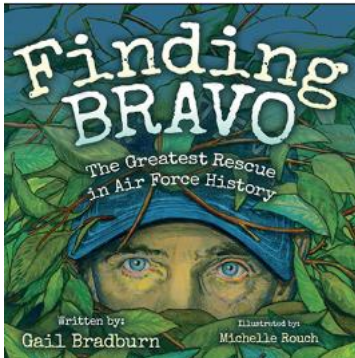


April 2026

Kindness and Giraffes

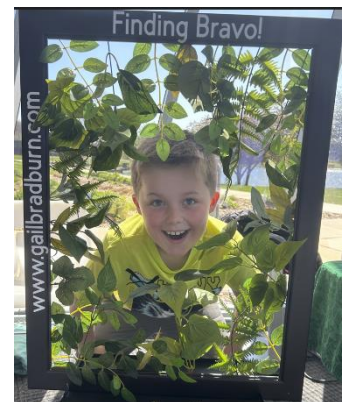


I recently had the honor of meeting new readers at the Des Moines Storytime event sponsored by Bookpress Publishing. Though my book, **Finding Bravo**, won't be out until October (I'll keep you posted when it's available to pre-order!) I loved the opportunity to talk about this heroic story - and the kids had fun with it too!

Congrats to Karissa who won the drawing at my table and selected **Bobby the Bear Helps Build a Nest** as a prize. I had the pleasure of sharing the Storytime corner with Bobby the

Bear's inspiring author, Ryan O'Connor.

Kids and adults at this event, as well as fellow authors, were so very kind to this newcomer.



I've actually been thinking a lot about kindness. It is a theme in *Theo of Golden*, a fictional novel about a mysterious old man who appears in a southern town. I won't spoil it in case it's on your to-be-read list, but Theo is kind in ways that are *intentional*. Of course, the every day kindnesses that come from habit are wonderful too – holding the door for someone, passing along a shopping cart and not retrieving the quarter (any Aldi shoppers out there?), or the courteous please and thank you's that make navigating the world more joyful. Yet there is power in slowing, seeing, and reacting with kindness. One example from my adolescence stands out. In middle school, an early growth spurt produced a body that was gangly, clumsy, and the tallest in my grade. I resembled a giraffe, albeit with much bigger feet. One day I was in a store with my fashionable mom and my perfectly proportioned sister, lurking sullenly on the fringes of the cool clothes, when a young sales clerk approached me. With a sincere smile, she said, "Wow, you have blonde hair and brown eyes? I never see that combination. That's really special." Wow is right. To this day I can see that girl's face and feel the sensation of reframing how I felt about myself. Not to be too dramatic, but her one, kind sentence was life-changing for a young giraffe.

It's astonishing, really, how a smile or a simple string of positive words can make such an impact. May we all astonish this month!

Happy reading ~

Gail I'd love to hear from you: gailbradburn.author@gmail.com

