



PRESS RELEASE

FOR ITS IMMEDIATE RELEASE | CONTACT: 480 – 983-1445 | E-mail: books@hisi.org

Latina teacher from Phoenix asserts in new book Traditional children stories promote values

Phoenix, Arizona
September 6, 2007

Metaphorical stories and parables result in an indirect language more effective than the direct language of reason, affirms Carmen Filipi in a new book. In her literary work titled *The marvelous fountain and other stories my grandma told me*, Filipi —a Phoenix educator with several decades of experience in the school system— recovers and presents the oral tradition in which narrations communicated and taught ethical, moral and civic values to children, mainly told by grandmothers and other family members in the past.

“Teachers, social workers and parents notice a great emptiness in the civic, moral and ethical development of today’s children,” explains Filipi, an elementary and music teacher for the Roosevelt School District, in Phoenix. “We all agree that children desperately need a guide for such an education. But how to do this without giving pretentious lectures or long-winded speeches about what they should or should not do or creating new punishments to force them to change their behavior?” —questions the author. Based on her extensive experience in working with hundreds of children, the author considers that all these sermons, speeches and punishments seldom have an effect on children.

The marvelous fountain and other stories my grandma told me, is a bilingual book that Carmen Filipi conceived based on her own experience. Having grown up in an isolated, remote military outpost in the Paraguayan Chaco, near the border with Bolivia, Filipi spent her childhood with no TV, radio, toys or books. Her only distraction was listening to stories told by her grandmother and other grandmothers of the area. It was through these stories that Filipi learned many valuable lessons that guided and enriched her life.

“More than entertaining me, the stories taught me. Their purpose was to teach children life lessons and moral lessons of ethics, civics, and justice. Through these narrations we were taught how to be good members of the community: honest, honorable, just and compassionate” —reflects Filipi about the benefit these stories had in shaping her character. Her motivation in writing the book was to preserve this tradition, as well as to deal with the social tendency in which the majority of grandmothers no longer live close to their children or their children’s children. “Many mothers must work away from the house to support their children —laments Filipi— and their children spend many hours in front of the TV, playing videogames or on the street.”

The marvelous fountain and other stories my grandma told me is a children’s book that blends oral tradition, the strength of the English and Spanish languages, and the beauty of digital art to illustrate it. The author includes activities and suggestions for educators and parents. Published by the Arizona-based Hispanic Institute of Social Issues, this literary work documents one of the most distinctive cultural customs of Latin America, and contributes to fill the need for bilingual texts for schools, institutions, and families who seek to not only teach moral values and character-building lessons, but also to maintain the tradition.

Further information can be obtained at: www.hisi.org/books.html or by calling 480 – 983-1445. The book is available for purchase at www.amazon.com and Changing Hands Bookstore in Tempe.

Book details: *The marvelous fountain and other stories my grandma told me* / By Carmen Filipi / Illustrated by Dave Long / 55 pp. / 25.5 cm. / ISBN 13: 978-0-9797814-0-7 / Price: \$14.95 (plus s/h.) / Paperback. / Language: Bilingual in English and Spanish.
Published by the Hispanic Institute of Social Issues (2007).