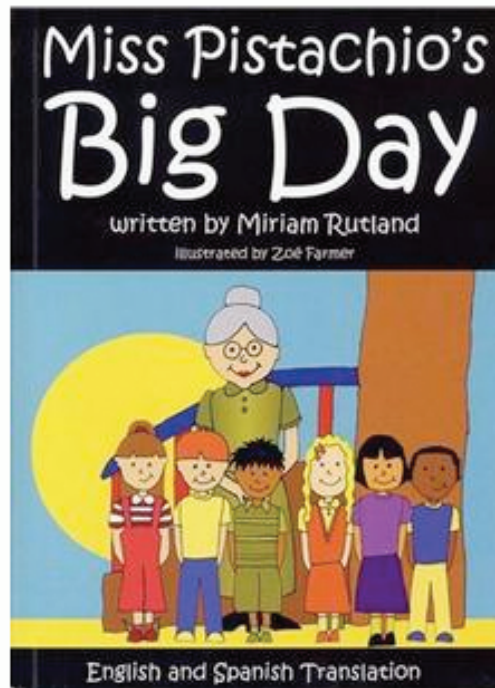


## Local Author: Life proves inspiration for author

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Miriam Rutland Miss Pistachio's Big Day

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"Miss Pistachio's Big Day" by Miriam Rutland celebrates education based on the author's experiences teaching kindergarten and elementary students for 18 years.

The children's book centers around Miss Pistachio, a Mary Poppins-esque kindergarten teacher, as she prepares for her first day of school.

"People have no idea how much preparation goes behind the first day of school," said Rutland. "There's bulletin boards that have to be colorful and bright, labeling desks, children's personal belongings, setting up learning centers; I could work three weeks for 24 hours and still not feel fully prepared."

Rutland, a former Port St. Lucie resident, teaches first-graders at Miami Country Day School. Her inspiration comes from teachers she has worked with — including two kindergarten teachers from Francis K. Sweet Magnet School in Fort Pierce — and her grandmother.

Rutland wrote "Miss Pistachio's Big Day" (Empire Publishing Service, \$14) after being diagnosed with breast cancer two weeks after Sept. 11, 2001. She credits the life-altering experience as the motivation to write children's books.

"It was time to do those things I wanted to do," said Rutland.

Her book is available at Borders in the Treasure Coast Square mall, and Barnes & Noble bookstores, and can be ordered through her Web site, [www.misspistachio.com](http://www.misspistachio.com).