

## MEET AUTHORS OF THE ICKY, STICKY, PATCHY MONSTER GREEN SPACE CHILDREN'S BOOK

### ANDREA GRUNY AND ANANDA POON INSPIRATIONS



Co - Author Andrea Gruny

**PASSION AND GOALS:** Andrea is a young and vibrant lady who is passionate about education, creativity and the environment. She is a graduate from the University of the West Indies with a Bachelor Degree in Visual Arts. She is currently pursuing her career in the creative and education industry. Her goal is to incorporate creative and environmental practices in the education system.

**EXPERIENCES:** Andrea explained that each phase of this book was filled with unforgettable experiences, from the visits to the children at the Mayaro and Guayaguayare primary schools to storytelling and illustrating with them in the R2R classrooms.

**INSPIRATIONS:** Her inspiration she expressed "came in many forms throughout the journey of this book, from my interactions with the children telling us their many stories of daily lives in the Mayaro and Guayaguayare environs, to the eco-systems that I existed in the communities. We used the inspiration from community environs, objects, stories that were familiar to the, so that can easily relate to the content."

**MEMORABLE EXPERIENCE:** Andrea shared that her most memorable experience in creating this book was "observing the creativity of the students and hearing their imaginative recounts of their experiences. They were full of life and the possibilities for the story and characters were endless as each child had their story plot." But more so, the children were very eager to learn more about the environment, they were passionate about what they can do to help save the environment and the eco-systems that existed in their space."



**FOCUS AND THEME OF BOOK:** The Icky, Sticky, Patchy Monster is a book centered on the theme of environmental sustainability and ocean conservation, particularly in Mayaro and Guayaguayare. This book highlights one of the major issues that many oceans are facing which is the increase in size and population of garbage islands. Garbage islands are man-made and are formed from the irresponsible disposable of waste that enters into our waterways and is compiled through the movement of the ocean current. These garbage islands can severely affect our marine life and environment if proper sustainable practices are not implemented."

**RELEVANCE OF R2R GREEN SPACE:** Andrea shared that "these books on environmental sustainability are very important to the students. They teach children from a very young age how to treat, respect and protect the environment, eco-systems and themselves. This initiative encourages the creation and placement of these books into the learning spaces where children would have easy access to its environmental content. If these environmentally sustainable practices are developed from an early age, they will be naturally incorporated into their lifestyles which can be very promising to our future. We only have one Earth, and we need to do all that we can to save our home now and for future generations to come."



Co - Author Ananda Poon

**PASSION AND GOALS:** Ananda shared that she is a plant enthusiast, a lover of fruits and veggies, and a student of art and design. She explained that she is “finishing my final year at the University of the West Indies, to obtain a degree in the Visual Arts and Design. In the future, I hope to have a sustainable business and practice which includes the visual arts and food. I also dream of operating in a space where individuals can find peace and fun in a wholesome, holistic environment.”

**INSPIRATION:** As cheesy as this sounds, the inspiration for Icky Sticky came from the sense of community and the great kids that we interacted with on our visits to the schools in both Mayaro and Guayaguayare. I hope this program has inspired them just as much as it has inspired me.”

Also, Ananda was inspired from “hearing about adventures at home, vegetable gardens and the love of the beach. These wonderful kids and their imaginations are what really helped to influence the story.”

**EXPERIENCES:** Ananda expressed how the book evolved and shared student’s initial idea. “Initially they wanted to read a scary story about a monster, but after delving in and going through drafts and drafts of the story, I didn’t want the monster to be a manifestation of the environment, after all, animals are not the ones that are littering. So instead it is the community littering but it’s also the community acknowledging how their actions

are having an impact on the environment, when over time marine life like Franky are threatened.”

**AUTHENTICITY:** She reinforced the importance of relatable stories. “To me, it was important to choose species such as fish that were indigenous to the areas of Mayaro and Guayaguayare, after all we were writing about their communities!” I chose the Red Snapper, big Barracudas and tiny Anchovies as characters that were involved and experiencing the effects of pollution first hand.



**THEME OF BOOK:** The Icky Sticky Patchy Monster is a story about our marine environment, and the importance of responsible consumption and production. No matter who you are from top industrial companies to persons like you and me, the story tells us that our actions have an impact on our natural environment.

**RELEVANCE OF R2R GREEN SPACE:** Ananda expressed that “there has never been a more urgent time to speak out about the importance of our environment. The Read to Rise Green Space program has allowed me the opportunity to send this message to students through an avenue of creativity and learning. I think it is important to

have avenues such as this to teach as much individuals as possible about this big not so green space that we live in.”

## **ACCORDING TO THE CREATOR OR GREEN SPACE BOOKS AND PUBLISHER – BRIDGE FOUNDATION**

R2R Green Space programme is a powerful environmental advocacy strategy using children’s books as “community building tools” to engage children and their parents about their environment and to develop practical strategies to improve their environment where they live.

Anthea McLaughlin, Bridge Foundation

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Special Appreciation to Past UWI – DCFA Programme Coordinator, Keith Cadette and Adjunct Instructor, Adele Todd