

## Author raises money for adult literacy

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Article Last Updated:09/28/2006 12:39:34 PM MDT

Jill Vanderwood cottons to rainbow-colored, cartoon-like fish. She also savors pink and green dogs, eating wedding cake just by wishing for it and getting a massage.

And she isn't the only one.

Readers recently enjoyed an opportunity to catch up on Vanderwood's fanciful creations by "walking through" the chapters of the novelist's first book, *Through the Rug*, at a fundraiser to benefit the Literacy Action Center (LAC), an agency that promotes adult literacy.

"I want to help literacy and want people to know about my book," Vanderwood said.

Karen George, bookkeeper for the LAC, believes in the things the center is doing to help adults living in the community.

"I'm out here helping to collect money" [for the center], she said at the event.

And there was plenty to do at the Highland Cove Retirement Community in Sugar House, where the fundraiser took place.

"My grandson who came along for the ride, fully expected to be bored," George said. "He brought his iPod, but he hasn't even taken the iPod out."

Most activities, such as the fish pond and the pirate beanbag toss, were free. Others - washable tattoos, a massage, a fortune telling or palm reading or the chance to cop a prize in the raffle - were available for a small donation.

Margaret May, who lives at the center, was one of many excited to join in the festivities and to get Vanderwood to autograph her copy of the author's book.

"I still get around pretty good," she said, her book in hand.

May was one of many in line for the author's autograph. Few wanted to leave the table until they also received an autograph from Lee Westover, the illustrator of the book. A lifetime artist, Westover's work in *Through the Rug* was her first experience illustrating a book.

"A lot of people do artwork but [they] don't always get published," Westover said. "My mother was a writer, and we speculated on a lot of different children's book ideas, but we never really worked hard at it like Jill to get it published."

Published by Authorhouse, *Through the Rug* is about a grandmother who enjoys cooking up magic. It's also about the woman's 10-year-old granddaughter, Alyssa, who gets caught up in her grandmother's bungling ways that transport the two of them "through the rug" to a land where all wishes come true.

"I read the book yesterday," visitor Tanna Campbell said. "The imagination, the creativity that comes out in it is great. I loved it."

For her part, Vanderwood is thankful for those who turned out for the cause and for the volunteers that made the fundraiser so successful.

"I couldn't have done it without them," she said.

*Through the Rug* illustrator Lee Westover,  
(Kathryn Jones/Close-Up Correspondent)

