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Contact: Mary Lou Décosterd  
mdec@leadlifeinstitute.com

### **Children Learn About Diversity and Friendship**

Mary Lou Décosterd, author of the “Magical Max Book Series” offers valuable life lessons in stories that feature a lovable Westie puppy named Max.

New Hope, PA (October 2006) - Most children have a positive, natural curiosity about people, especially those who seem different. But, when it comes to stepping forward and befriending someone who is different, these same curious children can be wary, and may struggle with trust and acceptance.

Mary Lou Décosterd, a developmental psychologist who has worked with children and families for more than 20 years, said she has seen how much children have to go through. They face pressure and mixed messages, often unable to sort through and determine how and if to make friends. This issue can be compounded by our mobile society – families relocating and children have to make new friends, cope with change, and face new challenges. “I wanted to give them a great little guide,” she said, “and my West Highland White Terrier, Max, seemed the perfect role model.”

What Décosterd had learned was that her Westie’s true zest for life and uncompromisingly positive nature would make a wonderful friendship role model for children of all ages. Thus, inspired by the antics of her energetic and friendly pup, the “Magical Max Book Series” was born.

In the first book, “Magical Max Makes Friends,” one of the topics she addresses is diversity - accepting and appreciating the differences in others. The two cats next door certainly do not look like Max, nor do they look like each other, and although they first seem strange to him, he learns that they are not so strange after all. Max also meets a bumblebee, and two swans, each creature with its own beauty and attributes. The story ends with Max going to sleep and dreaming about his new friends and the things he has learned:

- Friendship starts with a friendly attitude.
- Making friends takes patience; sometimes you have to make friends a little bit at a time.
- Being a friend means appreciating the differences in others – that what seems strange at first isn’t so strange after all.

"Magical Max Makes Friends" is the first in a series of three children's books about important life qualities and is published by Lead Life Press.

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Available on [www.adventuresofmagicalmax.com](http://www.adventuresofmagicalmax.com), Amazon.com and through Baker & Taylor

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