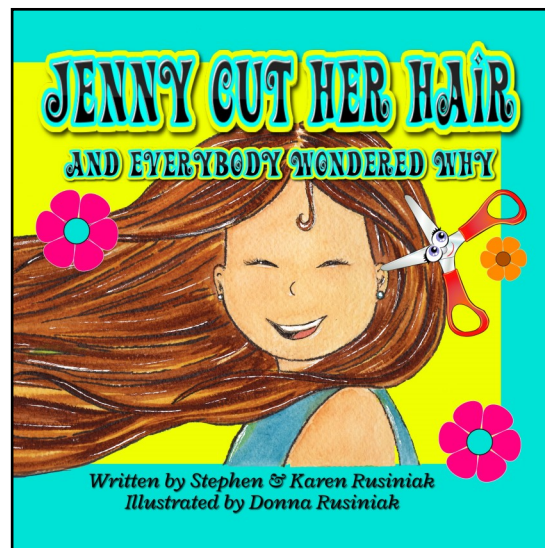


JENNY CUT HER HAIR And Everybody Wondered Why

By Stephen & Karen Rusiniak

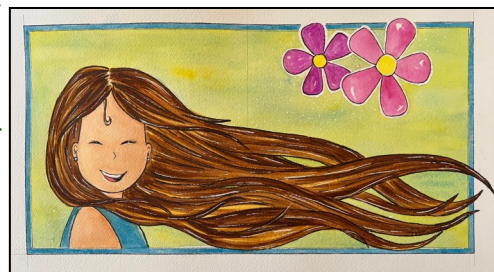
Illustrated by Donna Rusiniak

Sometimes heroes have hair, and sometimes, they don't.

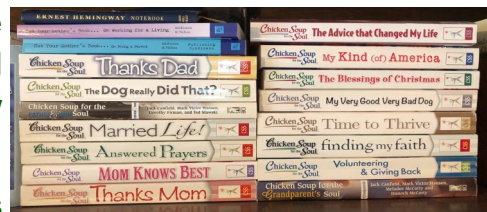


The backstory...

In case you were wondering as to the origins of *Jenny Cut Her Hair and everybody wondered why* then wonder no further! Our story happens to be based upon a real girl, and yes, her name is, in fact, Jenny. Also true, she really did donate her long locks to an organization that made hairpieces for children. And, our children's story begins and ends in our church sanctuary at The Packanack Community Church—true again. Her thoughts, as shared in our book were based upon, well, just a little bit anyway, on a very brief conversation that the real Jenny and I had during the coffee hour following that Sunday morning when she appeared in church sans her long locks.



It's conjecture, coupled with what Jenny had told me, that rules most of our storyline. But still, her parents had to be proud of their daughter, and surely, the recipient's parents were grateful as most certainly was the child receiving Jenny's gift. And then there were her fellow congregants—me included, proud of her—no conjecture here!



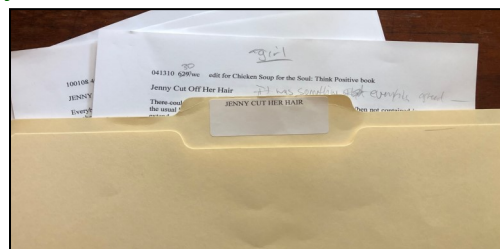
Jenny's donation made for a good story, and I was especially happy to share it through my writing. I was convinced that I could easily compose a good *Chicken Soup for the Soul-like piece*—something of which I was well versed because by this time I had already written and had published several pieces with my Soup friends, both in their many books and as well, with another publisher.

Some books, less the Grandparent one, contain stories of mine

Yeah, but this time, what should have been an easy piece to write just wasn't—its actual completion took far longer than I would have preferred. Years in fact.

I should explain.

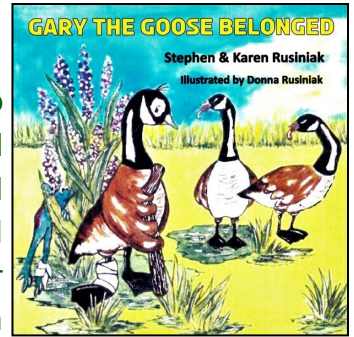
There are several edited versions of my *Jenny* piece within my files. Never satisfied with what I had written, I continued tweaking my verbiage, always believing my words never adequately did justice to what Jenny had done. And so, for a few years and every so often I would tweak what I had written and then tweak it some more until one day I simply stopped trying—the



A sampling of some of the edits and tweaks I struggled with in my attempts to write a worthy *Jenny* piece.

piece, rewrites, tweaks, and all, relegated to my *Jenny* file.

Some years later, as Karen and I were discussing some follow-up ideas for our first published children's book, *Gary the Goose Belonged*, I remembered my *Jenny* story. Retrieving the file, I shared my last tweaked version with Karen. Afterward, she told me how much she liked what I had written and wondered why it had never been submitted previously for publication—an especially gratifying review! But suddenly, and now much more important, two revelations: First, I now, after some years, finally felt satisfied with what I had long ago written. And second, and best of all, we now had an idea for our new children's story!



To this end, Karen and I collaborated on a story based upon the original premise that acknowledges and indeed celebrates unsung youthful heroes such as Jenny who too often go unrecognized for their altruistic acts—doing so without receiving the platitudes and praise that society tends to bestow upon those we admire. And, while the character of Rebecca is fictitious, in the real world she too would garner both recognition and hero status for the maturity she displayed in educating Jenny regarding juvenile hair loss. After all, *sometimes heroes have hair, and sometimes, they don't.*



Rebecca

Telling the real Jenny she inspired a children's story...

Few people, if any, are aware of what it is that I may be writing until such times as I decide to publish, post, or otherwise share my efforts. And to this end, the real Jenny never knew about my attempts to memorialize her story and she certainly had no idea that years later both she and her selfless act would become the basis for a children's book.

But this all changed when, after locating her contact information, we called her, shortly after the book's soft launch and just before we began publicly publicizing our work. To say we caught her by surprise would be an understatement—her excitement equal only to the thrill that Karen and I felt in sharing with her the news. After all, from the moment we signed the publication contract we wanted to tell her, but we didn't. Instead, we waited, for months, many months, until the final and approved version of the book was completed. Only then did we feel comfortable telling her that something that she had done as a child had now inspired a new children's book.



Jenny & Rebecca

After some years, I believe that Jenny's altruistic act will finally and rightly receive the recognition it deserves. Through the publication of our book, I also believe that her story will eventually have a greater impact on children and their parents, but most importantly on the kids who are suffering from hair loss and those who choose to make a difference in their lives by becoming a donor.

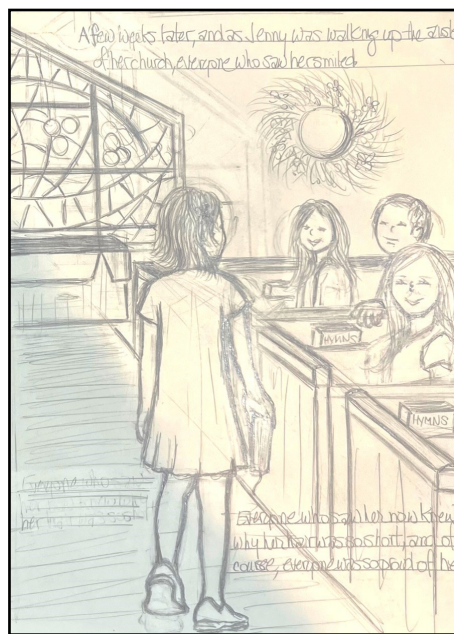
It's a delayed legacy for sure but one well worth the wait!

Our Illustrator...

We were blessed to have had such a talented artist, my sister-in-law, Donna Rusiniak, illustrate our first book, **Gary the Goose Belonged**, and now our second, **Jenny Cut Her Hair and everybody wondered why**. Karen and I had very specific ideas concerning what we wanted when it came to illustrating our story. Donna addressed our thoughts, made lots of suggestions, and then went far, far beyond our expectations. with so many ideas of her own!



We never told Donna what the real Jenny looked like except for a description of her long locks. Donna quickly created these sketches—ideas of what our characters might look like. Of course, we loved her samples as is evident by the illustrations found in the book!



The photo on the left reveals what was our view on the morning when we saw Jenny walk up the aisle of The Packanack Community Church, with her newly cut and short hair. I took this more recent photo to give Donna an idea of where Karen and I were sitting on that morning, our view, and described to her the origins of my original story. Her sample sketch here of the church aisle reveals her interpretation of that special morning—quite identifiable to Karen, me and our fellow congregants! (Look for the illustration, sketched here, near the end of the book!)