

Turning Tragedy Into Children's Smiles

Children's author finds solace writing the book *Grandma would've loved to read to her grandkids*.

by Hector Gonzalez
Editor

A tragic accident shattered Adam T. Newman's family, but the graphic artist and newly published author found consolation in his creativity. "In 2010 my mother-in-law was killed – right down the street at Devonshire and Reseda," Newman said, speaking in the noisy parlor of the new Menchie's on Chatsworth Street in the Old Granada Village Business District.

"She was at a red light and a car ran into her. So as a way to mourn and cope...I decided to write a book in her honor that she would've loved to have read to her grandkids. She had four grandkids at the time of her death; now she has five."

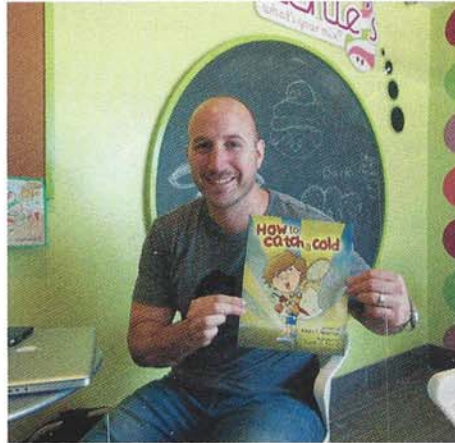
This month at the yogurt shop Newman will read his book and sign copies of his children's story, which takes the gross-out route of such kids' favorites as the "Captain Underpants" series and the popular "The Big Book of Gross Things." It's filled with the type of humor Newman's mother-in-law – while blushing – loved, he said.

"She loved booger jokes, and my book is filled with that sort of stuff," he said.

She was "also the type of grandma who would always say, 'You need to put on a jacket or you're going to catch a cold.' So the title of my book is, 'How to Catch a Cold.'"

Newman's father-in-law loved the story, but he died of a heart attack shortly after his wife's death and never got to see it in print. That spurred Newman to form his own publishing company as a tribute to the couple, combining his their two first names, Mike and Lois, to create Milo Ink Books.

Reading has always been a big part of his family life, and since his wife teaches at Tulsa Elementary School in Granada



Adam Newman holds a copy of his new book, 'How to Catch a Cold,' which he will read this month at Menchie's on Chatsworth Street.

Photo by Hector Gonzalez

Hills, Newman began reading his book to classrooms there. Now he visits classrooms several times a week to read his book and speak to children about inspiration.

"The whole idea behind inspiration is that you can be inspired by something really, really good. Or you can be inspired by something kind of bad."

To illustrate his point, he tells kids a story about a boy who is having a horrible day.

"He's late for school and he trips over a rock and he breaks his arm and he winds up falling into a big pile of cow poop, and this horrible event inspires him to write a silly song. It's just to show that you can turn something that was really, really bad into something good. The world needs more laughter anyway."

Hearing children giggle at his stories is one of Newman's rewards – that and keeping the memory of Mike and Lois alive, he said.

"How to Catch a Cold" is a story about a boy who goes to school and finds all his friends have stayed home. When his teacher explains that they all caught a cold, he goes out and literally tries to



Use your receipt to donate a percentage of your May 5 purchases at Menchie's to your local school.

Photo by Hector Gonzalez



To promote Newman's gross-out kids' book, Menchie's will offer gummy worms and other fun gummy toppings May 5.

Photo by Hector Gonzalez

hunt down and catch a cold, finding all sorts of yucky things along the way.

"At the end of the tale, he wakes up with a cold," Newman said.

Newman will read at 11 a.m. Friday, May 5, at Menchie's, 17840 Chatsworth St., Granada Hills. To promote the event, the store will donate a percentage from sales receipts to local schools, owner Liz Charlton said. For more information, call 818-368-7700.