

Healthy Stories at the Book Fair



By Tracie Dickerson

We couldn't believe our eyes when the stall directly across from our Healthy Story booth said "My Days with the Doors and other Stories". We had just published a story entitled "People are Strange" and this coincidence was just as odd. Another strange fact was that John Holmes, the author of our story was driving down from Palatka to attend the book fair. John being a major Doors fan, couldn't believe "the Fifth Door" Doug Lubahn who had played bass on four of The Doors' albums, including *Strange Days*, *Waiting for the Sun*, and *the Soft Parade* would be sitting directly across from him all weekend. The night before, John could hardly sleep, thinking about meeting Doug. John carried a copy of his story, which he presented Doug, and they started to reminisce about their lives in the late 60's. They became close enough so that John felt comfortable in asking Doug for a blurb for the back of our next edition. Doug graciously consented to write the following blurb.

"I met John Holmes at the Miami International Book Fair. John related to me his "People are Strange" story, wherein he shared a beer with Jim Morrison. The story just goes to show what an incredible man Morrison was. I know having actually shared a few beers with Jim myself."

Another one of our ideas was to trade Healthy Stories with other authors in exchange for their book, and hopefully a blurb from them. We were quite successful, and have now added to our quarantine library the following editions: *The Golden Egg*, *The Story of Our Miracle Baby*, by Debra & Elias Franco; *Why Jews Don't Camp, Plus 24 other Hilarious Stories about Everyday Life* by Arnie Z. Goldberg; and *Breaking up Without Breaking Down, Picking up the Pieces to Become Whole Again* by Kristina de la Cal.

Not only did we trade for books, but one of our editors succeeded in paying five dollars for an "all-the-books-you-can-carry" deal of the day, that has resulted in an additional forty five books for the Quarantine Exchange Library.

Seeing the Miami-Dade County Health Department banner, many people stopped by to take a look at *Healthy Stories*. The Chairman of the Board of County Commissioners, of Miami-Dade County introduced himself after spending some quality time studying our story book. Our medical director, with his whole family, stopped by to say hello! Some health department workers from around the state purchased books as gifts for their colleagues' enjoyment.

One patron said, "This is a great idea! Are there any other Healthy Stories books in publication in the country?"

To which we proudly responded, "No."

One perspective customer yelled to his friend, "Hey look, Miami Dade County Health Department has a book at the book fair!"

But our favorite quote was said by an elderly African-American woman, "The first book I bought at the fair was Obama's, "*Audacity of Hope*," and the second book was *Healthy Stories*."

Hundreds of readers picked up our Healthy Stories bookmarks and business cards. Many of them gave us their e-mail addresses so that we could mail them our new stories. The book fair was a marketing bonanza. Not only did we have fun, we got some street cred. We had the joy of autographing our books in the blistering heat of Saturday and the chill of Sunday. As the parade of ravenous readers marched by our booth, children were magnetically attracted to our book cover, as if by the simple act of touching it would make their own. Readers picked up copies and read a story or two while they decided if *Healthy Stories* would take a place on their bookshelves. Thousands of people saw that the Miami-Dade County Health Department is a community partner.

What a coincidence to find in our story President-Elect Obama, Jim Morrison and the Doors, a golden egg and a beer. How bold. How daring. How audacious.



Healthy Stories is available on Amazon at http://www.amazon.com/Healthy-Stories-Sharing-Health-Department/dp/0615206344/ref=sr_1_7?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1224865070&sr=8-7

