

For Immediate Release

Contact: Cathey Nickell, 713.443.5632 or catheynickell@gmail.com

HOUSTON AUTHOR SHARES BOOKS ABOUT ART AND IMAGINATION

HOUSTON, Texas – Students at _____ Elementary School will hear all about art cars, yarnbombing, writing, publishing, creativity and inspiration when author **Cathey Nickell** visits on [date] at [location].

Nickell's first book—*Arthur Zarr's Amazing Art Car*—is the only published book specifically written for children on the topic of art cars. It's relevant because The Orange Show hosts the country's largest and oldest Art Car Parade in Houston each year. Houston is also home to one of the first and only Art Car museums. The book is illustrated by Bill Megenhardt, a former Houston resident who now lives in Ohio.

Her second book—*Yazzy's Amazing Yarn*—is inspired by the warm-and-fuzzy yarn bombing craze that you may (or may not!) have heard of. It is illustrated by Emily Calimlim, a talented graphic artist from The Woodlands, Texas. Both books encourage children to be as creative as possible and will appeal to ages 4 to 9.

Nickell has been presenting her books to schools in Houston and beyond since 2016. She speaks to students about how she got the idea for her art car book (hint: her personal SUV sports 18 bumper stickers and counting), how they can come up with their own amazing story ideas, the writing and publishing process, and, of course art cars and yarn bombing. She also reveals a few “insider secrets” about the making of her books. And there is almost always a real art car for the students to see up close.

Nickell, a former public relations professional, does not drive an art car herself, but she loves snapping photographs whenever she spots one. The concept for Arthur Zarr came to her one morning during rush hour while driving her teenage son, Will, to school.

“I keep the back of my SUV covered with various bumper stickers,” Nickell said. “I joked with my son, Will, that I need to be a polite driver and obey the laws of the road because my car is so incredibly recognizable. He laughed at me, insisting that no one ever notices me and certainly not my car. During the drive, Will's comment got me pondering what else—besides bumper stickers—might make a car memorable? That question triggered me to think about art cars, and by the time I finished my morning carpool, the concept for Arthur Zarr's *Amazing Art Car* was born.”

Nickell also is not an expert knitter, but that didn't stop her from writing from the heart.

“I don't knit or crochet myself, but I've always been crafty and grew up sewing with my mother and grandmother,” Nickell says. “Just for fun, a friend sent me a photograph of a city bus that was artistically covered in colorful yarn. I couldn't believe what I was seeing, and my mind exploded with ideas. I started researching yarn bombing, and the concept for my latest children's book was formed.”

Nickell also has written a nonfiction history book. In 2012, she researched and wrote the 60-year history of the Institute for Spirituality and Health, a nonprofit organization in the Texas Medical Center. Her book, *Uniting Faith, Medicine and Healthcare*, serves as a marketing/fundraising piece for the Institute; it was revised for a second printing in 2015. Profits from the sale of this book benefit the Institute, not the author herself.

She is a member of the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators, the Texas Association of Authors, Houston Writers Guild, Writers' League of Texas, and the Association of Writers and Writing Programs. Nickell graduated from Baylor University in 1985; she received a Master of Arts degree from Louisiana State University-Shreveport in 2013. She is originally from Shreveport, La., but relocated to Houston in 1998. She and her husband (Kevin Nickell) are foodies and fans of the Houston theater scene; they also enjoy snow skiing and hiking in Colorado whenever possible.

###