

# BIOGRAPHY

## ON-AIR BIOGRAPHY

She's the award-winning author/illustrator of *Sunbelievable* – a children's picture book for young readers. Jo Ann is the youngest of three sisters who grew up in Philadelphia, making up and acting out fairy tales. She has always loved children's literature and recently began writing stories for her grandchildren. Her professional career took her into the health sciences field where she merged her love of storytelling with research and technical writing skills. Widely published in peer-reviewed major medical journals, she has helped health professionals around the world fund well over \$10m in research grants and projects.

From extensive travels and teaching in maternal and child health centers in Russia and Central and Eastern Europe, she draws upon the imagination and dreams of children around the globe.

Recognized for both storytelling and illustrating – Jo Ann now teaches others how to create extraordinary illustrations that transform digital art into award-winning masterpieces. She also coaches authors about strategies for successful publishing and marketing. Her new book, *I Want Cake*, will be released late fall 2012 along with a breakthrough book App version of *Sunbelievable*.

Jo Ann writes from her home in New Jersey. Her original photographs from New England to Siberia set the stage for her unique digital art. She continues to write for the medical profession, focusing on research to improve healthcare for under-served children.

## PROFESSIONAL BIOGRAPHY

A 30-year veteran of the public health sciences, Jo Ann Kairys is unique among women who have transformed their careers so successfully.

She never dreamed she'd become either an author or illustrator of children's books. Her creative journey started with making picture books for her granddaughters. Fascinated with their playful imagination, she tried to capture their curiosity about the natural world in words and images. With no formal art training, she learned to use Photoshop as a canvas to blend photographs of the girls with digital landscapes.

Ms. Kairys is widely published health sciences researcher whose articles appear in major peer-reviewed journals. At Dartmouth Medical School in New Hampshire, she taught quality improvement methods to improve health outcomes. This work took her to the Newly Independent States of Russia and Central and Eastern Europe where she coordinated hospital partnerships throughout the former Soviet Union.

At the Robert Wood Johnson Medical School in New Jersey, she continued research in quality of care as Executive Director for the Center for Healthy Families and Cultural Diversity. She led efforts to improve care for underserved patients by designing systems to better meet the needs of children and families. Her strategies have been widely adopted by health care practices in the U.S. and around the globe.

## SUNBELIEVABLE: Connecting Children with Science and Nature

While some new children's authors would consider themselves lucky to simply break even with their debut title, New Jersey-based writer, Jo Ann Kairys, proves that venturing into a new genre is no bar to National success.

Kairys' first children's book, *Sunbelievable: Connecting Children with Science and Nature*, has brightened the literary landscape and earned her six National U.S awards this year alone. With accolades including the coveted Mom's Gold Choice and Indie Excellence awards, Kairys proves that self-published success is possible.

*Sunbelievable* is a humorous, educational children's picture book for ages 4-8. The story tells the captivating tale of two young sisters who are forced to abandon their playtime on the beach when darkness falls. Safely indoors, the duo weave fantastical stories about what the Sun likes to do when it 'goes away.' From riding rollercoasters and teaching fireflies to shine, to taking bubble baths and eating pizza, the personified Sun's imaginary life is backed up with plenty of real-world facts (contributed by NASA's Chief Technologist) and stunning digital imagery.

The latter has, in itself, earned Kairys a host of awards. "The quirky illustrations not only burst with color, but offer a second-read appeal. Young readers will discover new details each time they page through the book. The illustrations, like the book's story, are an interesting combination of realism and fantasy," explains Kairys, who had no formal art experience before writing *Sunbelievable*. Continuing, "Although the girls, the beach, and their home are portrayed realistically, the illustrations include intriguing details to spark children's imaginations, such as sprinkles of fairy dust and mice wearing top hats!"

Critics are praising the book's illustrations for their deep appeal. Kairys' real-world subplots have also contributed to her rapid success and popularity. "The book also focuses on the concept of multicultural family: the girls' love for each other and their relationship with their parents. When, so often, children's books and cartoons portray the relationship between siblings and parents as less than ideal, *Sunbelievable* offers a compelling message: *building strong family bonds through play and imagination*," she adds. Kairys' own family played a vital role in the development of the book. As a self-confessed 'late bloomer' to published literature, Kairys co-wrote the book with her own son, featuring her grandchildren as the book's main characters.

With six National awards, strong media interest and a demand for further insight into what the Sun does when the lights go off, Kairys has recently announced the book's sequel. Due for release in fall of this year, along with an interactive book App, children and parents are promised plenty more reading and learning fun in this one-of-a-kind storytelling experience. *Sunbelievable: Connecting Children with Science and Nature*, published by the author's self-owned Story Quest Books, LLC, is available now from [Barnes and Noble](#), [Amazon](#), Whole Foods and other retailers.

For more media information, including interview questions and a short video trailer, please visit Jo Ann's website/blog: <http://www.storyquestbooks.com> and social media channels: [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

# Interview Questions

## SUNBELIEVABLE: Connecting Children with Science and Nature

Tell us a bit about you and your journey as an author/illustrator.

What role does your family play in being part of this journey?

What and/or who inspired you to write *Sunbelievable* and your next picture books?

Who is the ideal reader for your book?

What is the message of your book?

How challenging is it these days to publish independently – that is, without a traditional agent?

What is/was your greatest challenge in creating and producing a children's book?

What advice can you offer to authors or anyone aspiring to write their first or next book?

What has inspired you most on your success journey and what impact has this had?

Are you currently writing your next book? What can you tell us about it?

How did you develop a book App for Sunbelievable?

Do you have a program or product available to help authors in any phase of the writing, publishing, or marketing of their books?

What is the best way for people to find out more about you, your book and your work?



