

Contact: Katherine Miller, (877) 958-2600
KatherineMiller@SylvanDellPublishing.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASECelebrate the Fourth of July ***“In Your Backyard”***

Mt. Pleasant, S.C. (June 19, 2007) – Families who are planning to celebrate the Fourth of July holiday by spending time outdoors can also teach children about the animals who live just outside their home by reading Valarie Giogas’ new picture book, ***“In My Backyard.”***

“Backyard” is a clever, rhyming story that will appeal to children ages four to eight. Giogas encourages children to care for the wildlife around them by presenting 10 animals that live in your backyard by baby and group name. For example, did you know that a skunk’s litter is called a surfeit and a baby skunk is called a kit?

In addition to providing fun, educational facts about backyard animals, ***“Backyard”*** uses colorful illustrations by artist Katherine Zecca to teach children the numbers one through 10. And there is a six-page “For Creative Minds” educational section in the back of the book that contains animal counting and fun fact cards for a memory game, additional information about the animals around you, tips on how to care for the wildlife around you and suggestions on what to do if you find an injured animal.

Published by Mt. Pleasant, S.C.-based Sylvan Dell Publishing ***“Backyard”*** has been vetted for scientific accuracy by educators at Zoo Atlanta and the Delaware Nature Society and is under consideration for the Accelerated Reader program. The picture book was also featured on the March 6 edition of “Kidstuff” on Martha Stewart Living Radio, Sirius 112, as a recommended read.

Giogas, a Massachusetts resident, was inspired to write ***“Backyard”*** as she and her son drove past a gaggle of geese and their goslings. A member of the Society for Children’s Book Writers and Illustrators, Giogas has also written magazine articles for ***“Hopscotch for Girls.”*** This is her first picture book.

Zecca, a Washington artist, has written and illustrated ***“Puffin’s Year”*** and illustrated ***“River Song with the Banana Slug String Band”*** and ***“Why Puppies Do That”*** in addition to ***“Backyard.”*** As a scientific illustrator and graphic designer for the National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Zecca won the national poster competition celebrating the 125th anniversary of the Alaska Fisheries Science Center. She continues to illustrate for the

Smithsonian's National Zoo and, when she is not designing or illustrating, Zecca teaches nature journaling and sketching in western Washington, Alaska and Maine.

"I wanted to make sure the animals were drawn accurately, so part of my research was spent at Sarvey Wildlife Center in Arlington Washington," explains Zecca. "I was allowed to be with the caretakers as they fed the baby squirrels, raccoons and rabbits. I even played with a baby raccoon for hours! After all the photographs and sketches, I illustrated the book with confidence and loved every minute of it!"

Sylvan Dell Publishing is on a mission to create picture books that excite children's imaginations, are artistically spectacular and have educational value. Readers can ask for "***In My Backyard***" and other Sylvan Dell titles at their favorite local or online bookstore. They can also find more information by calling Katherine Miller at (877) 958-2600 or by visiting www.SylvanDellPublishing.com.

#
