

# • Meet the Author •

Grades  
K-2, 3-5

## Jan West Schrock

Interview conducted by Toni Buzzeo, career media specialist and author (visit [www.tonibuzzeo.com](http://www.tonibuzzeo.com)).



Photo from [www.creativeworksystems.com](http://www.creativeworksystems.com)

**Jan West Schrock**, consultant for Heifer International, taught elementary, junior high, and learning disabled students for 22 years, primarily in Maine. She also founded a night school for learning disabled adults in Washington, DC and taught English in China. After directing Brethren Volunteer Service for the Church of the Brethren for seven years and the AmeriCorps program for the National Council of Churches for five years, she joined the Heifer staff where she has worked for the past ten years, serving as Director of Community Relations and leading Heifer study tours to Ecuador, China, and Poland.

She now organizes volunteers in Maine, makes presentations, and leads Heifer-Universities in Arkansas. Jan lives in Westbrook, Maine near her two children and four grandchildren.

**You have a long family history with Heifer International. Can you tell us about that, both your father's involvement and your own?**

**JS:** I was one year old when my father took relief supplies to the victims of the Spanish Civil War. His crew of relief workers distributed used clothing, shoes, blankets, and powdered milk to women, children, and older folks. Daily, Dad witnessed women lined up to receive powdered milk to carry home and reconstitute with water. Eventually their supplies of powdered milk ran low, so the relief workers chose to give milk only for those babies showing weight gain. Dad was devastated. He had two little children back home in Indiana and knew Midwestern farmers had plenty of cows. Why not give them a cow? He did, and the recipients agreed to give their first female heifer to a neighbor. When a recipient becomes a donor, nutrition,

income, and dignity are restored.

The United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Agency also agreed to ship horses to help with the reconstruction of Europe following WWII. This is how the work began and how Heifer International got its name in 1944.

**From there, how did you come to write a book about it?**

**JS:** Tilbury House Publishers asked me to write a story about Heifer. They had previously published *The Goat Lady* by Jane Bregoli, a wonderful story of an eccentric woman who raised goats for Heifer in the 1970's. Tilbury knew the Heifer story and realized I lived here in Maine, and got excited about Mrs. Rowell and her fifth grade class.

**You name another wonderful and inspiring book about Heifer International, *Beatrice's Goat*, in the text of your book. What is your history with that book or its author? Why did you decide to name it specifically in your text?**

**JS:** Beatrice Biira, from Uganda, is an amazing example of Heifer's work. At age 9, she couldn't go to school because her family was too poor. Heifer's gift of a

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goat gave her family nutrition and income and her education began. The story in *Beatrice's Goat* not only inspired Mrs. Rowell's class, but youth and children everywhere. Beatrice now has a master's degree in public policy and is working at Columbia University in the Millennium Promise's School to School and Connect to Learn programs ([www.millenniumpromise.org](http://www.millenniumpromise.org)).

### Please talk about your experience as a classroom teacher and how that influenced your writing of *Give a Goat*.

**JS:** As a teacher, I know how enthusiastic a class can become. A good teacher will seize this energy and turn it into a learning experience. Mrs. Rowell, a great teacher, turned the vision

of her students into a math lesson in supply, demand, and record keeping. In the process she developed world citizenship and philanthropy.

### Do you plan to continue your career as a writer?

**JS:** Yes, I am currently co-authoring a book. *Skowhegan: A Place to Watch* is about a school project on farming blending Native American lore and Heifer International's work.

### How can readers learn more about Heifer International? What should children do who are interested in being involved with Heifer International? Is there more than one option? How can an individual start? What about a class?

**JS:** Heifer offers excellent educational resources for all ages, kindergarten through college. The Heifer story is a great way for kids to learn about our world of great need, hear examples of success, and learn how to become involved. Go to [www.heifer.org](http://www.heifer.org) to learn about Heifer's work or to purchase several children's books, including *Beatrice's Goat* and *Faith The Cow*, the story of how Heifer began in 1944.



*Toni Buzzeo, MA, MLIS, is an author as well as a career library media specialist. She is the author of fourteen picture books, most recently Lighthouse Christmas (Dial, 2011) and many professional books and articles. Visit [www.tonibuzzeo.com](http://www.tonibuzzeo.com) or e-mail Toni at [tonibuzzeo@tonibuzzeo.com](mailto:tonibuzzeo@tonibuzzeo.com).*

