

# Q&A

## Dr. Lindsey Murphy and Kristin Ross O'Brien

by Aimee Reitzen and Megan Stetts

### INSIDE THE MINDS OF THE AUTHORS OF 'KAT6 AND ME'

The KAT6 Foundation is proud to share an inside look at the creation of *KAT6 and Me*, the first children's book written to educate, raise awareness, foster inclusion, and celebrate the lives of those affected by KAT6.



Bash, Lindsey and Kristin at a book signing in MO.

#### **Q** Tell us a bit about Bash's story.

**Kristin:** Bash came into our lives first as our foster son at 6 months old and instantly captured our hearts. Before he turned two, we were blessed to officially adopt him and make him a forever part of our family. From the start, Bash's life has been filled with both challenges and incredible joy.

At 2 months old he was diagnosed with KAT6B, a rare genetic condition that affects less than a few hundred people worldwide.

Bash is a kindergartener, a disability advocate and a playground philanthropist. He started a movement to bring accessible playground equipment to

our small town. Every small victory, every sound, and every step for Bash is a celebration. Despite the many therapies, surgeries, and medical complexities he faces, Bash's happy personality touches everyone who meets him.

#### **Q** What inspired you to write *KAT6 and Me*?

**Kristin:** The idea for *KAT6 and Me* began with our son, Max. One day, he wanted to write a school book report about KAT6; the rare genetic condition his little brother Bash was born with. But there weren't any children's books about KAT6. There weren't even books for adults. From that moment, it became our family's wish to one day write the children's book that didn't

exist; a story that could teach, comfort, and celebrate kids like Bash, and help others understand them, too. I shared this with Lindsey and she encouraged me and offered to help. Lindsey and I started talking about it and never stopped. *KAT6 and Me* is that wish come true — a story born from the belief that every rare child deserves to be seen and celebrated.

**Lindsey:** I've been a witness to Bash's journey from the beginning and have seen first-hand how much his family advocates and inspires others. Knowing there was something tangible I could do to support their efforts for education, inclusion, and advocacy was an easy "yes!"

**Q What was the process of collaborating, and how did your different perspectives shape the book?**

**Kristin:** Lindsey brought her expertise as a child life specialist and her heart for children with unique needs. Together, we balanced medical accuracy with emotional honesty and warmth. As moms with eight kids between us, we wrote this book over coffee while our children played. Lindsey's insight and compassion helped bring the story to life.

**Lindsey:** Collaborating with Kristin was such an organic and special process. We'd already been friends for years, so there was a natural trust and shared passion that made the collaboration flow easily. Kristin brought the heart and soul. She knows her child and the KAT6 community better than anyone. My background as a child life specialist helped us make complex or emotional topics understandable for children.

Together, we blended those strengths—her mission and lived experience with my focus on child-centered

communication. The most rewarding part was helping bring a friend's wish to life and seeing it evolve into something that helps families feel seen and supported. Along the way, our conversations kept sparking new ideas, and now we even have plans for additional books to reach other audiences within the KAT6 community.

**Q How do you see this book being used by professionals who work with KAT6 children?**

**Lindsey:** It can help guide conversations with newly diagnosed families, offer insight into family strengths and challenges, and remind care teams of the power of validation and partnership. Hearing a parent's perspective helps professionals remember that small gestures — listening, explaining clearly, offering hope — make a lasting impact.

**Q How do you hope the book will support newly diagnosed families?**

**Lindsey:** As a child life specialist, I know how important it is to help children and families make

sense of complex information in ways they can truly understand. I hope *KAT6 and Me* gives families language they can use to explain the diagnosis in a positive, age-appropriate way — one that celebrates who their child is while still acknowledging the challenges ahead. For parents, I hope it's a resource that opens doors for discussion, helps them feel empowered, and reminds them they have support within a wider community.

**Q Tell us how the book is giving back to the KAT6 Foundation?**

**Kristin:** To honor the children and families affected by this rare condition, **all royalties from the book are donated to the KAT6 Foundation**, to support research, raise awareness, and connect families around the world. Every purchase of *KAT6 and Me* helps fund the search for answers, the growth of community, and the celebration of children like Bash.

**Q** What has been the response to *KAT6 and Me*?

**Kristin:** The response to *KAT6 and Me* has been the best I could imagine. The interest in our book has reached beyond the rare disease community. Parents of children with rare diagnoses have shared pictures of their children with the book. Teachers have told us they're using it in classrooms to start important conversations. Local families have bought our book to share with their children.

What touches me most is hearing from siblings, kids like my Jack, Max and Leah, who now have a way to more easily explain and understand their brother or sister's condition. That's exactly what we dreamed this book could do.

**Lindsey:** We knew people associated with KAT6 would be our main audience, but I didn't anticipate all the teachers, advocates, and libraries across the world adding it to their collections to support inclusion, connection, and advocacy.

**Q** How have you been promoting the book?

**Kristin:** Our family has been sharing the story right here at home in Boonville, Missouri, where our journey began. We hosted our first book signing at a local bookstore that champions community, inclusion, and local authors.

The Cooper County Board of Sheltered Services also welcomed us to host a special storytime for their Unlimited Opportunities, Inc. support program, where children and adults with disabilities got to hear *KAT6 and Me* read aloud — a truly joyful and full-circle moment.

Copies of *KAT6 and Me* have been donated to local hospitals, schools and libraries, helping caregivers, teachers, students, and families learn about rare conditions.

Our hope is that these moments, big and small, help create a ripple of awareness and belonging that extends far beyond our hometown

**Q** What do you hope readers will take away?

**Lindsey:** More than anything, I hope readers finish *KAT6 and Me* with a deeper understanding of what it means to live with a rare genetic condition — not just medically, but emotionally and socially. Awareness leads to connection, and connection leads to advocacy. If this book inspires even one more person to learn, listen, or support research and inclusion, then we've accomplished something meaningful.

**Kristin:** Most of all, I hope *KAT6 and Me* inspires people to see the extraordinary in the ordinary — to look beyond medical labels and see the heart, joy, and bravery that shine within every child.



Order your copy of *KAT6 and Me* on [Amazon](https://www.amazon.com). All proceeds benefit the KAT6 Foundation.

