

A Note to Parents and Teachers



BlueBeary introduces the main characters in *Open Eyes: A Series of Books for Children*.

Essentially, *BlueBeary* is a book about belonging. Everyone needs a primary place of belonging from which to grow. We all need someone who loves us best of all and cleans us up when we fall down. From that place of belonging we wander out and forage through life, discovering the world around us. As children grow, their world also grows and the skills with which they learn to observe that world become the basis from which to participate in the Great Conversation.*

At an early age children often develop strong attachments to a special blanket or stuffed toy. As growing children transition from the world of home to the broader world of school, they add other places of belonging and special friends like *BlueBeary* who are along for the ride. At every stage, these elements of a child's world will take on new meanings. When seen through the eyes of a young child, the world is full of new things to explore and understand.

As parents and teachers our work is to prepare our children to observe and understand their world as it expands, helping them learn to communicate their experiences. A young child whose eyes have been opened and who has been given words to use is now able to engage in the Great Conversation.

Observation is nutrition for growing healthy conversations. Still, in order to observe one must set out and explore the world. There are times we should allow the juices of discovery to dribble down our chins. Once we taste the world, it changes us forever.

BlueBeary and Samantha have begun that journey into an ever-expanding world. Through a partnership of home and school they are learning to see, to know, and to communicate. I invite you to join them in *Open Eyes: A Series of Books for Children*, as they search for show-and-tell items to share each month throughout the school year.

Blessings,
Kathleen McMillan

*Note: Western philosophical tradition suggests that human interaction about ideas is like a great conversation extending through the ages from generation to generation. My ideas about "the Great Conversation" are heavily influenced by Mortimer J. Adler, Dorothy Sayers, and Susan Wise Bauer. For more information and resources, visit www.openeyes.ca.