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Bush twin to publish book

Washington - Jenna Bush, the daughter of US President George W Bush, is entering the publishing world with a book for teens that focuses on a teenage single mother in Panama living with HIV.

The 25-year-old, who along with her twin sister Barbara once provided fodder for tabloids because of her collegiate partying and underage drinking, told the daily USA Today that she hoped the book would get "kids thinking and involved".

The president's daughter said Ana's Story: A Journey of Hope, which is due out this fall, was inspired by her work as an unpaid intern since September for Unicef in Central America.

"I'm aware that not all kids can pick up and fly to Panama, I'm very lucky," she was quoted as saying.

She said the book is not political and would end with a "call to action".

Bush who quit her job as a public school teacher in Washington DC last year to work for Unicef said she was willing to return to the spotlight to promote the book and "start a dialogue with kids."

She said she planned to donate her earnings from the book to Unicef and hoped her writings will have some of the same impact as two books about girls caught up in the Holocaust - The

Diary of Anne Frank and Lois Lowry's Number of Stars.

This morning I got an email from a reporter for a newspaper in the Middle East asking my reaction to this statement from the president's daughter.

I was kind of at a loss, wondering what to reply. I still am. So I have postponed - maybe permanently? - answering his query.

Then I browsed through an advance copy of part of next Sunday's New York Times, reading an article from the magazine section with particular interest because it was about a friend of mine, someone whose work I admire greatly, Gregory Maguire. The article focused on his book *WICKED*, from which the musical evolved, and it portrayed Gregory as the charming and smart guy he is, as well as giving a lovely portrait of his life with his partner and their three adopted children.

But I gulped when I came to something that had to have been taken out of context, or misquoted.

*> What has continued to give Maguire consolation is the world of make-believe,
> though for years, he fought it. "I used to think my brain wasn't sharp enough
> to write for adults and I'd have to keep writing for children," he told me.*

Gregory has, for years, championed fine literature for children, even as he was producing it himself. He was one of the founders of Childrens Literature New England, an unusually scholarly and serious group. There is no way he would have denigrated writing for young people in the way that that so-called quote implies.

As someone who has occasionally been the victim of careless journalists (or actually, perhaps my own carelessness, in not staying constantly alert for out-of-context possibilities) I cringe on his behalf.

And speaking of the sharp brain and enormous talent required for writing the best possible literature for the young....I just read Brain Selznick's The Invention of Hugo Cabret

I just hope this book gets as much attention as Jenna Bush's.

Tags: Untagged