

BHC Children's Literature students will soon be published children's book authors.

Their book, "Shapes of Our Lives," covers basic shapes and the importance of diversity, acceptance and inclusion.

Adjunct professor Lauren Wood owns a small publishing company, Paradisiac Publishing in Davenport, which is publishing the English 240 students' book.

"I wanted to give my students the opportunity to take something away from the course that could truly be something of pride and a substantial achievement to add to their resume," Wood said.



No matter what they decide to do after graduation, the process is teaching important lessons: how to work together on a project and how to successfully meet deadlines.

BHC student Maurissa O'Donnell, of Moline, said writing "Shapes of Our Lives" was a team building experience and that she wants the book to inspire kids.

"I hope that the book can be read by the younger generation and teach them a valuable lesson," she said.

The manuscript is complete and the goal is to release the book in December. Wood plans on submitting it for a Newbery Medal, which has a December 31 deadline.

"Shapes of Our Lives" will be available through online retailers including Amazon, Barnes & Noble and smaller companies. The launch price will be \$15.

These sales will be used to pay for the cost of publication and then proceeds will go to the publishing company.

Student authors can sell the book directly, too, by buying wholesale copies from the publishing company. Wood encourages friends and family to purchase from the authors to get signed copies.

Wood noted the project has challenged the students to create their own version of the concepts the class is studying.

"As a writer myself, I've found the best way to learn the ins and outs of a particular genre is to actually practice creating it yourself," Wood said.



Artist Glen Lowry, of Davenport, will illustrate "Shapes of Our Lives." Lowry recently visited the class to talk about the process of illustrating a book.

He discussed how illustrations can impact the pace of a story, shared examples of his work including storyboards, and solicited student feedback on what kind of illustrations they wanted for their book.

The students were interested in bright eye-catching colors to capture the attention of their young audience. Lowry will prepare a few storyboards to give the students options.

The illustrations will bring the shapes and colors in the book to life, and are one of the final steps to the book becoming a reality.

You can keep up-to-date on “Shapes of Our Lives” and the class’ progress by following the class on Tumblr [here](#).

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