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Hi. My name is Shachar. I live in a community overlooking the Elah Valley in Israel. Today is my 10th birthday. But I'm not the only one celebrating. It's also Kuti's 10th birthday today. Kuti lives in my brain, just behind my forehead.



Shachar Edry was born with several large birthmarks called nevi throughout her body. Doctors removed the birthmarks which they thought might become cancerous. But her most dangerous birthmark, the one embedded in the front of her brain, is extremely difficult to remove.

Nevi birthmarks occur in different sizes, colors and frequencies. Small melanocytic nevi are most common: One in every 50 to 100 births. Large nevi are rarer (one in 20,000 births), and giant nevi much less common (one in every 500,000 births). Shachar was born with large nevi on her body and nevus cells called melanocytes in her brain which were responsible for the seizures she suffered in infancy. Her seizures are now controlled by medication, and the nevus inside her brain is actually shrinking!

“I also love to draw which is one of the reasons I decided to make this book. I also wanted to tell everybody about Kuti, my most troubling spot.”

Shachar and Kuti is a children’s picture book for 5-to-8-year-olds scheduled for release in the Fall of 2018. It tells the inspirational story of a 10-year-old Israeli girl’s personal struggle to live with a frightening medical condition. In her book, Shachar also describes her self-affirming response to children who are shocked or uncomfortable when they see her for the first time. Her personal story is an homage to acceptance and tolerance that will appeal to all children.



Contact: Jim Bergman
Phone: (845) 633-8234

For Immediate Release

PRESS RELEASE

Shachar and Kuti, a children’s picture book for 5-8 year-olds written and illustrated by a 10-year-old Israeli girl, Shachar Edry, was published on October 15, 2018 by Mediacs, a small press based in New Paltz, New York.

A 10-year-old Israeli girl, born with large birthmarks throughout her body, writes about how she came to terms with her most dangerous birthmark of all, the one embedded in her brain just behind her forehead — which she names Kuti. In her book, Shachar also describes her self-affirming response to children who are shocked or uncomfortable when they see her for the first time.

I tell them: “My spots are not normal, but I am. They are part of me, but not all of me. I love my friends. I go to school. I belong to a scout troop. I swim. I’m really just like you!”

Shachar and Kuti has received enthusiastic reviews from parents and teachers who believe the story’s dramatization of Shachar’s acceptance, self-love and tolerance provide important learning tools for all children — those with and without afflictions.

“Traditional publishing houses are often reluctant to publish children’s books featuring a child with a rare affliction because they think the audience may be too narrow to justify their investment,” says Mediacs’ President Jim Bergman. “I disagree. The success of *Wonder*, as a young adult novel and then movie, is a powerful case in point. Parents of children without afflictions will certainly understand the value of reading *Shachar and Kuti* to their children.”

Marketing plans include a media campaign involving models and other celebrities whose careers have not been hampered by their nevi birthmarks. Radio and TV appearances and bookstore signings are being scheduled.

Title: Shachar and Kuti
Publication Date: Oct. 15, 2018
ISBN: 13:978-0-9994664-3-8
Trim: 8.5 x 8.5
Page Count: 25 pages
Price: \$14.95 (paperback); \$9.95 (ebook)

TESTIMONIALS



Mariana Mendes

25-year-old Brazilian model and designer

I am simply enchanted with little Shachar and her beautiful story of love and overcoming. Her lovely illustrations reflect her feelings towards her beautiful spots, especially Kuti, and her brilliant journey to acceptance.

I live with a beautiful nevus on my face, of which I am very happy to have because it enables me to project a positive message of love and acceptance around the world. Shachar's book conveys this same message with particular purity. It's truly amazing how much her words make us all stronger.

Shachar and Kuti is a message of self-love for the world to read and enjoy!

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In a time of instant media, sound bites and hashtag identifiers, Shachar Edry offers a fresh and wholesome view on the world. Not the world of glitz and glamour, but life, a real life, seen through the eyes of a child with a unique birthmark and brain condition who has a wonderful contribution to make for other young children and parents.

Being born with a clear difference is not easy; a difference that is not a single skin tone or hair color, not clothing or fine linens, but a birthmark that truly marked her as special, and it came with a very special friend. In a world where 'special' differences can be looked down on, or bullied or worse still pitied, Shachar, has captured a true sense of child-like wonder and appreciation not of what she see in how the world sees her, or even how she sees the world; but what this birthmark has done to her and how it continues to impact her life. While written for other children, knowing that 1 in 20 people are born with a rare disease, Shachar and Kuti, will speak to child and adult alike.

For those children and adults facing the realities of life while living and sometimes suffering through Neurocutaneous Melanocytosis and all that diagnosis entails, this book is a simple unvarnished clearly written book. As it is written so it is also wonderfully illustrated. Shachar and Kuti paints not a picture of perfection nor of doom but one of reality, hope, perseverance and the art of living life to the fullest.

Kudos and much love,

Paul Coleman
Nevus Outreach, Inc.
Board of Directors, Chair of Research Committee

As a parent of two small boys, I was thrilled to read this important story about a lovely, young girl. Now, more than ever, it is crucial to teach our children love, tolerance and respect for everyone, no matter their beliefs, background or looks. I would encourage other parents to read it to their children.

Alexina Cather
Deputy Director at the New York City,
Food Policy Center at Hunter College

Fear and anxiety of being different is a common problem of childhood, even for children not born with birthmarks. Shachar's story is a wonderful example of a young child with the resources and strength to create her own way of resolving that fear. I highly recommend all parents read Shachar and Kuti to their young children.

Candis Cousins, Ph.D,
Child Psychologist.

A beautiful and unique book on finding acceptance in living with CMN and NCM. Pigment cells causing CMN and NCM make you unique. As long as it doesn't grow, people with CMN and NCM are the nicest and most loving people which is what the story of Shachar is about.

Marjolein van Kessel
Patient Advocate at Naevus International
Utrecht Area, Netherlands

Shachar's story is a wonderful one for children to hear, at home or at school amongst peers. I would recommend it to parents and teachers.

Rachel Loshak
Parent and 3rd Grade Teacher
Mountain Laurel Waldorf School

Any reader of Shachar and Kuti, young or old, will be reminded of the need for compassion, not only for others, but for ourselves. Filled with teachable moments!

Jennifer Sacks
Middle School Teacher, Darien, CT

This is a very sweet and charming book with an important lesson about how good stuff can come from bad. As a result of her ordeals and suffering, Shachar is thankful to her condition for teaching her not to fear pain and teaching her how to overcome sadness and loss. An important lesson for everyone; good often comes out of bad if you remember to look for it.

The value of learning about feelings needs to be spotlighted because children spend so much time plugged into electronics and less time learning about feelings and coping skills.

Nancy Caputi
Kindergarten to 6th Grade Teacher, South Bronx

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The Edry Family
(l to r) Or, Shachar, Shloimi, Yalli, Meirav