

MSW/MS-DRL student publishes children's book

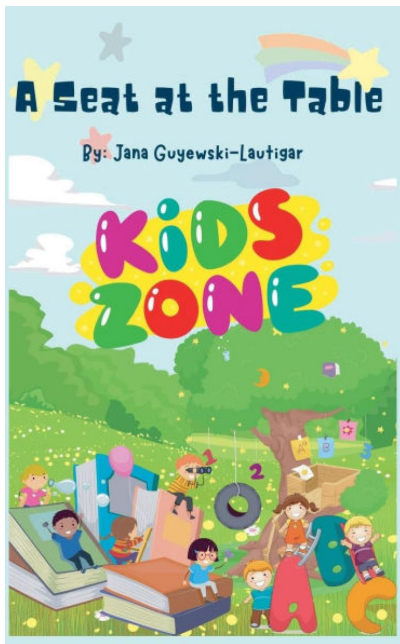
April 24, 2025 10:15 AM Stephanie Holden
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Author Jana Guyewski-Lautigar with daughters Jaisey and Aubrey Davis and husband Scott Lautigar.

March 11 brought a surprise for Tulane School of Social Work Interim Associate Dean of Academic Affairs [Dr. Candice Beasley](#): A novel, written by one of her students, in her email inbox. On page five, a dedication – “Dr. Beasley, your dedication to social justice, inclusion, and advocacy has inspired so many to challenge the status quo and create spaces where everyone has a seat at the table. Your passion for equity and empowerment echoes through every lesson you teach and every life you touch. Thank you for your unwavering commitment to fostering change, uplifting voices, and shaping future leaders who will continue the work of making the world a better, more just place.”

The email came from [Master of Social Work and Master of Science in Disaster Resilience Leadership](#) dual degree student Jana Guyewski-Lautigar, MHP, RSW, BSW, MAT, who published [A Seat at the Table](#) to encourage middle-grade readers to stand up for themselves and others.



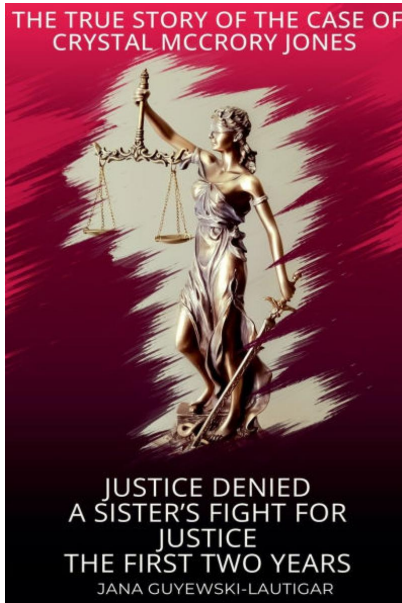
“Dr. Beasley always says, ‘How can you make a change if you’re not given a seat at the table? What if you don’t even know that the table exists?’” said Jana Guyewski-Lautigar. “That inspired me. So I wrote a book about it.”

Guyewski-Lautigar’s first book, [Justice Denied: A Sister's Fight for Justice](#), followed her fight for justice following the loss of her sister, Crystal McCrory Jones, on February 9, 2023. Once Justice Denied was published, Guyewski-Lautigar knew she had to write a children’s book. She wanted to distill the messages of resilience and advocacy from her lived experiences into something palatable for young people.

“I just thought, I’m struggling to find that seat at the table as an adult,” Guyewski-Lautigar said. “I can’t imagine how that feels as a child. That’s why I wanted to create a children’s book – so my kids don’t have to grow into adults who second-guess themselves.”

Thus, *A Seat at the Table* was born. With the help of her two daughters, Guyewski-Lautigar told the story of a group of elementary schoolers working to ensure all their peers feel included – on the playground, during lunch, or in the classroom. The group works together and eventually learns that even the smallest acts of kindness can

change lives.



“I want to see my book in a classroom on the first day of school,” said Guyewski-Lautigar, who spent 10 years as an elementary school teacher before returning to school for her MSW. “I really want teachers to teach inclusion and give their students some concrete examples. I want to show kids that they have a voice, that there’s strength in numbers, and most importantly, that they never have to feel alone.”

Guyewski-Lautigar encourages everyone working with kids – especially school social workers – to really listen to their problems. She encourages people to listen to themselves, too. Writing, Guyewski-Lautigar says, is not only a form of therapy – it’s a way to make change.

“When you have strong beliefs about something,” said Guyewski-Lautigar, “write it down.”