

**News Release**  
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Local Author to Release Children's Book Featuring Sign Language**

Kalamazoo, Mich.—Local author Marjorie Dykema is self-publishing her first book *Ella's Joy*, a uniquely illustrated story that uses words and sign language to help children discover the meaning of joy.

With colorful illustrations and sign language, readers are invited to join Ella as she searches for signs of joy and finds the secret to experiencing this incredible gift every day. The children's book is endorsed by the Michigan Deaf Association and includes an easy sign-language reference guide. Local artist and educator Geoff Helsom illustrated the book.

Dykema explained her goal in writing *Ella's Joy*, saying, "My hope is that all who read this engaging children's book will discover the secret of true joy and develop a heart willing to share this beautiful gift with others."

A fitness educator for more than 30 years in the public school system, Dykema has had the privilege of working with students who are deaf and hard of hearing along with sign language interpreters. She has seen how beautifully this language of motion enhances learning for children of all hearing abilities and felt called to create a children's story that uses sign language to help children better understand the gift of joy.

"*Ella's Joy* provides opportunities to talk about this powerful emotion with children and helps them discover the source of this beautiful gift," she said.

Dykema's previous publications include *Lessons for Living the Purpose Driven Life*, a study guide for *The Purpose Driven Life* by Rick Warren. She also has designed experiential learning activities for *8 to Great*, a life skills program for adolescents ([www.8toGreat.com](http://www.8toGreat.com)). These character-building activities are now used in numerous programs throughout the United States.

"I am excited about my newest writing adventure. *Ella's Joy* is an opportunity to help children discover the secret of finding joy in every day and express their joy through sign language."

*Ella's Joy* may be purchased through the Website [www.ellasjoy.com](http://www.ellasjoy.com).

Dykema said *Ella's Joy* is the first book in a series of scripture-based children's books that features sign language. She has already started work on the next book in the series, titled *Ella's Day*.

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Dykema completed her undergraduate studies at Central Michigan University and Western Michigan University. She has a master's degree from Western Michigan University with an emphasis in curriculum development. She lives in Portage, Mich., with her husband, John. She has three children and two grandchildren.

More information on *Ella's Joy* as well as author and cover photos are available for publication at [www.ellasjoy.com](http://www.ellasjoy.com).