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“RAISING BOOKWORMS”

**BESTSELLING CHILDREN’S BOOK AUTHOR & ARTS EDUCATOR
BRINGS CREATIVE APPROACH
TO SPARKING A LIFE-LONG LOVE OF READING**

“How can I get my child to turn off the Gameboy (TV, computer, iPod etc.) and pick up a book?!”

This is the question that **Emma Walton Hamilton**, a best-selling children’s book author, arts educator, and Editorial Director of the **Julie Andrews Collection** publishing imprint, hears most often. Whether on a book tour with her mother and co-author, the legendary actress Julie Andrews, at speaking engagements in schools, libraries and other public arenas, or in casual conversation, this question surfaces again and again, with increasing urgency, from parents, grandparents, educators, librarians and caregivers across the country.

Hamilton addresses this challenge in a new release, ***Raising Bookworms: Getting Kids Reading for Pleasure and Empowerment*** (Beech Tree Books). The book offers a fresh and creative approach to helping young people discover the joys and rewards of reading, and offers powerfully effective yet simple strategies to build or restore a love of reading for every age range.

Hamilton makes a compelling case for why it's critical for kids to grow up with the skills and appetite for reading in today's media-dominated environment. Studies show that elective reading has dramatically declined over the last fifty years, coinciding with the advent of television and the electronic age. Yet in order to participate fully in the workplace in 2020, young people will need powerful literacy skills at levels currently achieved by only a small percentage of the population.

Building on the premise that an appreciation for reading stems from an kinesthetic connection between books and pleasure, Hamilton offers insights, recommendations and tactics to engage even the most reluctant reader, and demonstrates how reading ties in with virtually every area of life. One of the aspects that make this book unique is that Hamilton draws on her rich theater background to demonstrate how to bring books alive with creative techniques and arts-based activities. Providing a host of insightful tips, strategies and reading recommendations, she shows the many ways that books can be a springboard for fun and shared learning, for children as well as for the adults who help make that happen. Readers are also invited to visit www.raisingbookworms.com to share their own strategies and success stories for future editions.

Emma Walton Hamilton has co-authored sixteen books, four of which have been on the New York Times Bestseller List, including the *Dumpy the Dump Truck* series, *The Great American Mousical*, *Thanks to You - Wisdom from Mother and Child* (#1 New York Times Bestseller) and the original fable, *Simeon's Gift* (Harper Collins). Her passion for literacy and the arts extends into numerous programmatic, literary and advocacy efforts that embrace and unify both issues.

As a professional arts-education administrator and advocate, she co-founded Bay Street Theatre in Sag Harbor, NY, an esteemed regional theater, and created and managed their unique performance and arts-in-education programs for young audiences for over fifteen years. As a teaching artist and educator, she has developed writing and performing arts curriculums and taught hundreds of high and middle school students the tools of dramatic writing and the value of arts appreciation. She has authored numerous teachers' guides for the books in the Julie Andrews Collection, as well as developing webgames and other creative and enrichment activities for the Collection's website (www.julieandrewscollection).

In addition, Hamilton is actively involved in developing books from the Collection for stage, film and television. She and her mother recently adapted *Simeon's Gift* for the stage, which was produced last fall at Bay Street Theatre. A symphonic version of the show – featuring music by Ian Fraser and lyrics by John Bucchino (“A Catered Affair”) - will be on national tour this summer at major venues that include the Hollywood Bowl and the Atlanta Symphony. *The Great American Mousical* is currently being adapted for the stage by Goodspeed Musicals for production in 2009. Music and lyrics are being written by George Stiles and Anthony Drewe (“Mary Poppins”).

Hamilton is a member of the Author's Guild, The Dramatists' Guild, The Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators, the International Reading Association, SAG, AEA, AFTRA and ASCAP. She has served on the theater panel for the New York State Council on the Arts, and as a National Ambassador for The Broadway League's "Kids' Night on Broadway". She speaks regularly on literacy and arts issues, and has delivered keynotes and presentations for such organizations as the American Library

Association (ALA), International Performing Arts for Youth (IPAY), The Broadway League, the New York State Association of Arts Educators (NYSAAES), MacMillan McGraw-Hill, the Stonybrook Southampton Children's Literature Conference and the Target corporation, among many others.

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Written by Emma Walton Hamilton

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