

Add a Touch of Alien Magic to Christmas This Year

Even living on another planet, the values of Christmas are truly universal, as Darius and Zmod are about to find out in the fascinating new children's book "My Alien Penfriend."

December 20, 2006 (FPRC) -- Every child looks forward to Christmas, wherever they are in the world – or perhaps, even in the universe. It's a time to spend time with family and friends, and to enjoy seasonal traditions. Yet Christmas is also a time for everyone to take stock of the year gone by, and think about how we want the world to be a better place in the future. With news reports reflecting much disorder in the world, impressionable children can't help but be aware of these issues, but somehow they inherently know that friendship and kindness have the power to conquer all.

Faiz Kermani's funny and adventurous children's book, "My Alien Penfriend" (ISBN 1420858602) looks at how two children on opposite sides of the galaxy, actually can become, the best of friends. By discovering each other's vast differences, the two find they have more in common than they could have ever imagined. Their differences give way to their abundant similarities, and the two boys find out that they have actually received the most incredible gift of all – true friendship.

In "My Alien Penfriend," Darius, a young boy from Earth, and Zmod, an alien from the planet Bartoch, are both inquisitive children equally interested in finding out about life on other planets. The curious pair are linked through a penfriend organization, and communicate across the galaxy by spacemail. The fascinating facts they learn about each other leaves them eagerly awaiting the next letter. Kermani explores timely, real-life themes of environmental issues and war and counters it with humour, and fun details about exotic life on an alien planet. Living underground means that Zmod is unlikely to experience snow at Christmas, but equally, Darius is unlikely to find that rocks can move by themselves!

"Often, Christmas is the season for catching up with friends and filling your spirit with the warm feeling that only the camaraderie of friendship brings," explains Kermani. Even though they are separated by millions of miles of space, Darius and Zmod look out for each other when their lives get tough. "I wanted this book to show that friendship doesn't care about differences. It doesn't matter who your friends are and where they may be, they'll always be there for you." And perhaps, Kermani is right. This Christmas, through an imaginative tale of two very different boys, the gift of friendship through diversity becomes real in the hearts of children.

Faiz Kermani resides in London, England. He has visited about 30 countries and still considers his childhood pen-pal from Australia one of his closest friends. Kermani visits schools to talk about his book and has a number of local book signings this Christmas. He is involved with a number of literacy projects including the educational charity, One Life for Education (<http://www.onelifedevelopment.com/charity.htm>). This charity sets up partnerships between disadvantaged schools in developing countries and schools in Europe to encourage cross-cultural understanding, and sharing of ideas between children and educators. "My Alien Penfriend" (ISBN 1420858602) can be purchased at online bookstores. For more information, visit <http://www.myalienpenfriend.co.uk>, or the spaceblog <http://www.zmodsworld.com>

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