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Starabella

Sharon, Tara, and Dana Fialco

Welcome to a Bright New World! **Starabella** is a new series of books about a very courageous little girl with learning differences who expresses her thoughts and feelings through music. When she is happy, her eyes shine like stars.

Starabella, is a personal story that is brought to life with music and tantalizing illustration by renowned artist, Anton Petrov. **Starabella** is a collaborative family project: written by Sharon Fialco; based on the childhood music composed and performed by Tara Fialco, and narrated and sung by Dana Fialco.

Though the **Starabella** books are based on a little girl with autism, the stories will appeal to anyone who has felt different. **Starabella** demonstrates the special gifts children with extra challenges often bring to the world. **Starabella** shows children that we are all special and allows them to feel empathy enabling them to make positive social choices rather than turning to bullying and discrimination.

The three books in this series take **Starabella** along the road of life starting in book one as an infant and her interactions with her family at home. Book two brings our heroine into the community and takes her to events like the circus. These two books set the foundation for empathy and respect while book three takes **Starabella** to school and deals with issues of social sensitivity and inclusion. It is here that our leading lady becomes a kindergarten rock star compelling her classmates to become accepting and all-embracing. All three books are accompanied by an interactive cd of music and narration that children can listen to while reading and participate by sending their "friendly thoughts" with the aid of a "Magical Mirror," to the characters in the story to help them get to the Bright New World.

Sharon and her husband Marvin couldn't wait to bring their beautiful new baby home from the hospital. They watched as she grew and explored her world with eyes shining bright. But along with her surprising musical talent, Tara would later present perplexing challenges. Not able at the time to get a diagnosis, they were left with a mystery. Tara would not be diagnosed with autism until she turned 21. Tara, now an adult, went on to earn a degree in Early Childhood Education. But the journey has not always been

smooth and the lessons learned have been formidable. Starabella aims to help young children see the specialness in all of us.

About the Authors:

Sharon Fialco put her pen to paper and her thoughts could hardly keep up with her writing. Along with her husband Marvin, Sharon and her younger daughter, Dana, decided that they have a story that many other families will identify with. As Dana says: “Tara tells of her experience and growing up feeling different as she struggles to understand and conform to the world around her”. Starabella and her classmates model the behavior of children who embrace diversity in their friendships and make empathetic social choices. They all work cooperatively to achieve their mutual goal of getting to a “Bright New World”. The Fialco’s had the opportunity to participate together to produce the Starabella series and for that they feel very lucky. Although the inspiration for writing the series stemmed from serious issues, its actual development brought Tara, Dana and their parents much joy. Their hope is that children everywhere will see how brilliantly their eyes will shine and how they can become empowered when they have the courage to act on their own to reach out a hand to another child. These are the hands that can change the world.

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Fialco Productions

1. **Starabella: Mystery Girl of Music** (Winner of the Benjamin Franklin Award for Cover Design—Children’s/Young Adult category).
2. **Starabella: New Adventures and Mixed Emotions**
3. **Starabella: Welcome to a Bright New World** (Nautilus Book Award Winner)

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To learn more about Starabella and the Fialco’s please visit: www.Starabella.com

For more information or to schedule an interview with the authors, please contact Newman Communications at (617) 254-4500.

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Discussion Points

For both Parents and Children

- Social and extra challenges that children who are “different” face today
- Parental unconditional love
- Music Appreciation and expression of feelings
- Demands and understanding of society’s rules
- Sensory Issues: Overload
- Empathy and compassion
- Inclusion
- Diversity
- Anti Bullying
- Autism