

Q: How did you first hear about Winter?

A: In almost all of our stories, we hear or read about these animals in the news or a human interest piece. We now get emails from scores of people anytime an interesting animal story makes the news. Sometimes, as in the case of *Owen & Mzee*, it will be a single picture in the newspaper, and other times it will be a series of articles. We saw a number of stories covering Winter's prosthetic tail in early 2008, and I called David Yates at the Clearwater Marine Aquarium to see if he would be interested in doing a book about Winter.

Q: Why do you think kids and adults are drawn to Winter's story?

A: Winter appeals to people on many different levels. People are very inspired by Winter's resourcefulness and resilience. From her dramatic rescue to the way she learned how to swim first without a tail and then with her new tail, her story shows us that if this little dolphin can overcome her incredible challenges, we can get through our own life challenges as well. Also, the story of the engineers who are challenged to design her prosthetic tail adds an element of the wonders of technology. Winter has become an ambassador to children and grown-ups alike, inspiring people with her story and her exuberant "can do" personality.

Q: Winter began to swim on her own at the Clearwater Marine Aquarium, so why was her health still in danger?

A: The caretakers at the Clearwater Marine Aquarium were afraid her side-to-side motion would damage her backbone and her internal organs.

Q: How did the idea come about to use a prosthetic tail on Winter?

A: Kevin Carroll, an engineer at Hanger Prosthetics and Orthotics, a leading designer of prosthetic devices had heard about Winter in the news. He also loves dolphins. It was a huge engineering challenge that took almost 18 months to implement.

Q: What are some behind-the-scenes facts we might find interesting about Winter?

A: Winter as of right now is on her 7th tail and it is expected that she may need up to 25 or more tails as she grows, and as the engineers keep learning more and improving the technology. Winter is also quite a talented artist. Winter actually signed a book and created a painting for our family.

Q: How does Winter's story fit in with your line of other animal books?

A: This story takes us in a number of very interesting directions. It is our first story about an animal in the United States who people can easily visit. Secondly, it deals with the difficult topic of physical and other disabilities in a way kids can relate to.

Winter's story is helping to de-stigmatize disabilities of all kinds in a natural way. It adds a dimension and a new set of tools for kids, parents, and teachers to deal with difficult subjects or topics.

