



**Michelle Nelson-Schmidt** used to fit creating art around her day job. But since the release of her picture books by Kane Miller Books, she's a full-time author and spends her free time traveling around the country inspiring audiences, young and old, to follow their dreams.

After studying math and science in college for several years, Michelle decided to follow her childhood dream of studying art. After art school, she began working as a graphic designer. Later, seeking a creative outlet, she began painting pet portraits which led to her first two picture books for Kane Miller, *Cats, Cats!* and *Dogs, Dogs!*

Ms. Nelson-Schmidt is an enthusiastic, energetic and popular presenter at schools, day care center, hospitals, retirement homes, anywhere people want to hear about her work. With the publication of *Jonathan James and the What-if Monster*, encouraging children to face their fears of failure head-on, the demand for Michelle to share her dynamic talks continues to grow.

Michelle describes the Whatif Monster as that little voice inside your head that asks the question, "What if I fail?" After being plagued by the Whatif Monster's whispered doubts, Jonathan James finally confronts him asking, "What if you're wrong?" Although geared toward young children, the book deals with topics everyone can relate to: fear and self-doubt – making it a book for anyone embarking on something new and just a little scary.

Michelle has visited hundreds of schools making "Pinkie Promises" with over 100,000 children, "to follow their hearts and their dreams by working hard and never giving up on themselves." She invites them to write to her; she's received mountains of mail!

Michelle also speaks at festivals, literacy conferences, fundraisers and to college and university students. She has spent a day with cancer patients at Joy Ranch, a summer camp for sick children in Sioux City, South Dakota. She makes monthly Skype visits with Kenyan school children in collaboration with Ziwani Boys Lit Club through Lit World Organization, looking forward to actually visiting Nairobi in summer 2014. A former "Jersey girl," Michelle spent a week visiting schools on the Jersey shore. In collaboration with the Reading Council of Southern New Jersey and her publisher's direct sales division, Usborne Books & More, she spoke at a community event where book sales generated monies matched by the publisher to help rebuild school libraries destroyed by Hurricane Sandy. Michelle is a featured author on *The Studio* website of the Girl Scouts of the USA.

Despite Michelle's busy travel schedule, she continues to write and paint. A new picture book, *Bob Is Not a Unicorn* has just been released and is available exclusively through the Usborne Books & More direct sales division. Releasing simultaneously is a cuddly plush Bob toy, sure to prove irresistible!

