

# SissyMarySue

Award-Winning Children's Book Author



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# SissyMarySue

## is Dr. Wendy Muhlhauser

“SissyMarySue” is the pen name for Dr. Wendy Muhlhauser, the award-winning author and creator of Jelly Beans the Cheetah and Hope Children’s Book Series. Wendy is a 21st-century renaissance woman: she is an author, educator, champion of children and scholar (during her doctoral studies in education, she was awarded a Fielder Graduate Fellowship through the Marie Fielder Center for Democracy, Leadership, and Education).

Her expressive children’s books and diligent work on behalf of diversity and inclusion has taught children (and adults) the power of empathy and compassion for others. Through her literary works, readers are enlightened, entertained, and profoundly impacted.

SissyMarySue’s enjoyable, beautifully illustrated, and award-winning five-star books have earned their place as beloved among readers and listeners of all ages and from people all over the world. Wendy is represented by **Sylvia Hampton of Hampton Bates Public Relations**. She writes from her home in Minnesota, where she is also the playwright and lyricist of the accompanying SissyMarySue children’s musicals, songs, and movies.

Wendy is a dynamic educational and cultural thought leader and is the driving force behind bringing a “we are one-world” philosophy to educators, parents, and children through her books and multimedia. Through SissyMarySue.org, Wendy is a prominent voice in teaching compassion, diversity, and inclusion in some of the most unique and



“  
All children deserve  
to see themselves  
represented in the  
books they read!

fun ways — her books and characters are an entertaining way for parents and kids to open up a dialogue about cultural differences an important subject that affects how we all live and work.

Dr. Muhlhauser has been an educator and thought leader for two decades. Dr. Muhlhauser earned her Doctorate in Education (with an emphasis in Leadership for Change: A Concentration in Media, Technology, and Innovation) from Fielding Graduate University in February of 2021. Her dissertation focused on Creative Play for Teaching Empathy to Young Children. She also has bachelor’s and master’s degrees — both of which she earned while working, writing books, and raising a family. For Wendy’s full bio visit [SissyMarySue.org](https://SissyMarySue.org).

## New Children's Book, Empathy Airlines, Flies in to Teach Children How to Combat Prejudice and Racism

In Midst of COVID-19 and Civil Unrest Award-Winning Children's Book Author  
Works Value Diversity, Empathy and Compassion

Amid COVID-19 and Civil Unrest, award-winning Minnesota book author, educator, and scholar, Dr. Wendy Muhlhauser, a.k.a. SissyMarySue writes books that help children understand empathy while promoting inclusion is a perfect foil in today's world—a world that is frightening for most adults, let alone children. Her Jelly Beans the Cheetah and Hope book series, promotes empathy and caring, and is published by Beaver's Pond Press. Her books are sold online and in stores at **Barnes & Noble, Walmart, Amazon, and Target.**

"The characters of our latest book **EMPATHY AIRLINES: Jelly Beans Cheetah and Hope - Book 2**, with the help of illustrators Sarah Williams and Jacob Peterson, come to life and is relevant during COVID-19 and civic conflict!" says its author SissyMarySue. "The book explains how we are one world, and offers beautiful lessons about friendship, acceptance, kindness, and compassion--and how to care for each other when confronted with life's difficulties."

SissyMarySue's books – are lovingly written primarily for children aged 5-11 years old – but older children and adults enjoy the multicultural messaging of diversity and inclusion. In addition to books, there are accompanying multimedia platforms of songs, plays, and interactive videos, which are stress-relieving as they beautifully showcase people of different cultures and racial backgrounds working, playing, and solving problems together to benefit all.

**EMPATHY AIRLINES**, like SissyMarySue's first book, is entertaining to its readers. The concepts are presented in a rhyming format that is easy to read, memorize, and fun for all ages. Surprisingly, there are very few children books that feature people of different races and cultures playing and working together—with empathy, inclusion, and for the betterment of all. Here are some eye-opening facts about diversity in publishing:

- **Only 11% of children's books in 23 years contain multicultural content**
- **79% of people working in traditional publishing are White**
- **Out of 3600 children's books published in 2012, only 3% were about African American, and 1.5 were about Latinos**

(Reference: University of Wisconsin, Cooperative Book Center, School of Education)

With SissyMarySue books, we are hoping to change these statistics with great storytelling and relevant inclusive educational messaging for children, through the introduction of other cultures that highlight the importance of the "one-world" philosophy of people working and problem-solving together, which is especially crucial during a global pandemic and worldwide grief.

SissyMarySue/ Dr. Wendy Muhlhauser Book Awards:

- **Jelly Beans the Cheetah and Hope**  
(John E. Weaver – Excellent Reads, Globally Mindful, The Montaigne Medal, Eric Hoffer Book Award, Finalist 2020 and Mom's Choice Award)
- **Empathy Airlines – Book 2**  
(Mom's Choice Award, Honoring Excellence)
- **Tristy Sparkles – Launching Soon!**  
Single- Sparkle, Sparkle, Available Now!

### About the Author

SissyMarySue is the pen name for Dr. Wendy Muhlhauser, an award-winning author, educator, champion of children, and scholar (she was awarded a Fielder Graduate Fellowship through the Marie Fielder Center of Democracy, Leadership, and Education). Website: [www.sissymarysue.org](http://www.sissymarysue.org).



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Why did you start writing for kids?

Why do you think your books are important for kids to read?

Where do your story ideas come from?

What is your most favorite thing about writing for kids?

What part do your books play in teaching children how to navigate during difficult times?

What do you find the most challenging about writing?

How can teachers use your books in the classroom (and online)?

What makes a good story?

What's next for you?

Is there anything we didn't ask that you'd like people to know about you and/or your books?



## Jelly Beans the Cheetah and Hope

Video Conferencing platform called [CILC](#) hosting five programs based on book “Jelly Beans the Cheetah and Hope” and EMPATHY AIRLINES: Jelly Beans the Cheetah and Hope, Book 2, delivered as a Virtual Author!

Artist Sarah Williams was selected from MCAD (Minneapolis College of Art and Design) and Jacob Peterson (one of the illustrators from the first book) They collaborated to illustrate the second book in series!

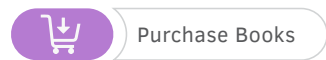
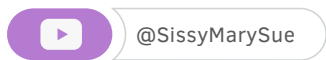


[Watch the Musical Play](#)  
of “Jelly Beans the Cheetah and Hope”  
was Fall 2018 and April 2019.

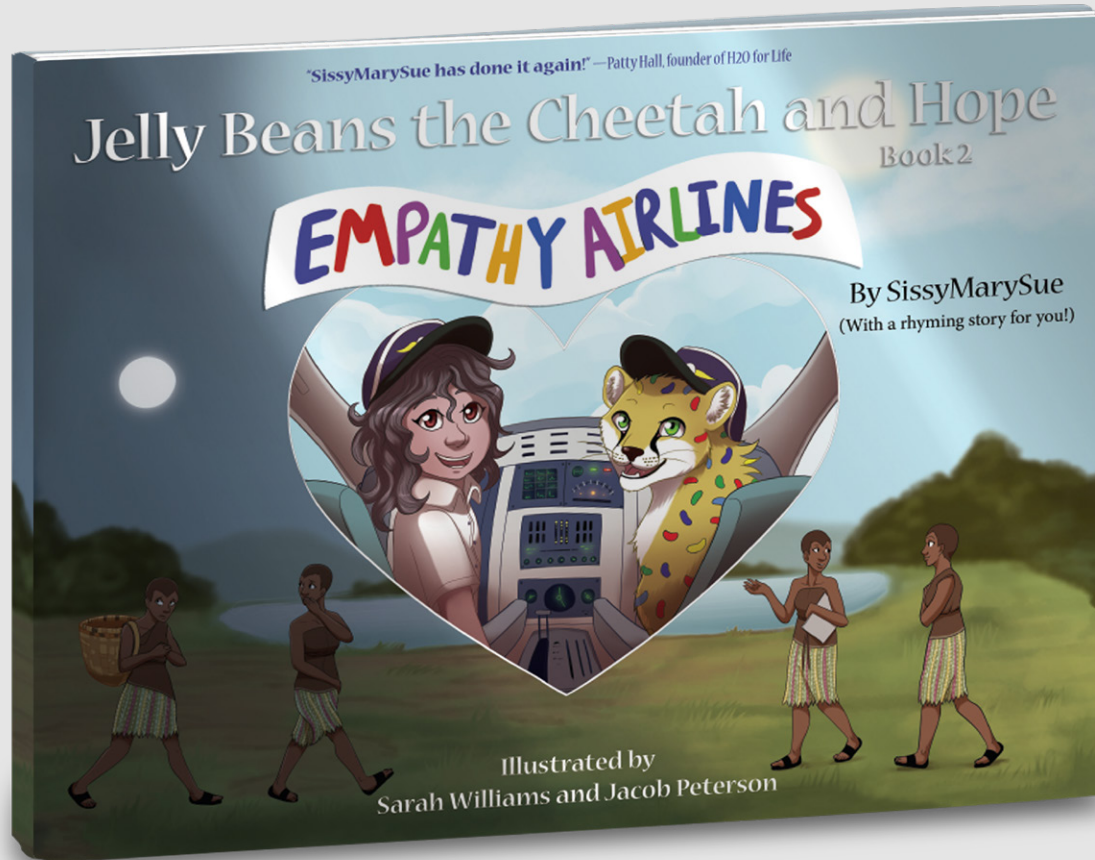
[“TRISTY SPARKLES - The Teacher  
and Others who Shine”](#)  
A book with an inclusive classroom!

[Learn About SissyMarySue](#)  
High school and college age youth deliver  
quality work, with real world projects!

[Learn About EMPATHY Ripple](#)  
How we are empowering youth with empathy  
to spring into compassionate action.







*Trusted worldwide*  
by parents, educators,  
retailers & members  
of the media

### Overview

When they met, Hope, a sad girl, and Jelly Beans, a captured cheetah, began a lifelong friendship through mutual caring. The power of their surprising partnership—strengthened by empathy—connected them with a new family, the Barabaig tribe. In this highly anticipated sequel, Hope and Jelly Beans use compassionate listening to explore what brought them together. Hope shares memories of the empathy shown by the flight crew on her way to Africa, which inspires an original game called Empathy Airlines.

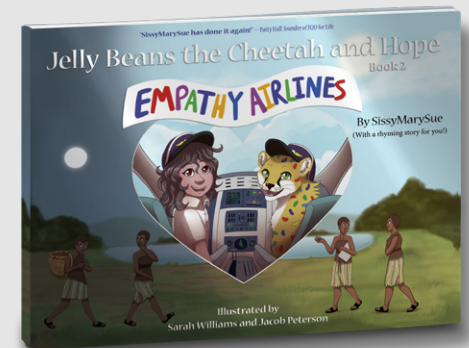
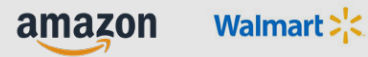
The two see the value of play, inspiring them to enhance their game with real items from the airplane trip . . . but first they must make a difficult journey to find them. They walk home through the dark, reminded of how the Barabaig girls walked to get clean water for their village every night.

Will their respect for the bravery of the Barabaig girls inspire their own courage? With imagination, empathy, and the power of friendship, Hope and Jelly Beans know, together they can do anything!

# Empathy Airlines

Jelly Beans the Cheetah and Hope Book 2

SissyMarySue



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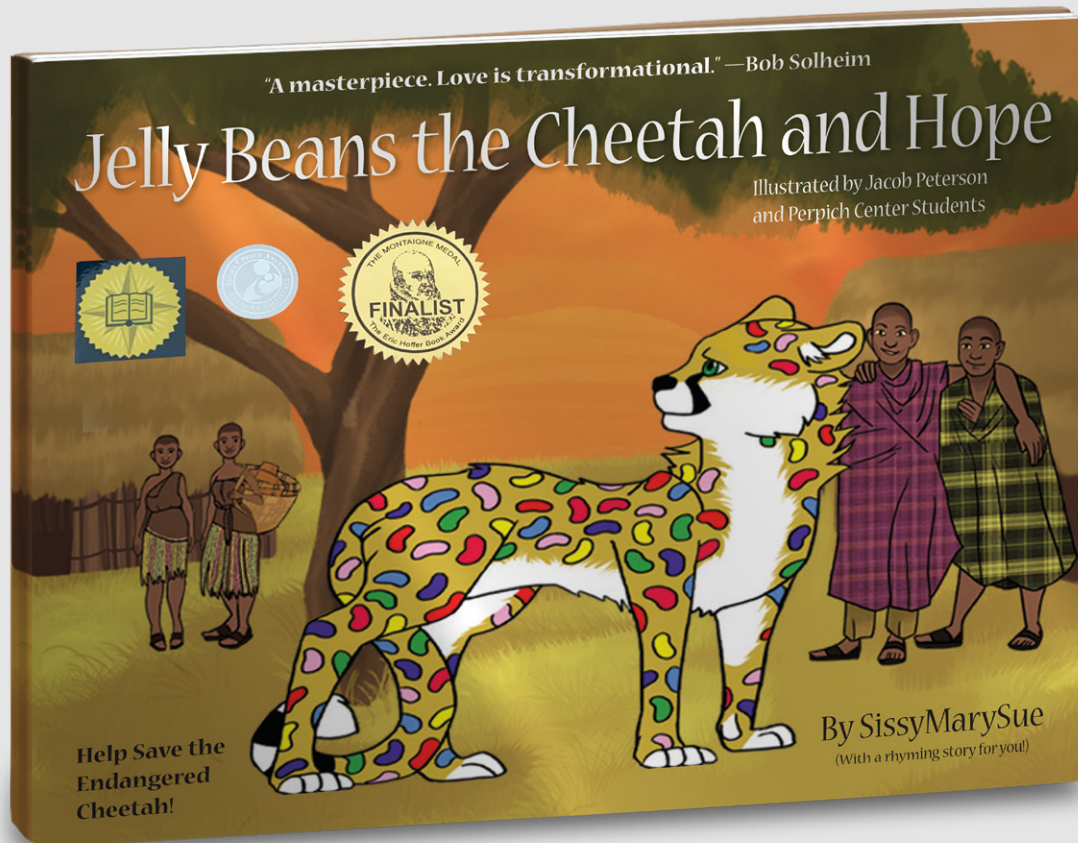
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John E. Weaver  
Excellent Reads Award  
**Globally Mindful**

## Overview

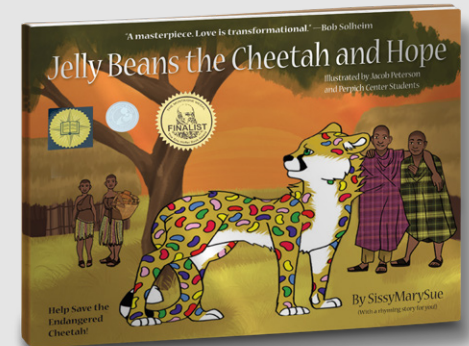
In *Jelly Beans the Cheetah and Hope*, the unlikely pairing of a sad little girl and a captured cheetah discover how much they share in common when they embark on an adventure in friendship. They've both experienced profound loss, but persevere through sharing empathy, kindness, joy, and love. Together they learn about their connection to the human family and to all, which provides for their self-esteem and a feeling of wholeness.

*Jelly Beans the Cheetah and Hope* is a vehicle for empowering youth with empathy to spring into compassionate action! Compassionate action refers to the positive impact youth can make by caring about the plight of all people. Set in Tanzania, Africa with the Barabaig tribe, the book encourages youth to identify with the characters as they experience difficulty, persevere, model empathy, and then are shown empathy by the tribe. Together, these special friends demonstrate our connection to all, including the endangered cheetah, showing that we all belong.





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**COMING SOON!**





“ This is a wonderful book that teaches children an important lesson while telling a great story. The rhymes are fun to read, and children will love the songs. The journey of friendship between a girl and a cheetah is something that both young and old can relate to. A great mix of storytelling and teaching.

*Amazon Review of Jelly Beans the Cheetah and Hope*



“ I absolutely love the love and compassion that is seen in this book. Children of all ages will love to pick up and read this beautiful book. Full of great messages of empathy and hope, this book will be one to cherish for years to come.

*Amazon Review of EMPATHY AIRLINES Jelly Beans the Cheetah and Hope, Book 2*



“ SissyMarySue's amazing ability to understand children's unique personalities really shines through in this endearing children's book, creating a truly special story that transcends gender and age. This is a beautiful story that parents will enjoy reading with their children. At the same time, it is an amazing book for the classroom; helping children as they learn to understand empathy and inclusion. SissyMarySue deserves her own sparkly star!

**– Sharon Hanifl-Lee**

*Board Chair, Children's Performing Arts White Bear Lake, Minnesota  
Review for Tristy Sparkles*



“ SissyMarySue (Dr. Wendy Muhlhauser) is an intellect who happens to be an advocate. Her qualities of expertise come not just from experience as a creative, prolific and unique author of children's books but also from her scholarship and systemic analysis of such issues as the role of art, literature and music in social justice. She interacts well with persons of diverse racial, ethnic, gender, religious and personality backgrounds. This skill is essential to the successful achievement of her proposed scholarship and professional work. I enthusiastically recommend her and am prepared to do anything (pro bono) and otherwise to further her work to support this dynamic soul, mind and advocate.

**– Dr. Lenneal Henderson**

*PhD - Professor, Fielding Graduate University*



“ SissyMarySue (Dr. Wendy Muhlhauser) has a passion for education, learning and young people. She has an excellent understanding of how to positively motivate and challenge teachers to enhance student learning. She is constantly working to improve her skills and maximize her talent.

SissyMarySue is an innovator. She connects with people of all ages. She is respected by parents, educators and community members. She blends her creativity with her insightful views on life and her work ethic to generate products and solutions that advance learning and life. Her new children's book is just one example of her success.

**– Dr. Ric Dressen**

*Former Superintendent Ed. Department, Edina Public Schools*







True critical thinkers are innovators and problem-solvers, and it is imperative to foster these strengths early.



## Dr. Wendy Muhlhauser

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SissyMarySue has had the distinct honor to have been supported by many exceptional young people, working as unpaid interns, during the production process. They served in doing illustrations, marketing, and promotion of GLOBALLY MINDFUL, MOM'S CHOICE, MONTAIGNE Medal, **AWARD WINNING**, FIVER STAR, *Jelly Beans the Cheetah and Hope*. They all made significant contributions and were examples of "springing into compassionate action!" They passionately supported the messages of Jelly Beans the Cheetah and Hope surrounding empathy, shared humanity-that we are one human FAMILY, and are connected to all, including the endangered cheetahs as well as elephants! Any successes are as a result of this collaboration!

High school age student interns from Perpich and Brooklyn Center illustrated the first book! I am delighted that interns continue to support the Jelly Beans the Cheetah book series through marketing, graphic design, music arrangement, performance, production, recording, video production, editing, illustrations, and translations. MOM'S CHOICE AWARDED, FIVE STAR, **EMPATHY AIRLINES: Jelly Beans the Cheetah and Hope, Book 2** was illustrated by college-aged Jacob Peterson and Sarah Williams as interns. Sarah earned six credits from Minneapolis College of Art and Design for the work she did, while Jacob (who worked on the first book) generously donated his time. Our team has included; college students and graduates from MCAD (Minneapolis College of Arts and Design) the University of Minnesota, St. Catherine's University (St. Paul) St. Cloud State University, and Teachers from St. Cloud and Minneapolis. Tina Inez (Graphic Design Intern) worked remotely and received credit from The Art Institute of Washington (Washington D.C./Baltimore areas).



- Graphic Design/ Illustrators
- Musicians / Audio
- Business Development & Marketing
- Outreach-Social Media

**Our current Team Empathy includes:** De'Arris Wayne Judkins, Lauryn Wurscher, Anthony Hotakainen, Jacob Peterson, Meghan Rafferty (not pictured) and Paulette Mosely (not pictured).



Dahje Holmes

Tristan and Dan Ellison Gralenski

Cornelius Rish

Cheryl Cerqueira

Theresa Crawford

Marie and Laura Lingo

Dr. Paul Muhlhauser

Al Kelsper

Connor Willgohs

Dr. Sandy and Duane Schley

Eduardo Drake

Karen Monson

Dr. Onaiza Ansr

Viki Viertel



We hope SissyMarySue inspires you and your family to emphasize the importance of empathy with us along our journey!

[DONATE NOW](#)



Cheetah Conservation Fund is the world's leading organization dedicated to saving the cheetah in the wild. Founded by Dr. Laurie Marker in 1990, CCF has created a set of integrated programs aimed at addressing the principle threats to the cheetah.

[Click to learn more](#)



IEF creates a sustainable future for elephants. We generate and effectively invest resources to support elephant conservation, education, research, and management programs worldwide. Through our passion, expertise, knowledge, and partnerships we inspire and engage people to ensure a vibrant future with elephants everywhere.

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H2O for Life's service-learning opportunities are designed to engage, educate, and inspire youth to become global citizens. Our innovative school-to-school approach helps young people develop a concern for others by taking a major global crisis and scaling it down to a manageable size — one water project in the developing world.

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