



# MEET YOUR INSTRUCTOR

## Pegi Deitz Shea

### FICTION

*The Carpet Boy's Gift*, Tilbury House Publishers

*The Whispering Cloth*, Boyds Mills Press

*Tangled Threads*, Clarion

*Stitch in Time*, CreateSpace

And many more.

### NONFICTION:

*Ten Mice for Tet*, Chronicle Books

*Noah Webster: Weaver of Words*, Calkins Creek

*Patience Wright: America's First Sculptor and Revolutionary Spy*, Henry Holt

And many more.

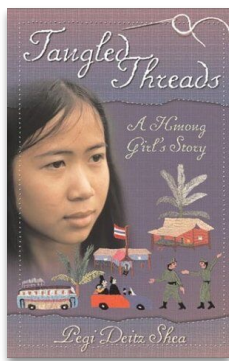
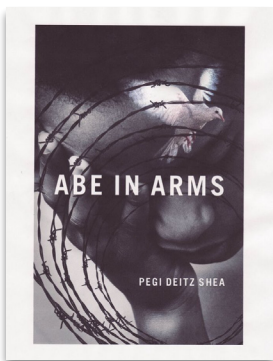
If you'd like to dabble in all the fun categories of children's literature, then I'm your gal. I'm one of the very few people who has published in just about every children's literature category from board book verse up through Young Adult fiction. I also write poetry, articles and essays for adult readers, and am working on a novel for that market too. I love challenges— it's as simple as that.

My favorite kind of learner is every kind of learner. I taught infants and toddlers in the YMCA's "Gym & Swim," program eons ago, coached kids soccer and softball, ran writing workshops in grade schools and, through my two decades with the Institute, taught home-schooled kids, college students, bright imaginative writers who never went to college, and 80-somethings who just want to hand down their stories to the next generations.

For several years now, I've also been teaching at the University of Connecticut (Go Huskies!) and Hartford's Mark Twain House. Would it surprise you that my father was a teacher and coach, that I married a teacher, and our two kids are studying to become teachers? Maybe it's something about having summers off...?

I am fascinated by people, which is why many of my children's works concentrate on human rights and diverse cultures. With global refugee crises and pressing issues of injustice, I am inspired to create literature focused on social justice. "A moving representation of the dreams of refugees everywhere" is what Booklist called *The Whispering Cloth*, my picture book about Mai, a Hmong girl confined to a refugee camp.

The book received awards from the IRA, NCTE, NCSS and other organizations with many initials. A novel sequel, *Tangled Threads*, (Clarion, 2003), about the same character as a middle-school newcomer to America, was a New York Public Library Top 100 Books of the Year, winner of The Connecticut Book Award, and a Junior Library Guild selection.



*"The word 'writing' is only part of a bigger and more important word, 'rewriting.' And 'vision' is only part of 'revision'."*

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**ICL** INSTITUTE  
OF CHILDREN'S  
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FOUNDED 1969

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She has also published a YA novel about Mai, and is currently researching for an adult novel starring Mai. No other picture book character has virtually grown from child to adult in the hands of author and reader.

If you want to learn how to write nonfiction, Pegi can help there too. Her nonfiction includes award-winners, *Ten Mice for Tet*, *Noah Webster: Weaver of Words* and *Patience Wright: America's First Sculptor and Revolutionary Spy*.

She fell in love with writing at an early age. "That's the only way to get attention in a house with four brothers, a school full of nuns, and in the crowded state of New Jersey," she says. It was at Rutgers, where she first published poetry and performed it. She took road trips into NYC to perform too. After college, she worked in advertising and publicity in New York's film and video industry. A long-time SCBWI member and a two-time conference coordinator, Pegi has presented at more than 400 schools, libraries and conferences nationwide. When she's not traveling, writing or teaching, she's tending veggies in her garden, swimming at the Y, or romping with her dog. "These activities all nourish me so that, in turn, can nourish students and readers. I believe the word 'writing' is only part of a bigger and more important word, 'rewriting.' And 'vision' is only part of 'revision.' You'll need your whole self to succeed!"

