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**FIRST NOVEL RELEASED BY REACH AND TEACH IMPRINT OF PM PRESS:
Abe In Arms by human rights children’s author, Pegi Deitz Shea**

Suggested Pull Quote: “Let the bigger publishers focus on vampires and werewolves. We’ll tackle the bigger monsters, the ones that really do snatch children from their parents in the dead of night.”

DALY CITY, CA – Reach and Teach, the year-old children’s book imprint of PM Press, is releasing its first novel, Abe in Arms, June 1. The young adult fiction is written by Pegi Deitz Shea, an award-winning author of multicultural books, some of which have human rights topics. Abe in Arms explores a teen’s difficulties adapting to life in America, having fled war-torn West Africa.

According to Craig Wiesner, Co-founder in 2004, Reach And Teach has been creating a one stop shop for books and other products that can help transform the world through teachable moments. “Deitz Shea’s picture book, The Carpet Boy’s Gift, led us to working with Free the Children, an incredible organization that has freed thousands of children from slavery over the last ten years. When Pegi told us she had written a manuscript about child soldiering that was being rejected by large publishers, we had to see it. We were instantly hooked and couldn’t put it down.”

“I found it riveting,” said Andrea Gibbons, editor from PM Press. “I knew immediately that I held one of those rare books capable of meaningfully engaging young adults without condescension. Deitz Shea’s book deftly opens up the realities of survival in a way that is desperately needed by so many of our youth who face war and violence directly, as well as by all those who love them. For a publisher like PM, aiming to inspire critical thought and understanding across all boundaries, there could have been no hesitation.”

“Powerful storytelling is what led a 12-year-old to create Free the Children,” Wiesner said. “Who knows what some young person might do after being inspired by Abe in Arms? Let the bigger publishers focus on vampires and werewolves. We’ll tackle the bigger monsters, the ones that really do snatch children from their parents in the dead of night.”

Having been an adolescent during the Vietnam War, and having attended parochial schools, Deitz Shea was always keenly attuned to the plight of children in less fortunate situations. Her initiation into children’s books in 1989 coincided with a trip to Thailand, where she visited a friend working in refugee camps. “Thirteen years after the US military left SE Asia, tens of thousands hungry, depressed war refugees were still languishing in

filthy, crowded camps. Deitz Shea had found her writing purpose, and her resulting books; The Whispering Cloth and Tangled Threads, on the Hmong plight and culture have won many awards.

So when Liberian war refugees moved into her town in Connecticut in the mid-90's, Deitz Shea interviewed them and wrote about their experience in *Footsteps* magazine (Jan/Feb, 2001). "At that time, I was researching and writing about child labor for The Carpet Boy's Gift. And I knew I wanted to write about child soldiers and 'wives.'"

Dr. Eleanor Pershing of the West Africa Trauma Team said, "Abe in Arms explores the wrenching irony of a shattered young man being thrust into an American youth culture that glamorizes the very violence that has caused Abe so much anguish. Deitz Shea's resolution, like Abe's epiphany, is surprising, believable, and gratifying."

Having presented at more than 350 schools, libraries and conferences, Deitz Shea writes fiction and poetry as well as nonfiction for all ages. Her books work across the curriculum and often explore difficult issues and history. Her books, including Ten Mice for Tet, The Carpet Boy's Gift and Patience Wright: America's First Sculptor and Revolutionary Spy, have been made Notables by the International Reading Association, National Council of Teachers of English, Children's Book Council/National Council for the Social Studies, Bank Street College, New York Public Library and other organizations. Tangled Threads, the middle-grade novel sequel to The Whispering Cloth, won the 2004 Connecticut Book Award for Children's Literature, and was a Junior Library Guild selection.

Her latest book, Noah Webster: Weaver of Words (Boyd's Mills Press, 2009) has already been named a JLG selection, and an Orbis Pictus Honor Book by NCTE for one of the six top nonfiction releases of 2009. In the Fall, Clarion Books will release The Taxing Case of the Cows: A True Story About Suffrage. Co-authored with Iris Van Rynbach, the book is being illustrated by Caldecott Medalist Emily Arnold McCully. Ms. Shea is currently writing a new YA novel, Snake Boy, Sister Spy, which is based on her aunt and uncle's teen Resistance exploits during WWII.

Ms. Shea teaches Children's Literature, and Writing Books for Children at the University of Connecticut, and Writing for Children and Teenagers through the Institute of Children's Literature. More information, including cross-curriculum guides for all books, can be found at www.pegideitzshea.com

Reach and Teach's first book was Girls Are Not Chicks (June 2009), and has two additional books in the pipeline for 2010/2011: Sometimes the Spoon Runs Away with Another Spoon and Ivy: A Tale of a Homeless Girl. PM Press, which is known for its activist fiction and nonfiction for adult readers, has released dozens of books, DVDs, and CDs since its founding in 2008.

More information can be found at www.reachandteach.com and www.pmpress.org.

ABE IN ARMS

Pegi Deitz Shea

A senior in high school, Abe's got a Division I track scholarship awaiting him, a hot girlfriend, and a loving and wealthy adoptive family, including a brother his age. But suddenly, horrific flashbacks and seizures rip him back five years ago to war-torn Africa, where he lost his mother, his sister, his friends, and almost his own life to torturous violence. In therapy for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Abe uncovers even darker moments that make him question why he's still alive.

This contemporary young adult novel portrays the pressures of teens to live a normal life, let alone succeed at high levels; while facing mental illness and—in Abe's case—a past that no one could possibly understand... or survive.

Pegi Deitz Shea has written a suspenseful, action-filled book that will open teens' eyes and hearts to the lives of young people exposed to violence around the world.

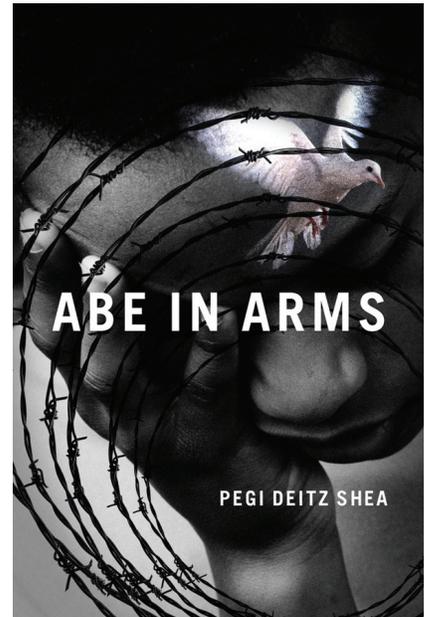
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Pegi Deitz Shea is best known for exploring human rights issues in children's books. Pegi has brought the worlds of refugees, immigrants, child laborers, and historical figures into the minds of readers of all ages. Her books, including *The Whispering Cloth*, *Tangled Threads*, *Ten Mice for Tet*, *The Carpet Boy's Gift* and *Patience Wright* have been made Notables by organizations including the International Reading Association, National Council of Teachers of English, National Council for the Social Studies, Bank Street College, Junior Library Guild and the New York Public Library. She has been teaching writing for the Institute of Children's Literature since 1996, and teaching children's literature at the University of Connecticut since 2007. Pegi has presented at more than 350 schools, libraries and conferences across the nation. Raised in New Jersey, Pegi lives in Connecticut with her family when she's not traipsing around the world.

ACCOLADES

"*Abe in Arms*, although fictional in nature, could have been true for any number of young boys in West Africa whose lives were devastated by conscription into the rebel army through force, threats, manipulation, bribery, and drugs. ...Pegi Shea engrosses us in the horrors of war, pulls at our heartstrings as we weep for Abe, and causes us to yearn for a time when he can confront the demons that control his life. At the same time, she explores the wrenching irony of war refugees being thrust into an American youth culture that glamorizes the very violence that has caused Abe so much anguish. Shea's resolution, like Abe's epiphany, is surprising, believable, and gratifying."

—Eleanor Porter Pershing, Ph.D., West Africa Trauma Team



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