

# Lora L. Hyler

**I** began my creative writing journey as a child. As an adult I wrote many short stories, screenplays, and one adult novel, before deciding to write children's books. I worked professionally as a news journalist for NPR and ABC affiliates in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. I also worked as a corporate communications writer and manager for major media and energy companies, and for various corporate and nonprofit clients. The latter was through my public relations and marketing company, Hyler Communications, founded in 2001, still in existence, and now focused solely on marketing my books.

I joined SCBWI in 2015 and began attending workshops and conferences. I was immediately struck that the Wisconsin chapter wasn't as diverse as I expected, but welcoming and filled with writers who didn't hesitate to share advice. I jumped in to volunteer, and soaked up as many mysteries of the publishing industry as I could.

Like any industry, obstacles are plentiful, but I had faced and overcome hurdles throughout my career and enjoyed many successes. I was up for the challenge. I joined a critique group, researched mentor texts, and admired the work of lauded colleagues, along with the passion of my fellow pre-published authors.

I set my sights on the middle grade market and began to write my manuscript featuring multicultural superheroes, working on CRISPR-Cas9 gene editing technology,

who share a love of spy gadgets. After many drafts, my manuscript for *The Stupendous Adventures of Mighty Marty Hayes* was ready for submission. As rejections piled up, I continued to refine my craft.

In August 2017, I knew I was ready for publication. Convincing faceless strangers was difficult. I wrote an article for the national *Writer's Digest* magazine and declared, I was seeking an agent.

In that same article, I also mentioned I had received a request for a full manuscript from a former editor and now publisher who had written, "Thanks for sending me your manuscript which I have so enjoyed looking at. It is such a great fun concept and the ideas you have for further titles makes it a more commercial project than we (pursue)."

Great news! This individual has successfully shepherded through a fantasy series that set global sales

records, captured the imaginations of youth and adults, and gained fans from reluctant and avid readers alike.

Several months later, I wrote a second article for *Writer's Digest* announcing I had launched without an agent and secured a three-book middle grade series deal with a traditional small publisher.

My aha moment came as I realized I had all the tools I needed to carve out my own success.

As I write this, I can reflect on nearly forty appearances around the country since my first book was published in 2018. I was invited to schools, educator conferences, bookstores, and book festivals. I would not have had these life affirming experiences if I had 'waited to be chosen.'

I've taken care to mentor others as I build my career, while continuing to refine my craft and publishing knowledge through SCBWI and other industry conferences.

My most recent book opportunity was inspired by an Emory Global Health Institute competition. The challenge was to write a book to help children ages six to twelve deal with the effects of the coronavirus pandemic. The book needed to be written in two weeks! I initially shrugged



July 2020. Safety tips are intertwined with humor and laughter.

Once again, SCBWI is at the forefront of making the book known to audiences. In accepting what at first glance seemed to be an impossible challenge, I learned two valuable lessons.

- How to write fast
- Sacrifice for the cause: children will be dealing with this coronavirus pandemic for quite some time.

My publisher and MG series illustrator came on board the project. It's been a joy and a rewarding accomplishment. A detailed mar-

keting plan is underway.

My advice for budding authors: stay humble. Put the work in. Write the book only you can write; you'll find your audience.

Thanks, SCBWI for accompanying me on this author journey.

**LORA HYLER** is a former reporter for NPR affiliate, WUWM and ABC affiliate, WISN, both in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. She also worked in corporate communications and executive speechwriting for media and energy companies. In 2001, she founded her public relations and marketing company, Hyler Communications. She worked in television for two years on NBC affiliate, TMJ4. She's been a member of SCBWI since 2015 and became a children's book author in 2018. Her debut novel, *The Stupendous Adventures of Mighty Marty Hayes*, is the first in a three-part children's middle grade series. Inspired by a challenge from Emory Global Health Institute, she has written a book to help children, ages six and up deal with the coronavirus. *Our Bodies Stay Home, Our Imaginations Run Free* debuted in July 2020 to great reviews. She's now working on her second book in the *Stupendous Adventures* series.

it off. Finally, with ten days left to write, I jumped in. I knew I wanted this book published, win or no win. *Our Bodies Stay Home, Our Imaginations Run Free* was published in

ART SPOT WINNER

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