

# Chronicle

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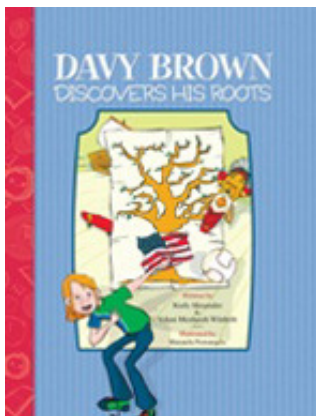
### Keely Alexander publishes children's book

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Keely Alexander, from Superior, has co-authored a children's book on immigration. "Davy Brown Discovers His Roots" will debut June 3 in Las Vegas at the American Immigration Lawyers Association Annual Conference.



With co-author Velani Mynhardt Witthöft, from South Africa, Alexander tells the story of a young boy and his friends “look back” to find their immigrant roots in Davy Brown Discovers His Roots. Davy Brown is a bright, all-American boy with some not-so-typical problems. His best friend may be leaving the country. His teacher has just instructed the class to describe their own immigration stories—but his family doesn’t have one—or so Davy thinks. In their search for their immigrant roots, Davy and his friends Carlos, Erika, and Amit discover that even the most seemingly typical people have exciting immigration histories.

Everyone has an immigration story—even you. Whether you came to this country in pursuit of a better life or your grandparents or great-grandparents came over on a boat with nothing but a dream, your story is an important thread in the fabric of the American tale. Sometimes we have to look back in order to look forward.

While researching children's books on immigration, Witthöft and Alexander discovered that many immigration narratives tell immigration stories from a strictly historical or ethnic perspective, which sometimes leaves the reader on the outside looking in. Witthöft and Alexander's goal was to tell an accessible immigration story that includes everyone.

"We wanted to create a story that would blend the historic with the current to convey the message that we are all immigrants," Alexander said. "In order to create understanding and tolerance, the immigrant experience needs to be relatable. I'm especially excited to share this book with the children who live in small towns like I did, and may not have had the opportunity to be exposed to different cultures."

"Davy Brown Discovers His Roots" includes resources that enable readers to embark on their own voyage of discovery and can be read on many different levels. The book is easy enough for a child to understand but with enough substance to engage an adult reader. The story also features information on various types of visas and immigration paths—along with a handy reference guide.

The authors have teamed up with the American Immigration Law Foundation and a portion of the sales proceed will support their Curriculum Center's educational initiatives on immigration. Lesson plans and activities are available to educators and parents on both organization's websites.

"In order for us to deal with a topic as heavy as immigration and get children excited to read about it, we needed to do something really different—so we invented a new genre: the highly-visual middle grade book," said Witthöft. "It's a hybrid chapter picture book to appeal to a modern generation that enjoys graphic novels and the Internet. Our illustrations are technology-based and truly modern. Parents keep telling us how much Davy reminds them of their own children."

Witthöft is an immigrant from South Africa. She graduated from the University of Pretoria in 1999 with two law degrees and practiced bankruptcy law until 2002 when she moved to New York City. She worked for a financial magazine on Wall Street until 2004 when she and her husband moved to Seattle. She is currently employed by the Foundation for International Services where she works in comparative international education assisting immigration attorneys.

Alexander grew up in Superior and received degrees in English Literature and German from the University of Montana. She has worked in the publishing industry, taught ESL and studied abroad. She now lives in Seattle with her husband and stepdaughter, and works in localization and the casual videogames industry.

Keely Velani LLC publishes children's books with a purpose. The books are designed to teach kids about global and social issues in a fun and novel way. When purchasing one of their books, kids not only will be educated on the issue featured in the book, but Keely Velani will contribute a portion of the proceeds to that specific cause to make a real difference. For the next two years Keely Velani will be dedicated to supporting AILF's Curriculum Center. Their next project will be on global warming; and after that that the issue the two will adopt is AIDS.

AILF is a tax-exempt not-for-profit educational, charitable organization dedicated to increasing public understanding of the value of immigration to American society, and to advancing fundamental fairness and due process under the law for immigrants. The American Immigration Council's Curriculum Center serves as a national clearinghouse and resource for teaching immigration history and policy to grades K-12. The Curriculum Center sponsors the annual 5th Grade Creative Writing Contest, funds community and classroom service learning projects, provides training to educators to encourage innovative teaching techniques, and produces an annual resource guide that is distributed widely.

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