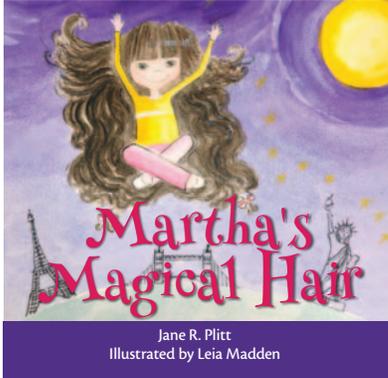


STYLE | NEW IN TOWN BY SU BYRON

Martha's remarkable life



The new children's book "Martha's Magical Hair" tells the true story of Martha Matilda Harper, who, despite being bound into servitude at the age of 7, became a groundbreaking pioneer in the franchise beauty industry. The book is a collaboration between Bradenton-based author Jane Plitt, Leia Madden, a Palmetto-based artist/designer and Sarasota-based Vicki Rollo, a book designer and owner of the boutique Hearts Desire. "The story captures Harper's remark-

able life in a way that is profoundly meaningful to young children — regardless of gender or economic background," says Plitt, who is also the author of a biography on Harper. "Harper is a shining example of empowerment in a time when women, especially those born into poverty, had few rights. Harper incorporated the goals of the suffragists to empower poor factory and servant girls to transform their lives through private enterprise. As we rally to support the 100th anniversary of women's suffrage, we need to think about how far we still have to go for full equality of the sexes." In her lengthy career, Plitt has run several successful businesses and also served as executive director of the National Organization for Women. Locally, she served as president of the Manatee County Library Foundation, where she funded a two-year literacy outreach program. During her tenure there, she recruited Stephen King and John Grisham as keynote speakers. Plitt's books are available at marthamatildaharper.org.

Lauren Hughey Director of Donor Engagement

Lauren Hughey recently moved to Sarasota from San Francisco. Prior to that, she spent seven years in Ann Arbor working as a fundraiser for the University of Michigan's new C.S. Mott Children's Hospital. In Sarasota, she serves as director of donor engagement at the Community Foundation of Sarasota County — a position she found out about because she happened to be sitting next to CFSC donors at Nancy's Bar-B-Q on her second night in town. She's also the co-founder of Pip & Grow, a company that produces bassinet boxes designed to reduce the risk of SIDS (www.pipandgrow.com).



How did you end up in Sarasota?

I was living in San Francisco working for a startup in a super-stressful environment. My boyfriend had recently moved to Sarasota, and I came to check it out. I realized he lived in paradise and that I needed to live in paradise, too.

Any culture shock you'd care to report?

Ha. Yes. San Francisco is a young town full of scrappy entrepreneurs trying to make it big. Sarasota is, er, a slightly more mature town filled with very suc-