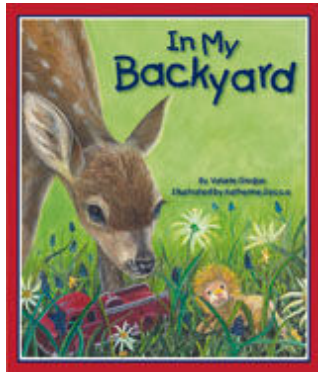


Schedule a School Visit with Massachusetts Children’s Author Valarie Giogas!



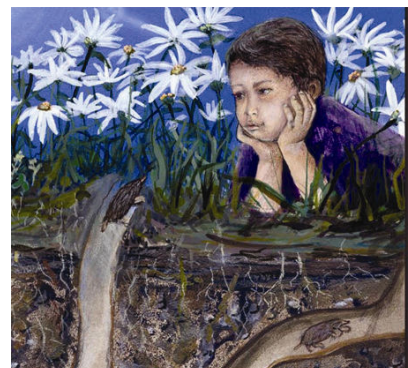
Baby dogs are puppies, and they belong to a litter; what is a baby skunk, and what is the name of its group? *In My Backyard* is a clever, rhythmic story that tells us just that! Counting from one to ten, familiar backyard animals are introduced by baby and family group names. Each stanza also tells a bit more about each animal by providing clues as to what they eat, how they sound, or where they live.

Valarie Giogas (pronounced JOE-gus) has been writing for children ever since she discovered that she could combine her love for children’s literature with her passion for writing. The idea for *In My Backyard* began when her son was in preschool. They always drove by a gaggle of geese and he would giggle when she told him the group name. When the geese had goslings, the idea for this book was cemented. A member of the Society for Children’s Book Writers and Illustrators, Valarie has also written articles for *Hopscotch Magazine*.

What was most challenging about writing *In My Backyard*?

“I had two major challenges. The first was with the rhyme. By virtue of the group names and baby names, the meter wouldn’t match in every stanza. I focused on the last two lines in each, and I made sure the third line flowed as best as possible.

“The other was with the research. Firstly, each animal had to be able to have the number of babies that it represented (for example, I couldn’t have a raccoon as number ten because raccoons can’t have ten babies at one time). Next, I wanted to tell something about each animal — what it eats, where it lives, or how it sounds. In order to make the whole book interesting, I wanted to make sure I did not repeat verbs in the third line, and I tried to mix up what information conveyed (food/habitat/sound).”



Not only is Valarie's book fun, it's educational, too!

The back of each Sylvan Dell book features a "[For Creative Minds](#)" section:

In My Backyard

- Animal Memory Game
- Counting Activity
- Animal Signs All Around
- What to do with an Injured Animal

Additional Online Resources include: Cross-curricular [Teaching Activities](#), [English/Spanish eBooks](#), [Audiobooks](#), child-friendly [Related Websites](#), Comprehension & Math [Quizzes](#). Aligned to [national and state curriculum Standards](#) and AR & Reading Counts Quizzes.



Visit Details:

- Programs range in age from preschool to upper elementary
- **Who Lives In Your Backyard?** A program for pre-school and kindergarten students which discusses where the idea for *In My Backyard* came from and Valarie shares stories from her backyard.
- **The Story Behind the Story.** A program for elementary students which teaches them how a book is created and includes sharing stories and show and tell.
- **The Writer's Word-Shop.** A program for upper elementary students teaching them how to create rhyming verses and the importance of word choice, rhyme, meter, and the revision process. A non-rhyming program can also be done using similar practices.

Rates:

- For rates and booking, please email Valarie, Valarie@ValarieGiogas.com

How To Schedule:

1. Coordinate with other classes (or schools or libraries), and decide what day works best.
2. Contact author directly to schedule date, time and details.

Email Valarie at valarie@valariegiogas.com

Visit Valarie's website at www.valariegiogas.com

3. Send letter home to parents announcing the author visit and offering them the opportunity to order autographed books for their children. (Form letter enclosed!)
4. Preorder books and coordinate book sales with author.

Dear Parents,

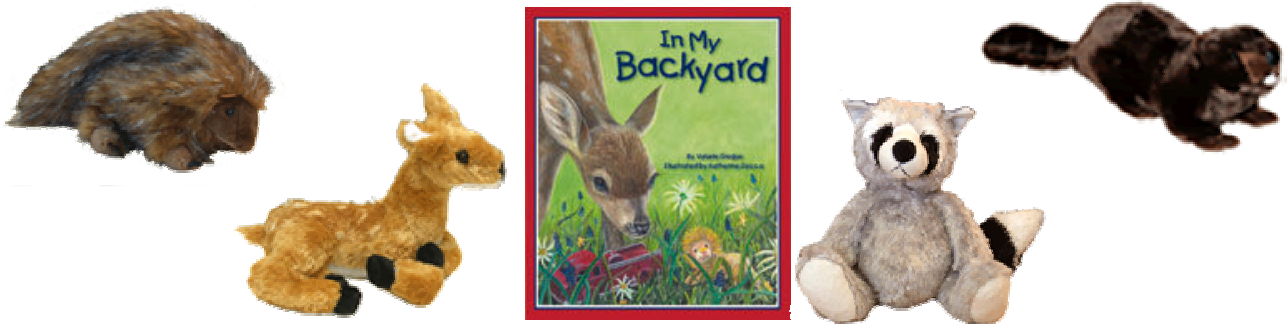
We are excited to announce that children's author Valarie Giogas (*In My Backyard*) will be visiting our school on _____ to meet our students, talk about her book and lead the classroom(s) in fun, educational discussions and activities! To purchase a copy of her book so that your child can receive an autograph and remember this special day, please fill out and return the attached order form by _____.

Best wishes,

**Yes! I would like to help my child remember
Valarie's school visit!**

Name of Child: _____ Name of Teacher: _____

Grade: _____ Personalize Autograph To: _____



Title		Retail Price	School Fair Price	Quantity	Total
<i>In My Backyard</i>	Hardcover	\$15.95			
	Paperback	\$8.95			
Plush 10" Deer		\$13.00			
Plush 6.5" Raccoon		\$8.80			
Plush 12" Beaver		\$11.60			
Plush 13" Porcupine		\$10.15			

Please make checks payable to (if applicable):

SUBTOTAL
SALES TAX _____%
TOTAL

Parent Name: _____ Parent Signature: _____