

AUTHOR NOTES

As a child, I had always loved to write. I would write for enjoyment, I always kept a journal, and I enjoyed the writing activities my teachers would assign. But, as an adult, there wasn't much reason to write. I knew that the best writers wrote what they knew about and what they felt strongly about. I felt that there was nothing I could share that hadn't been shared before.

When my hair began falling out in 2007, I was very sad. My doctor and dermatologist told me that alopecia areata is an unpredictable disease, but they felt there was a good chance my hair would grow back. In spring of 2008 it did grow back-and in September of 2008, it fell out again. For a long time I wore scarves and covered the spots with sprays and creative hair styling.

In fall of 2008, when my hair was rapidly falling out, we were at an alpaca craft show. I saw a publisher's table featuring the books of a local woman. She wasn't famous (yet), she just loved to write. I said to my husband, "I'd like to do that." My husband said, "Why don't you?"

So, I thought about what I knew a lot about and what I felt a lot about. Alpaca and alopecia jumped out! And....*Destiny's Purpose* was born. While I wrote it, I thought a lot about how a teacher would use this book, because I am firstly, a teacher at heart.

I employed an editor who suggested that I publish the book as a line drawn chapter book. I decided that I wanted a picture book with illustrations that were artwork.

The folks at Dragon Pencil helped me find Dennis Auth and I chose his style of illustration. We worked a lot together to get the illustrations just right. However, there were times when I allowed *creative license* to win out. In other words there were times when the illustrations were not 100% true to alpaca life, but I felt Dennis' design and artwork should take precedence.

My family was very supportive while I wrote the book. They listened and looked and suggested and smiled. It was published, and arrived at my door from China in spring of 2010.

By March of 2010, I had lost most of my hair, and made the decision to shave the rest of it off and wear a wig. (Well, at least when I'm not at home!) I told all of the students in the school where I work about alopecia and why I had decided to wear a wig.

Wigs can be very expensive and it can be very hard to find other people who suffer from alopecia. That's why it makes me happy to know that money from the book will be used to help children buy good hair wigs, and transport them to special events to meet other children like themselves.

I hope that people read the book and recognize, as the farmer did, that people are worth more than their hair, or their clothes, or their athletic ability, or their ability to spell. I hope that readers think about the role that they play when they come across someone who is different. I hope too, that people realize that change happens and while we can not control it, we can control our reaction to it. And, finallythat change is not always bad – without it, we can not grow!

I hope you enjoy the book!

Shannon