

Authors and Holmes County residents Alyssa and Keath Killebrew will release their first book on Thursday, November 6. They will hold a book signing on November 7 at 11:00 a.m. at the Peoples Drug Store booth at Mistletoe Marketplace in Flowood. On November 10 they will be signing books and displaying their art at the Holmes County Arts Council on the Square in Lexington.



**MEMBERS OF KILLEBREW FAMILY SHARE IN CHARLIE THE PEANUT** Members of the family and extended family of Alyssa and Keath Killebrew, many of whom are featured in the caricatures in Alyssa and Keath Killebrew's soon-to-be-released book, *Charlie the Peanut*, shown above from left are: (front row) John Thomas Murtagh, Lindsay Pierce Tutor, Riley Angell, and Delaney Smith; (back) Tyler Diffey, Keath, Hayden Tutor, and Alyssa.

The authors are natives and residents of Holmes County. The book is based on a true Delta daughter and son with a whimsical sense of wonder and Southern heritage to share their first children's story book, *Charlie the Peanut*.

Mrs. Killebrew, a mental health therapist, and her husband Keath, a delta planter, encourage the young reader to consider the joys of living and blossoming in the moment where you find your early eternal soul. "*Charlie the Peanut* is written in an American South setting with warmth and personal memories of powerful Delta images of a culture based on agricultural roots where crops are continuously being prepared for, growing, or about to be harvested," she said.

Keath is a welder and oil painter and both of the Killebrews are photographers.

The authors use their deep love and appreciation of their own Mississippi background to invite the child's early creative imagination to ponder a path of unfolding and simply being who you are, where you are, of living in the moment, and stretching to make a difference. "We find ourselves when we accept ourselves and understand the environment in which we live," Alyssa commented.

*Charlie the Peanut* is an invitation to celebrate, accept, and to use our own uniqueness to return to our authentic selves. "I knew I needed a tool to communicate the importance of family to young children, and this book is a result of that," Alyssa said. "Not only does the book assist the reader in grasping the idea of personal contentment wherever you are, the story itself inspires us all to grow where we have been planted".

Keath comments, "Raising a crop is like rearing a child, both need proper preparation, encouragement, and discipline". Writing through the eyes of a Delta planter and experienced mental health counselor, the couple introduces their reader to the healing concept of self-acceptance and to the that we can all nurture others and make a difference wherever we are in this world.

The authors live on a Delta plantation where their home overlooks miles of agricultural land that provides their livelihood from peanuts, cotton, soybeans, rice, corn, and wheat. The book theme mingles in remembrances brought on by the observance of Delta life through a story that offers a great path to emotional stability wherever you are. *Charlie the Peanut* is an introduction for children to learn about Mississippi crops and agricultural opportunities, through photographs of each crop in the Mississippi Delta.

Farm life can be better understood through this creative reading. Through the years, the Delta left an indelible impression on both Alyssa and Keath.

Both authors are influenced by their wonderful Mississippi childhood recollections of the smell of freshly tilled soil, the echo of the gin whistling, leaves falling, of smoky Indian summer afternoons, the inconceivably slow parade of truckloads of raw cotton coming in for ginning, and the fading brilliant orange sunset so beautiful that you have to see it to believe it. That was at a time when all that was necessary for a successful growing season and harvest was just love of land and courage. Their ancestors came to Mississippi at a time when only canebrakes, huge forest, snakes, mosquitoes, and alligators were visible and there was no levee to protect the land from floods and annually the earth was covered with water which receded in time for the spring planting.

Planting is an important cornerstone of the cultural life of the South. It represents to the authors all that is good and natural in a time when few are holding these elements to be of value. They gratefully acknowledge and appreciate the way they have been molded by their heritage. Delta crops are truly special products, beautiful and rich with history and an air of solemn grandeur.

Charlie the Peanut features all fields and types of crops in the Mississippi Delta. The authors' Great Dane Charlie, who is six years old, is the inspiration for the name of their character. The book is a combination of Alyssa's experience working with children for 6 years and a dream Keath had in the middle of peanut planting season. The story is their lives together.

They both agree that it is so important to focus on the positive and simple things in life, to live and grow in the moment, and to not focus on the past or worry about the future. A close family friend commented about the couple saying, "One tills the soil and one tends to souls. I wish their life a beautiful garden."

Chris Jenkins, originally from Batesville, who now lives in Greenwood has a 6 year old son, Eli, and two stepsons, Dylan Kern, fifteen and Gabe Kern, twelve. Mr. Jenkins is a self taught musician and artist who plays several instruments.

Glyn Jenkins, Chris' wife of seven and a half years, introduced Mrs. Killebrew to her husband's talent through artwork hanging on her office wall. The two ladies worked together at Region VI Mental Health Center in Greenwood where they were both therapists.

When Alyssa began her literary adventure, she mentioned to Ms. Jenkins how much she would like to have Chris illustrate Charlie the Peanut, thus began their partnership and adventure.

The book is designed so that it can be used in the classroom as a tool to teach children and crops in the Mississippi Delta as well as for the moral which is, "to grow where we are planted."

The book is dedicated to the nieces and nephews of the writers, Sarah Scott, and Sellers, Lindsay, and daughter of Lexington author and retired banker, Billy Ellis, and Sally Scott of Oxford. Mr. Killebrew is the son of

Pam Killebrew of Lexington and Zackie Killebrew of Lexington. Ellis has written two books, Tithes of Blood and Hunter to the Dawn.

Mrs. Killebrew has also published a cookbook Southern Belle's Kitchen two years ago. Alyssa and Keath Killebrew are available for book signings and copies of the book are on sale at Peoples Drug Store and Russell's Mr. Discount Drugs in Lexington. For more information call (662) 299-4001 or (662) 475-0479.