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Formerly of Elyria and Vermilion and now living in the Tremont neighborhood of Cleveland, Julie Goulis has co-authored two interactive children's books: "The Things A String Can Be" and "Something Shiny, Something Round."

# What an imagination can see

Stephen Szucs  
The Chronicle-Telegram

**VERMILION** — With the videogame generation expanding to younger ages, and the imaginations of children shrinking with every new game, Vermilion native Julie Goulis hopes to instill some creative spirit into young minds while she still can.

Goulis recently finished her second children's book, "Something Shiny, Something Round," in which the characters go on extraordinary adventures with the ordinary objects they find in their own backyards.

"We really wanted to do something to focus on a child's imagination," said Goulis. "That was definitely our objective."

Goulis attended Vermilion High School before graduating from Bowling Green State University with a journalism degree.

While working as a copywriter for a Cleveland ad agency, Goulis and a friend and co-worker, John Ferguson, decided to write children's books as a side gig.

"It really just came up over a beer at happy hour," said Goulis. "We were thinking of other things we might enjoy doing, and since John has kids, we figured putting a children's book together could be fun."

As an author, Goulis tapped into her writing imagination for "The Things A String Can Be." With Ferguson at the illustrating helm, the duo churned out its first book a little over two years ago.

However, getting the book published wasn't as easy as they thought.

"Over the course of three to four months we had been rejected by everyone," said Goulis. "John and I were beginning to give up on the idea, when my husband, Brad, suggested that we do it ourselves."

With Brad Goulis involved, the triumvirate dug into their pockets to form their own publishing company, Bubblegum Books. Goulis said that while they would like national recognition one day, pushing the book locally has been their main concern.

"We are in book stores, and we have a distributor and a sales force, but the children's book market is really tough," she said.

For Bubblegum Books, the rough road to obtaining significant children's book status has been delayed by the trend of celebrity authorship.

"The celebrity involvement is disheartening, because our books are better," Goulis said.

Goulis admitted that ideas and scenarios for the third book in the bubblegum series are already dancing around in her head and that it will follow the same characters and their imaginations from the previous books.

In the meantime, she stays busy with her day job and local book signings.

"The books have been selling well, but it's a lot of work too," said Goulis. "It's definitely a rewarding experience. If it takes off, that'll be great."



The two books written by Julie Goulis and John Ferguson.