

Rescue dog Luke well-known on Worth Avenue and beyond

LIFESTYLE

By Paulette Cooper Noble · Special to the Daily News

   



Children's book author Susan Beattie with her son's dog Luke, a black Labrador mix, inside Gregory James Jewelers Friday, Feb. 9, 2018. Beattie is awaiting the release of her sixth book in her adventure series that features Luke as the main character. Damon Higgins / Daily News

Posted: 12:07 p.m. Monday, March 12, 2018

It all started with a dog wearing a tie greeting customers at a Worth Avenue jewelry shop. The dog's name was Luke, the shop was Gregory James Jewelry, and word began to spread about this unusual people-greeter.

Susan Beattie, mother of the shop owner, found that “kids were more often dragging their parents to meet Luke than their parents were going there to buy jewelry.”

Luke was so popular that customers kept asking questions about this Weimaraner-Black Lab mix from Big Dog Ranch Rescue. Beattie saw an opportunity to educate people about the importance of rescuing shelter dogs. So, she wrote up a little note card to hand to people that detailed Luke's story “to teach them compassion and inspire them to become the heroes for all animals.”

She expanded this card into the first book of her Luke-centric series. It was titled (not surprisingly) “Luke's Story,” and lavishly illustrated by local artist Sandra Thompson. In a few years, there also were five books about Luke and his animal-related adventures, a website (Lukesstory.com), and a documentary about the making of the book.



Children's book author Susan Beattie is awaiting the release of her 6th book in her adventure series that features her son's ... [Read More](#)

Although her books focus mainly on Luke's adventures, Beattie has had her own adventures in life. As a young child, she was a little ballerina, good enough to be one of the three child dancers on the Bob Hope TV show.

But her mother bought her a horse “and I decided I'd rather be with my horse than go away to study ballet,” she recalled.

Eventually, she became a local elementary school teacher, and now she returns to schools as a lecturer to teach children compassion for animals. “Luke is a spokesdog for all rescues,” she said.

Her 36-page books for kids of all ages (available at Classic Book Store) describe Luke's mostly fictional travels all over – always wearing a tie. Luke “goes” to Africa, or nearer places, like Lion Country Safari. The Everglades is the focus of the sixth book coming out soon.



Children's book author Susan Beattie walks her son's dog Luke, a black Lab mix, along Worth Ave. Friday, February 9, 2018. ... [Read More](#)

But sometimes his trips are even more local, such as Lake Trail. “I love to add a bit of Palm Beach history as it relates to compassion for animals and habitats,” she explained. “Like Mizner with his monkey and parrot...”

Beattie knows the local scene well since her family has been here for four generations. During “my own childhood as a Florida native, I was surrounded by horses, dogs, cats, birds, a monkey, a pig, a goat, and a raccoon. My entire life has always been around animals.”

When she’s not writing, she’s visiting schools with Luke.

“My mission is to make a difference,” she said. So is Luke’s, who may start a whole new trend of dogs in Palm Beach wearing ties and greeting customers in their stores.

Why not?