18, 2011) –Petersburgh author Rhonda Lucas Donald has been awarded a silver Moonbeam Award for Children's Books for her latest picture book, *Deep in the Desert*.

The Moonbeam awards, presented by the Jenkins Group and Independent Publisher Online, judge picture books based on content, originality, design, and production quality, with emphasis on innovation and social relevance. Founded in 2007, the Moonbeam awards have grown to become one of the most respected awards for children's book excellence.

In *Deep in the Desert*, catchy desert twists on traditional children's songs and poems will have children chiming in about cactuses, camels, and more as they learn about the desert habitat and its flora and fauna. Tarkawara hops on the desert sand instead of a kookaburra sitting in an old gum tree. And teapots aren't the only things that are short and stout—just look at the javelina's hooves and snout. Travel the world's deserts to dig with meerkats, fly with bats, and hiss with Gila monsters! Whether sung or read aloud, *Deep in the Desert* makes learning anything but dry.

Donald has written more than a dozen books for children and teachers including her most recent titles: *Animal Rights: How You Can Make a Difference* and *Life on Other Planets*. In addition, she has won awards for articles and stories appearing in *Ranger Rick* and *Your Big Backyard* magazines. Rhonda specializes in writing about science, and especially likes to write about animals and space. She fell in love with science as a kid, and read every dinosaur book in school library. Weaving science into verses and songs is her way of making it fun. Rhonda shares her Virginia home with husband Bruce, dogs Maggie and Lily, and her very dignified cats, Darwin and Huxley.

When asked about her creative process, Donald says, "I find nature to be inspirational. There's nothing more exciting to me than seeing a wild animal, especially one I haven't before. And I like to try and understand complicated scientific concepts such as gravity and space-time. Wrapping my head around complex ideas and being able to explain them to children keeps me learning and questioning."

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For more information about Donald visit www.browntabby.com. For more information about *Deep in the Desert* visit www.sylvandellpublishing.com.

Visuals & Other Requests: For cover art or Donald's headshot, visit www.sylvandellpublishing.com/ImageGallery.htm. For all interview requests or media queries, please contact Sylvan Dell's publicist, Ashlee Rowe, at (877) 243-3457 or ashleerowe@sylvandellpublishing.com.

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