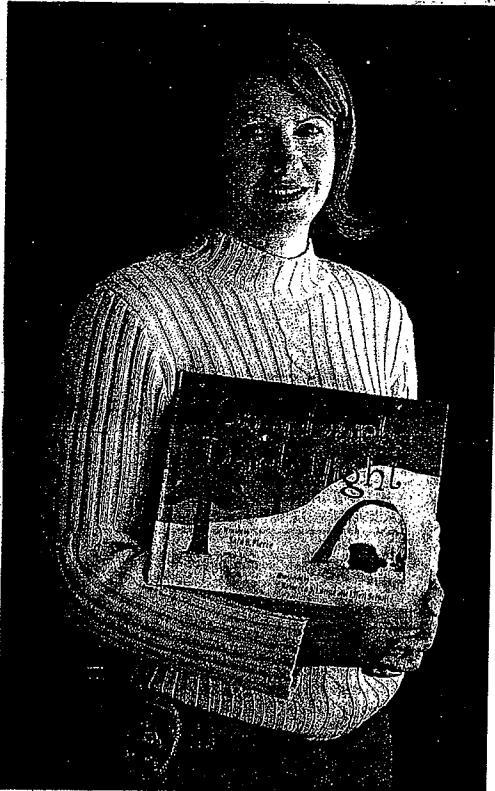


## SHARING SOME KNOWLEDGE



Richard M. Hackett/Times

Longmont Police Detective Sara Pierce wrote a book for children called "On a Dark, Dark Night," which deals with domestic violence issues.

# From a kid's perspective

## Detective pens book for children about domestic violence

By Pierrette J. Shields  
Longmont Times-Call

**L**ONGMONT — Sara Pierce tried to look through a child's eyes.

She remembered how she would view stories she read as a child through the prism of the main

character and wanted to recapture that for children who were trying to process the complexity of domestic violence in their own lives.

The Longmont police detective then sat and wrote a short children's book, her first. A launch

Please see **BOOK** on A8

## BOOK: Helps kids deal with domestic violence

From A1

party and book signing is scheduled from 4 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. Wednesday at the Longmont Public Library. The book will be read aloud at the event.

In "On a Dark, Dark Night," a young polar bear named Cub witnesses Papa hit Mama during an argument. He goes to bed and cries, seeking comfort the next day from his friend Moose. Moose takes him to Eagle, who Pierce describes as the law enforcement figure in the book. Eagle steps in to help. Papa is brought before the village to talk about the fight.

"They explain to Papa you must use your words, not your paws," said Pierce, who is a member of the Longmont Police Department's Domestic Violence Unit.

Papa is sent from the village for a while, during which time Cub does not know if his dad will return. Papa does return and tells Cub he loves him, but the book ends with Cub back in

his bed and it is unclear whether Papa has returned home for good. The story can be read either way.

"Sometimes the father comes back; sometimes he stays away," Pierce said of real domestic violence situations that children face.

Pierce, 31, said she has always enjoyed creative writing, but she wrote the story only after she worked on the Longmont Ending Violence Initiative book committee, which was initially charged with gathering books about domestic violence for children. Their search turned up little, and she sat down on her own in 2005 and wrote Cub's rhyming tale.

Others on the LEVI committee read the story and resolved to have the book published. Financing the first 1,000 copies was the first hurdle. Longmont Rotarians came up with \$4,000 of the \$5,000 needed. The Boulder County District Attorney's Office added another \$500, while private donors made up the difference.

Plans for the book pro-

gressed until those working on it faced tragedy. Illustrator Rebecca Lange was diagnosed with stage-four cancer and passed away on Feb. 17, 2008. She worked on the illustrations until she got too sick to continue, Pierce said. When she died, the book was put on hold for a year until illustrator Ellen Schultz picked up the mantle and worked to duplicate Lange's layered, cut-paper style.

Cheryl Swanson of LEVI said on Wednesday that more than 100 books have already been ordered. The hardback costs \$16.95 and is intended for children 4 to 7. While the father is the aggressor in the book, Pierce said she expects children will apply their own situations to process the information.

"Kids tend to make the story work for them," Pierce said.

Swanson said all proceeds from book sales will be placed in a special fund to finance another set of copies. No money will go to LEVI or any of the contribu-

tors. She said she first read Cub's story when it was still in the storyboard phase.

"I remember a tear came to my eye as I was reading it," she said.

She noted that the book launch is open to the public, but it has not been marketed specifically for children to attend because the book's themes are intended to assist children already dealing with domestic violence.

Other children, she said, could be frightened by a theme that revolves around a physical altercation between parents.

As for Pierce, she said she has no immediate plans to pen another book, but she isn't ruling it out in the future.

The book is available to order online at [www.longmontdomesticviolence.org](http://www.longmontdomesticviolence.org). LEVI also provides resources for those who are living in domestic violence situations and need help. To reach LEVI, call 303-774-4534. In an emergency, dial 911.