

Amidst all the news that minority children are falling behind, a young Latina from Plainfield, New Jersey is standing tall as author of her very first children's book!



Libros, A Community Publisher, of Long Beach, New York just released five new children's books. A highlight among them is 14 year old Maria Guardado's, a student at Maxson School in Plainfield, New Jersey. It was as a fifth grade student at Emerson Elementary that she wrote *The Frog That Went To The Moon*. Maria Guardado's touching story is a fantastical tale about a tricky frog named Chaco. He's a sad little frog who doesn't believe he will ever be happy in his town of Santa Ana. Chaco believes happiness can only be found on the moon, so the unhappy tricker concocts a cute little scheme to get him to the moon where he thinks pure happiness awaits him. Once there, Chaco learns that he must

return home where happiness can be found all around. All he needs to do is look for it. Maria came to the United States from El Salvador three years ago. Her hometown of Santa Ana is also the hometown of Chaco the frog, and from there, the parallels are easy to draw. "I felt the same way the frog felt," said Maria when considering her move to a strange land. "He [Chaco] felt lonely and unhappy, I felt that way too."

Libros, A Community Publisher encouraged Maria's writing talents in Spring 2003 when her fifth grade class participated in a pilot project developed by Libros called the Children's Author Project (CAP). According to Libros' owner Dr. Felix Padilla, "The goal of CAP is to encourage students to write stories from the heart through a process of self reflection and understanding." During his visit to the Emerson Elementary classroom, Dr. Padilla was honored to hear the CAP children participants read their books aloud. Maria's book stood out from the rest.

Maria's work has paved the way for other students to become authors. *The Frog That Went To The Moon*, inspired Libros, A Community Publisher to implement CAP on a wider scale in the 2003-2004 school year. CAP was used in several schools throughout the tri-state area as well as in Pennsylvania, Illinois and Oregon.

Libros is now working to publish the work of six new CAP young authors.

To find out more about Maria's book or the CAP program, please contact Libros, A Community Publisher at 516/889-9147 or 800/260-9915 or visit their website, www.librospress.com



Maria Guardado was born June 12, 1990 in the city of Chalatenango, El Salvador. She came to Plainfield, New Jersey at the age of 11. She is presently a seventh grade student at Maxson Middle School, Plainfield, N.J. Her favorite subjects are Math, Language Arts and Science. Maria's intention is to become an attorney. *The Frog That Went To The Moon* is her first children's book.