



# NEW BOOK ON YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES IS ONE-OF-A-KIND

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Over the last fifteen years, award-winning transition educator Mike Kelly has worked with hundreds of young adults with a wide range of disabilities living in New Jersey, Pennsylvania and South Carolina. During that time he has served as an employment specialist, job coach, event organizer and promoter, fundraiser, grant writer, teacher, mentor, and nonprofit business owner.

His recently-published book "**SPECIAL STORIES: Short Stories On Youth With Disabilities And My Adventures Working In The Disabilities Field**" (2017, Vendue Books) is a heartfelt account of what he describes as his "life's work." These thought-provoking and heartwarming stories showcase the many abilities individuals with disabilities have—regardless of their challenges—while entertaining, educating, and dispelling societal stereotypes. Aside from stories on many of the students Kelly's worked with over the years, the book also features accounts on famous professional athletes headlining fundraisers, ordinary folk generosity, celebrity greed, and social musings—all part of Kelly's experiences in his field.

"I've come across some incredible young people with disabilities who have achieved measurable success in their lives, yet whose efforts go largely unnoticed. I wrote this book because I felt it was time for their untold stories to finally be revealed to help inspire others to think outside the box and reach for the stars," Kelly said.

When asked what types of disabilities his book features, Kelly said: "ADD/ADHD, Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Down syndrome, Intellectual Disabilities, Learning Disabilities, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD), Spina Bifida, Visual Impairment, and Williams syndrome, to name just a few."

The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention state that roughly 1 in 7 American children have a developmental disability—over 3 million kids nationwide. Because of that number, one would think that there would be many books prominently featuring youth with disabilities. But according to Kelly, that's not the case.

"While there are books written by parents or teachers on how to raise or teach a child with autism—or kids' books featuring a single character with a disability—I could not find any books featuring different kids with various types of disabilities, highlighting their successes and challenges—all in one book," said Kelly. "The publishing industry said 'we don't publish books of that subject matter.'"

"Now, with the publishing of **SPECIAL STORIES...** there's finally a book about individuals with disabilities for individuals with disabilities, parents of children with disabilities, special educators, workers in the disabilities field... and everyone else."

Kelly hopes **SPECIAL STORIES...** gains support from the disability community and parents of children with disabilities to become this generation's *Chicken Soup For The Soul*. If not, he'll remain satisfied. "I feel like I'm already doing my life's work empowering young people, many of whom are life's underdogs. Any book sales would be considered icing on top of that cake."

**SPECIAL STORIES...** has already gained some positive reviews from a variety of local and regional sources, as well as from one NBA Hall of Fame legend named by the NBA as One of the 50 Greatest Players of All-Time.

The book is available in hardcover, paperback, and in e-book through online booksellers Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Apple iBooks and KOBO. For information on how to purchase your copy of **SPECIAL STORIES...**, visit [www.specialstoriesbook.com](http://www.specialstoriesbook.com).