

Never too young to write

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You don't see many authors fidgeting with a toy

motorcycle or making bunny ears behind their brother's head while promoting their books.

But most writers have a few decades behind them before they get published.

William Rabun, who co-wrote *My Grandma's Backyard* with his big brother Miles, is only 6. Miles is 8.

"Ordinary kids," their mother Yolanda says with a smile.

Their book, *My Grandma's Backyard*, was recently published by Xlibris.

The 20-page picture book introduces readers to all the enticements of the Rabun boys' grandma's backyard. Kappitola Williams, affectionately called "Drandma" by the boys, lives in Atlanta, Ga. The boys live with their parents in Wake Forest.

The thoughtfully landscaped area behind Kappitola's house includes a brick walkway, a pond, stone turtles, a blue gazing ball, and other features little boys (and adults) find appealing. The boys love to visit there.

The book came about as a challenge from Kappitola. "We have so much fun in her backyard she said she wanted us to write a book," Miles said.

The boys, already active in Raleigh Little Theatre and working in local commercials, began writing. The process took about a year, the boys said.

The rhymes were his idea, William pointed out.

Yolanda insists her role was limited to coaching and typing. "I tried (to help); I really did," she said. But each time she typed up the script and her boys reviewed it, they would say, "Mommy, I didn't say that."

Yolanda finally gave in and let the boys do all the writing.

After they were satisfied, she took the book to Kinko's and had it printed. When the family announced — appropriately — in Kappitola's backyard the boys had

written a book, people were impressed and said it should be published, Yolanda said.

She contacted several publishers before deciding it would be easiest to self-publish. Kappitola furnished the artwork after telling a friend, "I challenged my boys to write a book — I need to to draw me a picture," Yolanda related.

After the first draft came back from the printer, Yolanda asked her boys what they could do to improve the book.

Miles came up with a matching word challenge and William compiled a list of vocabulary words. Suggested activities and questions were added, too.

The boys said their grandma was so excited when the book was published she screamed.

"(Mama) brought me up that way. I don't know why she expected anything less," Yolanda said.

The entire project has been a family affair, Yolanda added. Her engineer husband Dereck may have been instrumental in helping the boys develop a literary streak, she said. He read to the boys when she was pregnant.

Miles, who along with William just started a new school year at Pleasant Union Elementary, plans to continue writing.

He's currently working on a book about a boy who shoots basketball and another kid who plays ice hockey.

William, a second-grader who's made it to a fourth-grade reading level, is already busy checking his brother's work, Yolanda said.

The boys are currently in school, but their plans for trackout include appearances and book signings in Raleigh and Atlanta in August.

To find out more about the boys or their book, log onto www.mygrandmasbackyard.com.

The Aug. 11 book signing in Raleigh is set for 2 p.m. at Quail Ridge Books & Music.