



## Linda's Story

### How Henry the Blue Monkey Came to Life

The concept of *Henry the Blue Monkey* popped into existence for Linda Christen in 2012, after attending a silent meditation retreat – not talking to anyone for three days. Upon returning home with a clear visual in her head, she pulled out a notebook and began to write. Twenty minutes later, *Henry the Blue Monkey* was on his first big adventure – learning about himself, noticing the differences in the world around him, feeling insecure about being the only blue monkey in the forest, and finding comfort and strength in his parent's words, 'Being Different is Good.'

Filled with joy and enlightenment, she called her sister, going on to tell her all about *Henry the Blue Monkey*. Her sister was taken aback and furious, reminding Linda about her own children's story centered around a bunny with a different colored tail and how he wanted to change it to match all the other bunnies. In fact, she had just told Linda about this story a few weeks before the silent retreat. She was convinced Linda had stolen her idea. Linda assured her sister the bunny story didn't even cross her mind when she wrote *Henry the Blue Monkey* – nonetheless, her sister was still very upset with her.

In an effort to redeem herself, while on a trip to Seattle visiting with her nephew, she asked him to read the story of *Henry the Blue Monkey*. After reading it, her nephew, Dr. Christen Mark Adams, MD, working on his residency as an anesthesiologist at the University of Washington Medical Center in Seattle, pressed his aunt, "I like it, so what are you going to do with it?" Linda had no idea at the time how to answer that question and two years went by.

It wasn't until her nephew's sudden and unexpected death on April 17, 2014, that she felt compelled to do something with the story. Feeling her nephew's spirit as her guiding light, she found the conviction she needed to finish the book. "He inspired me in life, with his acceptance of others and non-judgmental way of looking at people. His purpose in life and the beauty of his soul motivated me to complete the book and get it out into the world," said Linda. Dr. Adams left behind a loving wife, a three-year-old son and another son on the way. The dedication page in *Henry the Blue Monkey* honors her nephew Christen and the two little boys he left behind, Pierce and Morgan, Linda's grand nephews.

After her nephew's death, Linda moved to Seattle, Washington to help out with her grand nephews, a three-year-old and a newborn. While still deep in the grief process, she managed to find an illustrator and publicist to join with her on this project to bring *Henry the Blue Monkey* to life. "Looking back, I am not sure how I got through this process. I made a lot of mistakes but I felt my nephew's presence guiding me through and rooting for me to finish this book. I believe with all my heart that *Henry the Blue*

*Monkey* can help children everywhere get through difficult times, find self-confidence, and feel special in their uniqueness.

“I want to tell my story and explain why the message in this children’s book is so important. We continue to live in a world surrounded by fear, separation, the harsh reality of dealing with bullies, and a lack of love and understanding for others. So many anti-bullying campaigns exist already, but I wanted to be more proactive by inventing a character little children could understand -- to give them a positive role model in *Henry the Blue Monkey*.

“I want to help make the world a better place where we accept each other’s differences. I also want to open the door of communication between parents and their children to talk about life and what matters most and how to accept each other. I’d like to see a transformation in the world where instead of devaluing our differences, we embrace them. We must work together to create a future and culture of acceptance.

“I hope for a future where we can appreciate our differences knowing that each one of us is unique and special, different from our brothers and sisters and friends, and that being different is good. Teaching our children to believe in themselves; encouraging parents to take an active role in cultivating that belief; building self-confidence and acceptance of others in a safe and loving environment, all the while, celebrating our differences.”

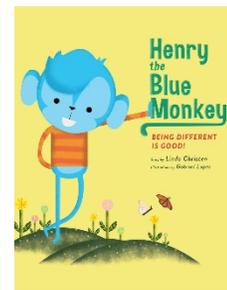
Out of silence, reflection, and tragedy, a new voice is born, speaking to children everywhere – in the form of *Henry the Blue Monkey*. All is forgiven now between sisters – and who knows, perhaps in Henry’s adventures, he will meet a little bunny in the forest with a different colored tail, and they can change the world together.

Christen, Linda. ***Henry the Blue Monkey: Being Different is Good***. 2016.

Henry discovers in one way or another we’re all different and that's what makes us special. Join this endearing blue monkey as he overcomes insecurity with love, acceptance, and a few superpowers.

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For more information, interviews and appearances, please contact:  
Michelle Ranae Nelson, Manager/Publicist, [www.ShinePREtc.com](http://www.ShinePREtc.com)  
[HTBM@shinepretc.com](mailto:HTBM@shinepretc.com) or at 425-346-1259