

# Young book lovers pack Hudson Children's Book Festival

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Amanda Purcell/Columbia-Greene MediaChildren's book authors Deirdre McCarthy and Diane deGroat with a framed copy of 'Annabelle Starless' at Hudson High School on Saturday.



Amanda Purcell Columbia-Greene Media  
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"I had a Korean War veteran, 88 years old, in here once who was shot three times by the Chinese and he can't remember any of the details," Flaherty said. "They really struggle with it. Some veterans just say, 'Forget it. I don't want the VA's money.' It is not the VA's money, it is the veteran's money. They earned it."

| U.S. Dept. of Veterans Affairs |   |
|--------------------------------|---|
| The War                        | The number of veterans with PTSD  |
| Iraq (Iraqi Freedom)           | Between 11 and 20 percent of service members have PTSD in a given year  |
| Operation Enduring Freedom     | Between 11 and 20 percent of service members have PTSD in a given year  |
| Operation Desert Storm         | About 12 percent of veterans have PTSD in a given year                  |
| World War II                   | It is estimated that 30 percent of veterans had PTSD in their lifetimes |

HUDSON – Fellow children’s book authors Deirdre McCarthy and Diane deGroat were surprised to be seated next to one another at the 10th annual Hudson Children’s Book Festival on Saturday.

“She (McCarthy) modeled for me for one of the book covers when she was 12 years old,” deGroat said from her booth at the festival. “We were both living in Yonkers at the time. I went in to the local schools asking for a model for the cover.”

McCarthy was picked out of dozens of children and was paid \$5 to model for the cover of deGroat’s book, “Annabelle Starr, E.S.P.,” in 1983.

“It was my first paying gig,” McCarthy said. “I was ecstatic.”

McCarthy and deGroat were among the thousands of families, teachers and authors who packed the Hudson High School auditorium, at 208 Harry Howard Ave., on Saturday for the 10th annual Hudson Children’s Book Festival.

Out of the dozens of booths, the authors were serendipitously seated next to each another.

“How could you be on the cover of a book jacket and not want to be a writer and not want to be in that world,” McCarthy said. “It’s just a real honor and gift that I got to be here today and to sit next to her (deGroat) and thank her. She was so wonderful.”

DeGroat now lives in Massachusetts and is the author of more than 130 books, including a best-selling series about Gilbert, an opossum.

McCarthy is a teacher of fifth and eighth grade English Language Arts and special education at Hudson Jr. High School.

“I get the rare and unique experience to be in the classroom and watching the kids’ faces and how they connect with all the books,” McCarthy said. “I get to see the perspective from both ends.”

McCarthy’s latest book, “Counting with Common Cents: Dime’s Quest,” won an Eifle Award in April for excellence in teaching financial literacy.

On Saturday, McCarthy brought a copy of “Annabelle Starr” with her to the event. To McCarthy’s delight, deGroat sign the copy of the book. The inscription read: “Happy book events! Keep writing and if that doesn’t work out... try modeling!”

“It’s amazing how her (McCarthy’s) past life caught up with her present life,” McCarthy’s mother, Kathleen, said.

The festival was made possible with the help of the Spotty Dog Books and Ale, which provides the books for the kids to buy, and the Hudson Children’s Book Festival Literacy Fund, which pays for each student to get one free book of his or her choice from the festival.

To reach reporter Amanda Purcell, call 518-828-1616 ext. 2500, or send an email to [apurcell@thedailyemail.net](mailto:apurcell@thedailyemail.net), or tweet to [@amandajpurcell](https://twitter.com/amandajpurcell).

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