



## TIMELY NOVEL DRAWS MIDDLE GRADERS INTO THE WORLD OF AUTISM

Peer pressure, bullying, academic challenges — all are typical middle grade fair. Paul Stephens isn't typical, however. He has autism. So too does Sarah Stup, the critically acclaimed author of *Paul and His Beast* (202 pps., illustrated, \$13.95). Kirkus Reviews hails the book as an “Entertaining, accessible, and beautifully lucid look at what it's like to have autism.”

Through her trademark searing prose, Stup has created in Paul a character rarely found in young adult fiction: a protagonist with a disability. His appearance is particularly timely, given 1 out of 68 American children today is on the autism spectrum.

*Paul and His Beast* raises autism awareness by following Paul and his desperate efforts to stay in a normal school rather than be transferred to one for special needs children. To remain, he must tame his “Beast,” the bizarre autistic behaviors that make other students recoil and mock — behaviors that also help him cope with an overwhelming world that bombards his senses and makes his body freeze.

Along the way, he meets and helps a younger boy with autism, deals with persistent bullying, experiences his first crush and uses his unique talents to help his academic team of “normals” win their school competition. As important, Paul learns to speak up for the “Beast,” thereby learning the power of speaking up for himself.

*Paul and His Beast* includes illustrations by Laurie A. Conley, and a “Reader's Guide” to spur conversation about new approaching to community inclusion. Individual and bulk copies are available at SarahStup.com.

Learn more about Stup and her other books, gift collections, poems and essays for children and adults at SarahStup.com.