



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Digging Deep to Empower Seriously Ill Children & Families

Philanthropist and Brain Tumor Survivor Sheri Sobrato Brisson Brings Focus to the Socio-Emotional Needs of Young People with Health Challenges

Redwood City, CA, May 14, 2014 – Today *Digging Deep, A Journal For Young People Facing Health Challenges* will be released at an event cohosted by the Silicon Valley Community Foundation and Sobrato Philanthropies. The event will feature a panel of children’s health professionals that will address the emotional needs of sick kids and the benefits of journaling. *Digging Deep* is a visually stunning book that prompts children and teens with serious illness to explore and express their feelings about having serious illness.

“*Digging Deep* helps children and their families find their strength at a time when they need it the most,” says philanthropist and co-author Sheri Sobrato Brisson. “When people think of seriously ill children, they immediately think of efforts to distract them from their illness. There are many resources and organizations focused on trying to make kids feel normal, but there is nothing normal about cancer, diabetes or any other serious illness when you are young. *Digging Deep* is a tool to help children cope during what can be an overwhelmingly sad and scary experience.”

Dale Larson, Ph.D., Professor of Counseling Psychology at Santa Clara University calls *Digging Deep* “a remarkable resource—inspiring, affirming, empowering and deeply empathetic...It is something I wish every child struggling with illness could have.”

By working closely with young people in hospitals, Sobrato Brisson, together with coauthor Rose Offner, has carefully crafted the exercises to guide the kind of “digging deep” that helps children uncover their inner strength and equips them with lifelong strategies to deal with emotional hardship. *Digging Deep* is appropriate in any setting and can be used by a wide variety of health professionals, families and other caring adults, and even children by themselves.

As a brain tumor survivor whose childhood was marked by surgeries and hospital stays, Sobrato Brisson understands firsthand how empowering self-reflection can be. While undergoing treatment for a life-threatening brain tumor, Sobrato Brisson remembers how she coped during her recovery, not by trying to stay strong, or trying to forget the seriousness of her situation, but by exploring and accepting her own genuine emotions.

Her most profound memory from having cancer was the first time that her parents cried with her, but at that time there was no tool like *Digging Deep* to create a space where it was okay for families to open up and be sad together. She knows that had there been a tool like *Digging Deep*, coping through this period of her life would have been much easier.

The benefits of journaling are well known in adults, but little or no research exists that focuses on the power of journaling with young people. Several studies, such as that of Dr. Elizabeth Broadbent, PhD in Psychology at University of Auckland, New Zealand (published in *Psychosomatic Medicine* in 2013), show that adults with chronic illness who regularly express their emotions in writing tend to fare better, both emotionally and physically, than those who do not. Sobrato Brisson feels confident

that when enough sick children benefit from using *Digging Deep*, clinical research will follow, proving the health benefits of journaling for children, and the importance of investing in the emotional health of society's most vulnerable patients: children and teens.

Life-threatening illnesses are increasingly curable, but often require treatment through adulthood. Sobrato Brisson formed Resonance House, a wholly owned subsidiary of the Silicon Valley Community Foundation, to distribute *Digging Deep* across the country and better meet the ongoing psychosocial needs of young patients. By using *Digging Deep*, kids have a safe outlet for self-expression and can use this tool to improve their communication with everyone around them. Sobrato Brisson intends to put this valuable resource into the hands of every child and family that needs it, regardless of socio-economic background.

For complimentary copies of the journal or to make a donation, please contact Jennifer@diggingdeep.org or 1-800-488-3202.

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About Resonance House: The goal of Resonance House is to make *Digging Deep* available to every child who needs it, regardless of socio-economic background. We partner with children's hospitals, physician offices, medical camps, outpatient clinics, rehabilitation centers, children's health associations and nonprofit organizations to get *Digging Deep* to any child who needs it.

About Sheri Sobrato Brisson: Sheri is a brain tumor survivor who discovered the importance of self-reflection during her recovery. From her personal illness experience and a dozen years supporting families and children with serious illness, her life's mission is to empower families and children facing serious illness.

About *Digging Deep*: *Digging Deep* is a bright, engaging tool that makes dealing with health challenges easier. Through vibrant art and thoughtful prompts, it helps kids discover their inner strength by telling stories about their experiences. *Digging Deep* was a category finalist in the 2014 Eric Hoffer Book Awards.

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