



Simon

and the Buddy Branch

Written By:
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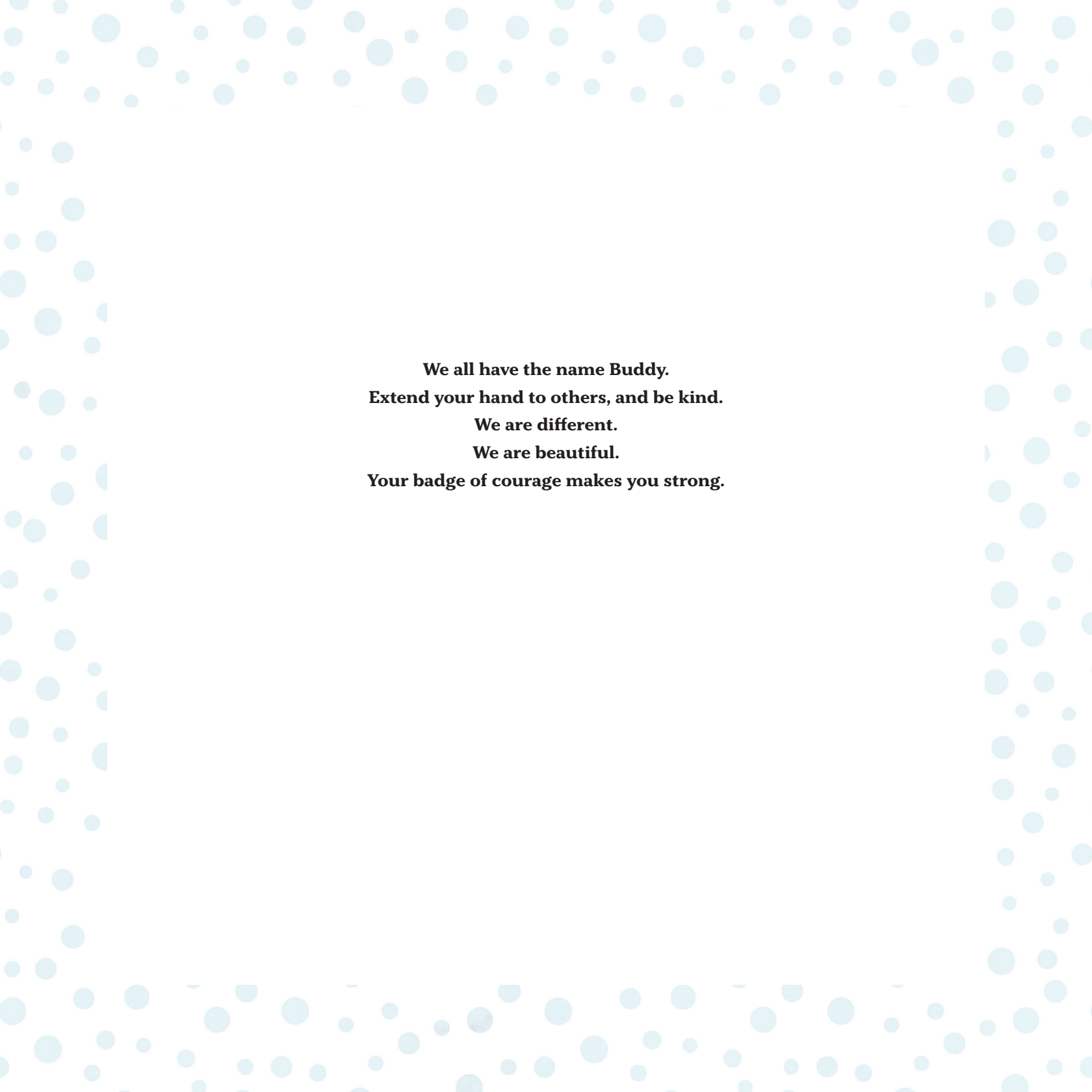
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**We all have the name Buddy.
Extend your hand to others, and be kind.
We are different.
We are beautiful.
Your badge of courage makes you strong.**

FOREWORD

Writing a book addressed to very young children requires special skills and talent.

Writing a children's book for children born with facial differences, based on personal experience, requires not only skills and talent, but also courage.

Patricia Simon was able to write two colorful books, *Smile with Simon* and *Simon and the Buddy Branch*, in an effort to educate children, parents, and educators dealing with children born with facial differences.

The message is simple but also very powerful: be tolerant and embrace children born with facial differences. Be supportive because they are wonderful human beings and deserve warm acceptance, not exclusion.

There is a message for the children born with facial differences as well: be brave—you are great kids, and with the support of your doctors, family, and community, you will have a successful future.

I spent my entire career treating patients born with facial differences, and I want to congratulate Patricia Simon for this beautiful initiative.

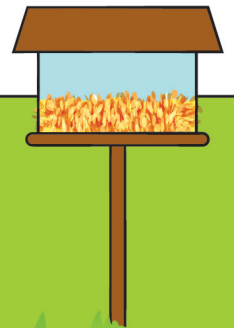
As a patient of mine said once, “It does not matter how you look outside but how you feel inside!”

This patient, Natalie, is about to graduate from college and enter the workforce with a big smile.

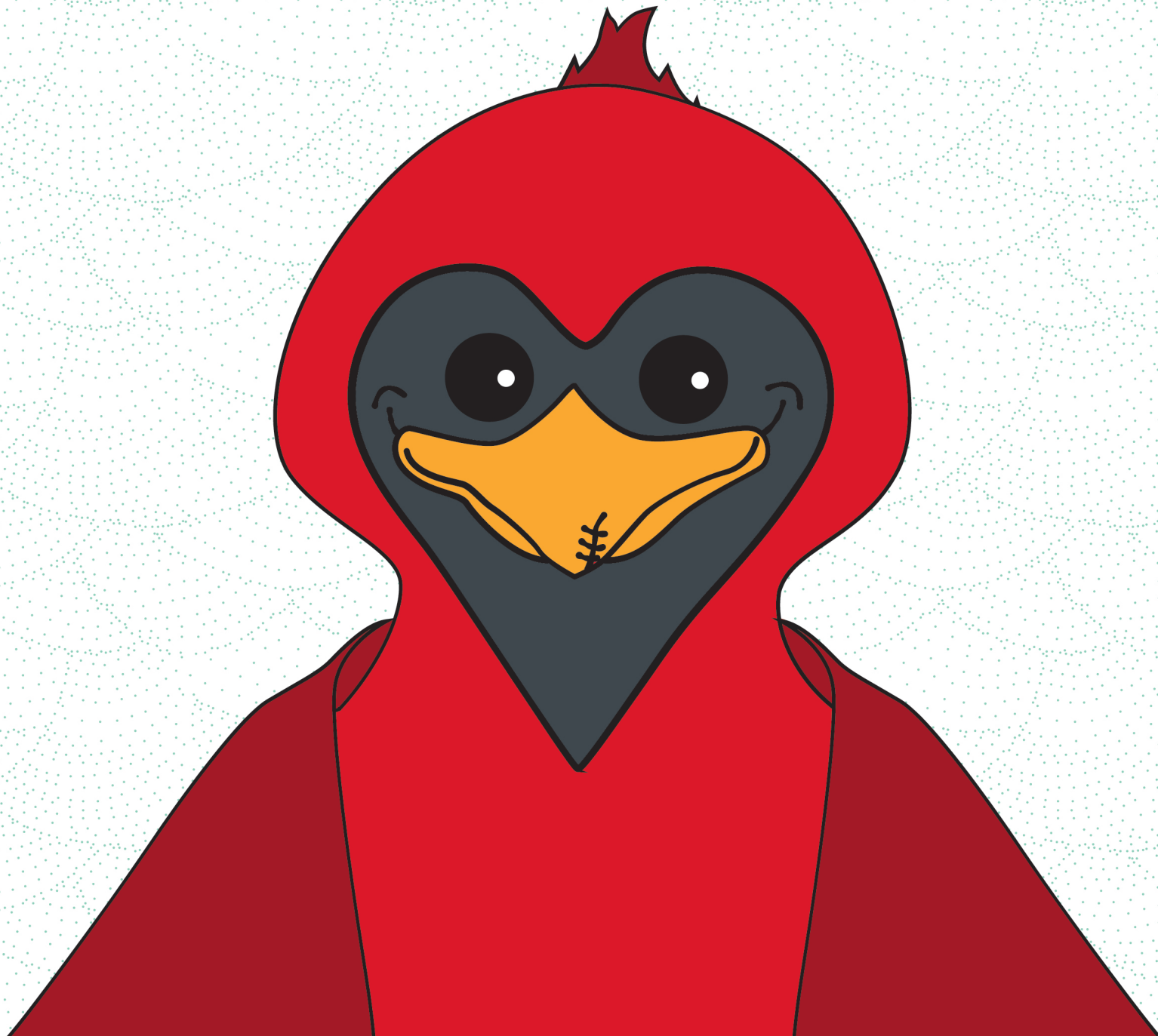
Thanks, Patricia!

**Mimis Cohen MD, FACS, FAAP
Professor and Chief Division of
Plastic, Reconstruction and Cosmetic Surgery
University of Illinois, Chicago
Director Craniofacial Center UIC**

Meet Simon, the cardinal.



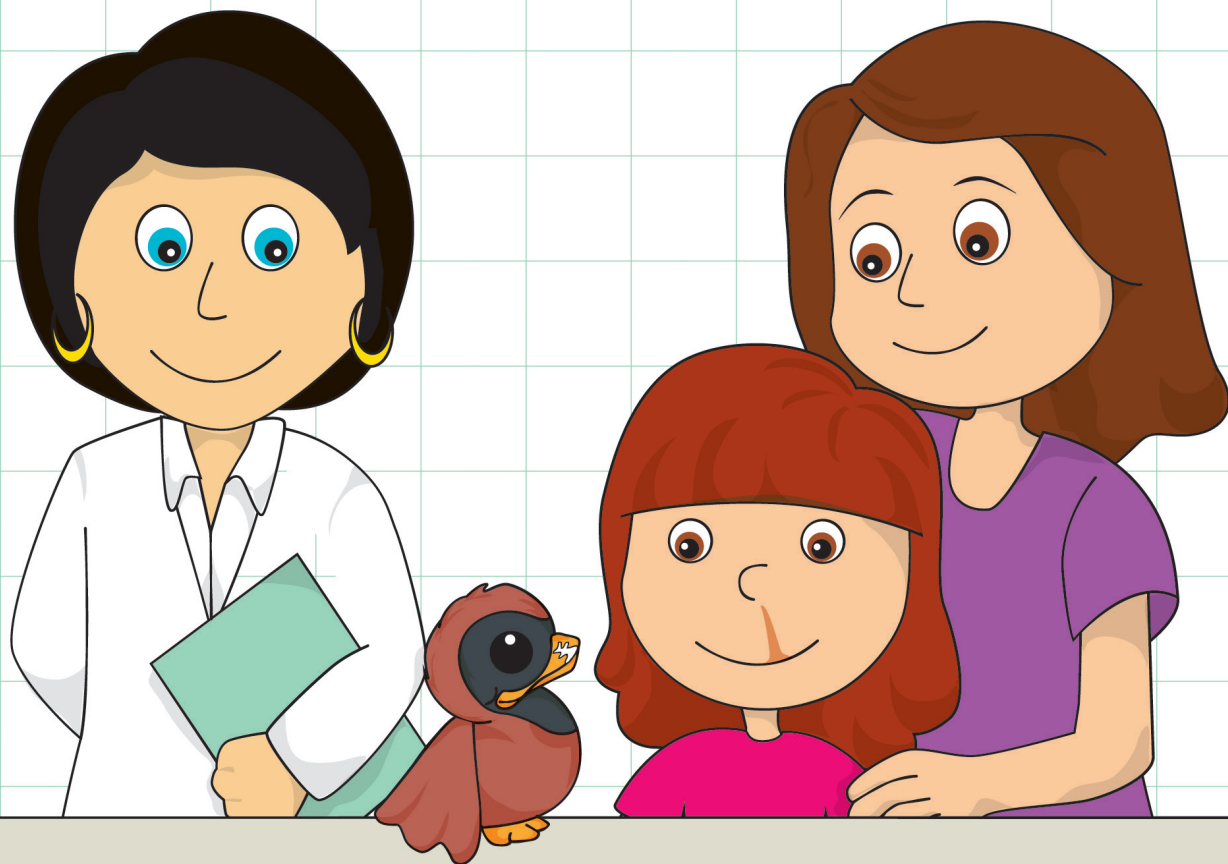
Simon's nickname is **Smiling Simon**
because he loves to smile.



When Simon was small, he
hatched from his shell
with a gap in his beak.

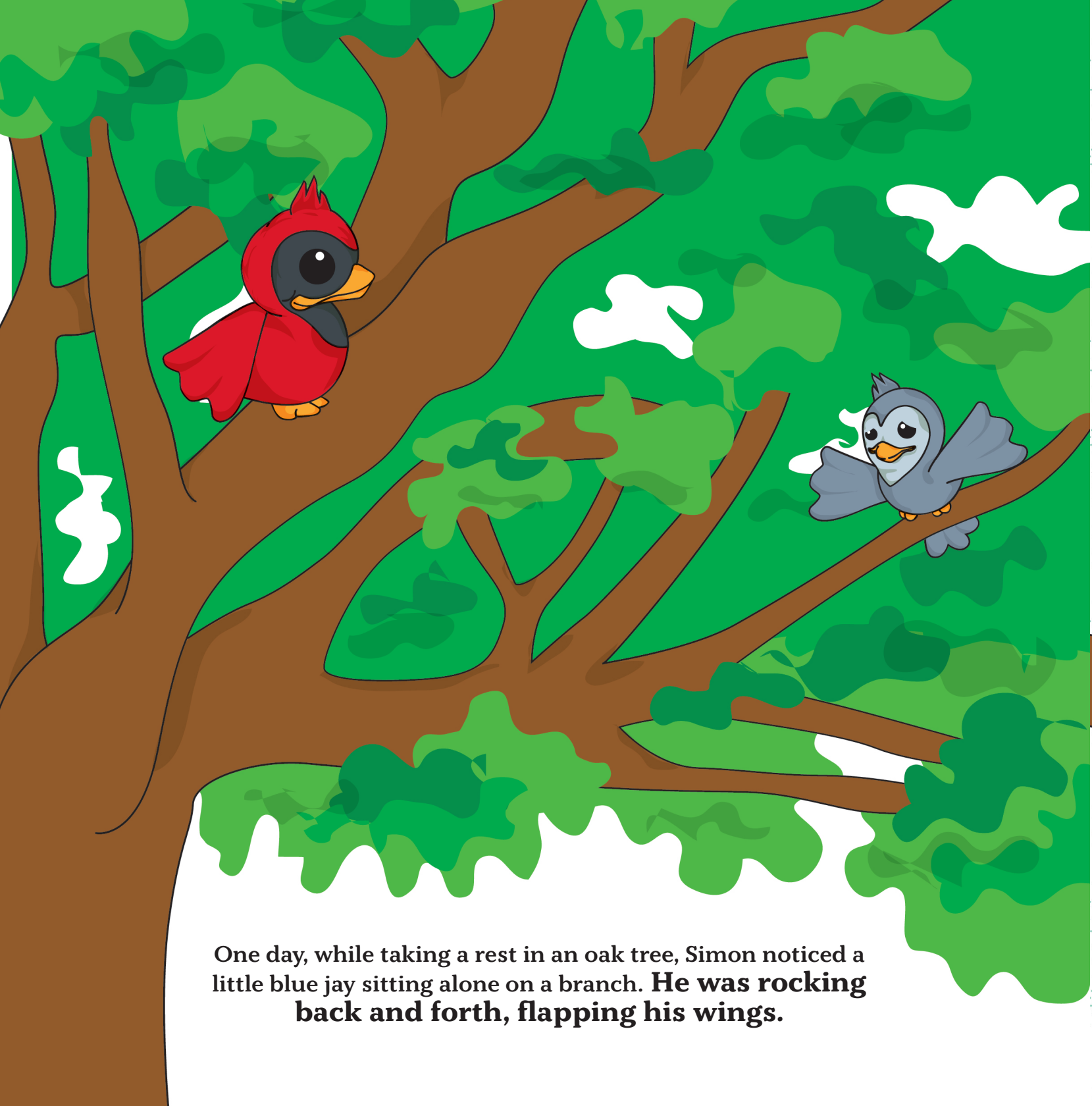


The gap made it hard for
Simon to eat or smile.



Luckily, Simon met some friends who
helped him get his beak repaired.

This made Simon so happy
that his feathers turned a bright, joyful red,
and he has been smiling ever since.



One day, while taking a rest in an oak tree, Simon noticed a little blue jay sitting alone on a branch. **He was rocking back and forth, flapping his wings.**

At first, Simon thought the bird was hungry.
He grabbed a seed and flew over to him.

“Hello!” Simon chirped
in a friendly voice.

“My name is Simon.
Would you like
something to eat?”



The little blue jay didn't seem to notice Simon or the seed. He just looked at the ground, flapped his wings, and rocked back and forth.

Simon thought long and hard before asking, **"What's your name?"**

For many seconds the little blue jay said nothing. Then he whispered, **"Buddy."**



“Nice to meet you, Buddy!”
Simon smiled. “How are you today?”

Simon waited patiently for the blue jay to answer.

Finally, Buddy chirped,
**“Bad day, bad day,
bad day.”**



“Oh no,” Simon said.
“What happened?”

Buddy rocked and flapped his wings for a long time.

**“No one came to
my birthday party,”**
he sadly peeped.



“But birds love birthday parties,” Simon said.

**“I was so excited,”
Buddy chirped.
“My parents sent tweets and
decorated our nest.”**



“That’s wonderful,” said Simon.
“Why didn’t the birds come?”

Buddy rocked and rocked and flapped his
wings. **“Because I’m different.”**

Hearing Buddy’s words made Simon sad.
“It’s okay to be different.
I’m different too.”



“But you have bright-red wings and a wonderful smile,” Buddy said.

“True,” said Simon, “**but my beak is different. See?**”
He leaned close so Buddy could see the stitches on his beak.

“We may not be the same, but if we were,
it’d be a shame.” Buddy sighed and looked at the ground.



“Hey, I have an idea,” Simon said.
“Let’s visit my friend Patty. She’s different too.
Come on, let’s fly!”





Simon and Buddy flew to where Patty was
reading a book under her favorite redbud tree.
Simon chirped, **“Hello, Patty!”**



“Hi, Simon!” Patty looked up and Buddy noticed the small scar above her lip.
“Who’s your friend?”

“This is my new friend Buddy.”
Simon replied.
“Buddy, this is Patty.”

Patty could see Simon's new friend was different.
She sat very still and waited for Buddy to relax.

**“Would you like to hear the story of
how I met Simon?”** Patty asked.

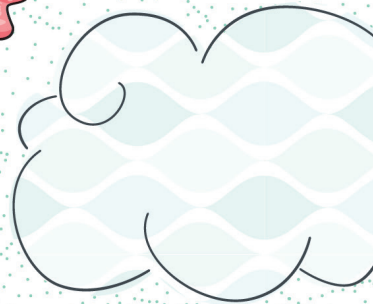


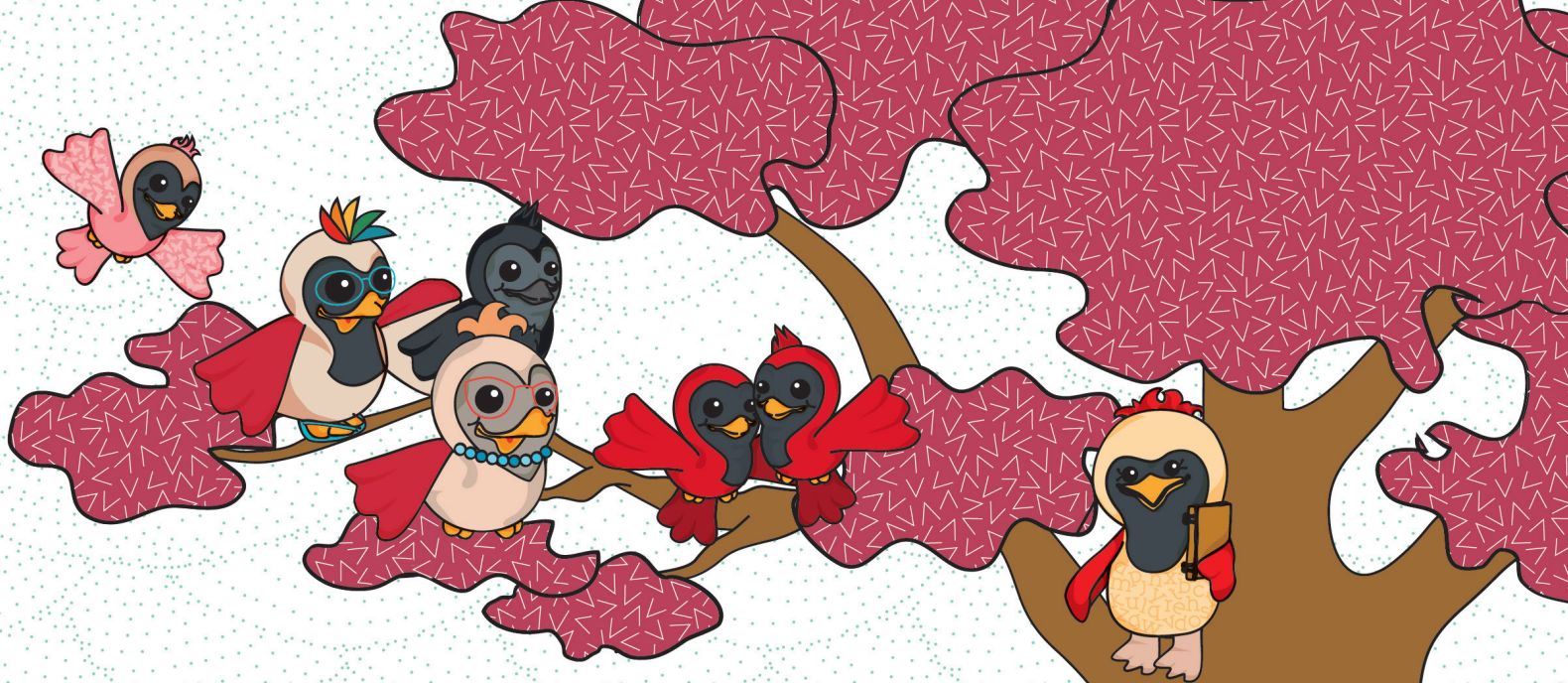
After many minutes of flapping his wings and rocking
back and forth, Buddy finally peeped, **“Yes, please.”**

While Patty told Simon's story, the cardinal flew from tree to tree, inviting all the birds he knew to come to a birthday party for Buddy.

**"Come on, Jose and Coco!
Come on, everyone!"** Simon called.

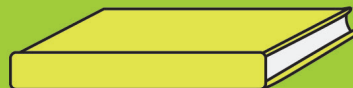
**"Come help sing happy birthday to
my new friend, Buddy."**

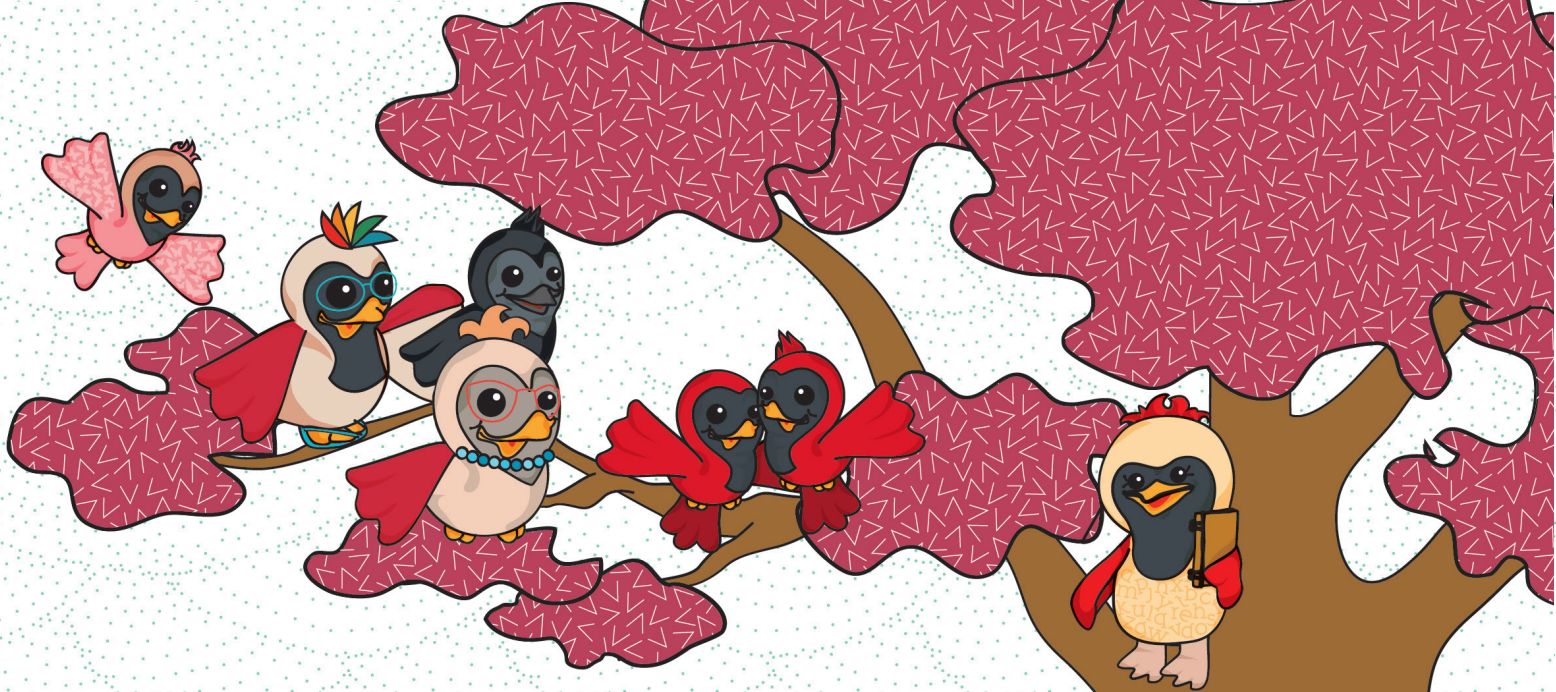




It wasn't long before all of Simon's friends began landing on the branches around Buddy, from Jose, the wise crow, to Coco, the storytelling robin.

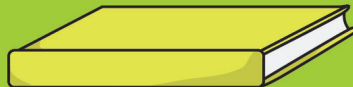
“Oh, look!” Patty smiled and clapped her hands. “Simon invited his friends to meet you.”





When all the birds had arrived, Simon
called for quiet, then said,

**“Let’s sing happy birthday to
my new friend, Buddy.”**



The sound of the birds singing made Buddy so happy that his dull-blue feathers began to turn bright blue, and he forgot all about being different.



When they were done singing,
he flapped his stunning blue wings and chirped,
“Thank you!” again and again.



“I have an idea,” said Simon. **“Let’s call this branch, the Buddy Branch.”**

“What’s a buddy branch?” asked Buddy.

“A buddy is a friend like you,” Simon explained. **“The Buddy Branch will be a special place for birds to meet and make friends.** If you are ever feeling alone, just sit on this branch. Another bird will see and join you. Lean on him or her in times of need. Friends help lift you up. What do you think?”

“Good idea!” the birds agreed, tweeting their approval.



**“Let’s decorate the branch
to make it look special,”**
Patty said.

All the birds liked this idea
and flew off to find decorations.

Soon there were feathers, leaves, bits of
string, and even some pretty colored pebbles
that Patty had gathered.

In no time at all, the **Buddy Branch**
looked very special indeed.





“I don’t mind being different now,” Buddy chirped as he looked at his new friends, sitting on the branch they’d named after him.

Buddy sang, **“I am different, but I am beautiful.”**
The other birds joined in, singing,
“We are different, but we are beautiful.”



And that's how Buddy made more friends than
he could count and learned **it was okay**
to be different after all.

SIMON'S FAVORITES

AboutFace.ca

ACPA American Cleft Palate-Craniofacial Association

Bear Necessities Pediatric Cancer Foundation

Beauty with a Twist

BORN A HERO, Pfeiffer's Health and Social Issues Awareness

Camp About Face

Cary Kanno-Musical Artist

Children's Craniofacial Association (CCA Kids)

CleftProud

Cuddles For Clefts

Doctors Without Borders

Emory Cleft Project-Dept Human Genetics, Emory Univ School of Medicine

Face the Future Foundation Illinois

FACES: The National Craniofacial Association

Facing Forward Inc

Love Me Love My Face: Jono Lancaster

MyFace

National Organization for Rare Disorders (NORD)

Noordhoff Craniofacial Foundation Philippines, Inc

Operation of Hope Worldwide

Operation Smile

Patients Rising

Pete's Diary: Peter Dankelson. Motivational Speaker

Rare Disease Legislative Advocates (RDLA)

Joe Rutland -CleftThoughts

Smile Train

Solidarity Bridge.org

St. Jude Children's Research Hospital

UI Health Craniofacial Center at the UIC College of Medicine

ABOUT PATRICIA ANN SIMON

I am a RN and was born with a cleft lip and palate.

I have written four books, *Smile with Simon*, *Simon and the Buddy Branch*, *Simon and Patty Go To Camp*, and *Simon and the Bully*. These children's books resonate with young people suffering from similar craniofacial differences.

My first children's book, *Smile with Simon* is about a cardinal named Simon, who's born with a gap in his beak. His gap made it difficult for him to eat, smile, and sing. In the story, he meets a young girl named Patty, who relates with Simon because she has a cleft lip.

I wrote a second book, *Simon and the Buddy Branch*, which further stresses the importance of kindness, love, and acceptance in the lives of children with facial differences.

My aim is to help children born with facial differences understand that it's okay to be different. I want to remind them that they are beautiful.

I am also a member of American Cleft Palate-Craniofacial Association (ACPA), Children's Craniofacial Association (CCA), Cleft Community Advisory Council (CCAC) for Smile Train, and former board member of Face the Future Foundation, which supports the efforts of University of Illinois Health Craniofacial Center.

I have given a keynote speech for the Inaugural Cleft Lip and Palate Team Day at Morgan Stanley Children's Hospital in New York Presbyterian Hospital,

My book, *Smile with Simon* was translated to Tagalog so that it could be used at a Philippine speech camp.

I created a webpage, www.smilewithsimon.org which features videos and songs that reinforce the message we are all different, and to be accepting and kind.

**Books can be purchased directly through my website:
www.smilewithsimon.org**