



Press release 25 February 2015

I LOVE YOU MORE THAN...ADOPT A WORD THIS MOTHER'S DAY

I CAN, the children's communication charity, has launched a Mother's Day campaign backed by the classic picture book *Guess How Much I Love You*, from Walker Books; coinciding with the 20th Anniversary of the beloved picture book.

The Mother's Day campaign, centred around the charity's *Adopt a Word* gift, asks children and adults alike to tell their mothers how much they love them by adopting a word describing something they love their mum more than. Mums will then receive a certificate with their adopted word on it; their adopted words can also be printed on additional gifts such as mugs and t-shirts.

Sam McBratney, author of *Guess How Much I Love You* said, "I know that this evening, somewhere in the world a mum or dad will be reading **Guess** with someone special, saying how they feel with the help of a phrase from the book. Words are central to the work of an author, of course - they are the tools of the imagination. Those same tools also help us to build strong relationship in everyday life. This Mother's Day, by adopting a word, we have a chance to show mums how much we love them."

Reama Shearman is a parent at I CAN's Meath School, and mother of Tait. Tait is 10 years old and has severe problems when expressing himself using speech. When Tait started at I CAN's Meath School he was unable to say more than a few words and these were only intelligible to those that knew him.

Reama explains, "*Guess How Much I Love You* has been a much-loved book of ours. I would always try to think of a new measure of my love so that each time was different for Tait. I would often include something that he had done that week, "I love you a hundred lengths of the swimming pool". We would always sign I love you but one day when I was putting Tait to bed, he pulled me in to hug him and said the words 'uv you'. It was a heart-stopping moment, incomparable and one I will forever be grateful for. Now, Tait can say 'Happy Mother's Day'. The words might still be tricky for others to understand but for me it is incredibly powerful. On Mother's Day morning when he brings in the card he has made at school and says the words, I will burst with pride for my son. In that moment neither he or I will have to guess how much we love each other, but it will be fun to keep guessing anyway."

"Before attending Meath School Tait was a frustrated, lonely little boy whose confidence had been damaged by his previous experience of school. For the past four years, every school day my son has thanked me for taking him to Meath and every day I am thankful to all the school staff and for I CAN."

Virginia Beardshaw CBE, I CAN Chief Executive, said, "Being able to express feelings with loved ones is a central part of relationships, but one in ten children in the UK will struggle to make themselves understood and their feelings known. They will have difficulties learning at school and have trouble making friends and forming relationships. These are the children that the *Adopt a Word* Mother's Day campaign will help I CAN to reach - helping these children in their early years settings and schools and helping us to support their families."

To *Adopt a Word* for your mother, and to be entered into the prize draw to win a *Guess How Much I Love You* hamper, visit: www.adoptaword.com.

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For more information, interviews or pictures from I CAN, please contact Sam Boyle, I CAN Communications Manager on media@ican.org.uk or 07511 515199.

For more information, interviews or pictures from Walker Books, please contact Tatti de Jersey, tatti@dejersey.co.uk or 07796571569

Notes to Editors

- For more information on the Adopt a Word Mother's Day competition visit: www.adoptaword.com

About I CAN:

- I CAN is the children's communication charity. www.ican.org.uk or www.talkingpoint.org.uk.
- We are experts in helping children develop the speech, language and communication skills they need to thrive in a 21st century world.
- Children and young people can fail to reach their potential because communication difficulties are not visible, often mistaken for something else, or not noticed at all.
- I CAN's mission is that no child should be left out or left behind because of a difficulty speaking or understanding.
- We do this through:
 - Sharing our expertise and knowledge to increase awareness of communication difficulties and inform policy making.
 - Providing resources and information for parents, families and people who work with children.
 - Providing assessments for children so that their families know what support will meet their needs.
 - Giving teachers and professionals working with children the skills to help children who struggle through our evidence-based programmes.

At the very heart of I CAN are our two 'Outstanding' special schools which give expert care and education to children with problems so severe their needs cannot be met elsewhere.

- I CAN's Meath School is a day and residential non-maintained primary special school for up to 75 pupils aged 4 to 11 years, where severe and complex speech, language and communication needs, including Asperger's Syndrome, is the primary difficulty.
- Most pupils will have a complex profile of special educational needs including learning, medical, sensory and motor co ordination difficulties. Speech, language and communication needs will override these to be the foremost barrier to learning. www.meathschool.org.uk
- Meath School is a twice 'outstanding' school as rated by Ofsted since 2008, and seven times outstanding in the Residential Department.
- There is a speech and language therapist in every class along with a teacher and learning support assistants. This supports children to access the curriculum, learn and make friends..

About GHMILY/Walker Books

For two decades ***Guess How Much I Love You*** has captured the deep and tender bond between parent and child. Sam McBratney's timeless, endearing story of Big and Little Nutbrown Hare, beautifully rendered in Anita Jeram's watercolours, still shares its universal message of love with readers around the globe. It has become one of the world's best-loved, most successful picture books of all time enjoyed, by generations of readers.

The book was written by Sam McBratney after his editor at Walker Books suggested he try writing his first picture book, to be shared between a child and a loved one. The result was an enduring and simple story which has charmed generations of people of all ages, and come to signify a way of saying, ' I love you' for millions.

Guess How Much I Love You was first published by Walker Books in 1994 and has gone on to sell over 28 million units in 53 languages.

Guess How Much I Love You has long been a nursery essential and a favourite gift for new babies and infants. But increasingly the book has also become popular with adults as a gift for weddings, Valentine's Day and special occasions. The simple and timeless story of Big and Little Nutbrown Hare has become a way of telling someone that you love them.

Walker Books

Walker is the world's leading, employee-owned independent publisher of children's books. Working with the best authors and illustrators, Walker Books is renowned for its truly original publishing and outstanding quality. Home to books for all ages, Walker Books publishes many award-winning authors, illustrators and brands including Anthony Horowitz, Cassandra Clare, Lucy Cousins, Anthony Browne, Polly Dunbar, Mal Peet, Patrick Ness and *Where's Wally?*

Walker's licensing division manages licensing activity across several Walker brands including *Maisy* and all other Lucy Cousins properties, *Guess How Much I Love You* and new property *Tilly and Friends*.

Walker Productions develops Walker content for other media platforms with a range of media partners, with current projects including *Hank Zipzer: The World's Greatest Underachiever* and *Tilly and Friends* for BBC and *Fleabag Monkeyface* for ITV.

Walker Books UK is part of the vibrant, international Walker Books Group that includes Candlewick Press in America and Walker Books Australia.

Further information can be found at www.walker.co.uk