

Sahar Simmons, Childrens
Book Author

Sahar Simmons, author Briana's Neighborhood



“There weren't enough images of little Black girls that were living real life scenarios,” according to, Sahar Simmons, a Hampton University graduate, with a degree in Mass Communications. In the series, Simmons created a positive and lovable character, perfect for commercial usage, that focuses in on the undistorted multicultural experience from the perspective of an African American little girl. “Briana lives in a household comprised of the wisdom of three generations, together with her mother and grandmother. Her mother is a successful career woman, and her grandmother is full of common sense and sagacity,” describes Simmons. Briana's background mirrors Simmon's own; a product of divorce whose attentive parents, though apart joined forces to encourage education and fierce determination. Like her character, Simmons also grew up in New York in



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an extended family unit, a common occurrence in African American households. Simmon's mother was an English professor and is now a personal trainer; her father is an Oncology sales specialist, who aids doctors with remedies for Cancer patients. Simmon's stepfather, a pharmaceutical specialist who has been a positive influence in the life of Simmon's and her equally successful younger sister (an engineer) for two decades, also extended a prominent presence.

In precocious Simmons, readers will discover a marketable personality who will steal the hearts of editors, television, radio audiences, and readers with the enthusiasm over the character and tales that parallel her own girl life. In the near future, Simmons is also gearing up for a launching of a nonprofit organization and the development of Briana's brand of educational games and products. Simmons has penned the first book and series of the new Millennium which captures the life of an African American lass.

Why did you first write : Briana 's Neighborhood Children's Book Series ?

I have been writing for as long as I can remember. It started as a child with creative poems and short stories to journal writing. It pretty much escalated from there on. I created, Briana 's Neighborhood series about seven years ago because there was and still is a void within the literary world for young girls of color to be able to identify with an image that looked just like them. I also wanted Briana 's story lines to be a voice for young girls that would be relatable through their every day experiences.

Why did you decide upon this topic verses another? Will you continue to write on this topic, if so why?

The beauty about Briana is that she is a real life image for all females. There is not one topic or situation in any of her stories that a female can not identify with. We experience topics such as peer pressure, puberty, death and divorce to name a few at one time or another. My goal is for little girls to be able to grow with Briana as she grows. I will definitely continue to write about experiences that will educate children. Each story will be enjoyable but you will always learn something at the end.

Why did you choose the name" : Briana 's Neighborhood Children's Book Series "? Does this name have any significant meaning?

I have always loved the name Briana . I thought it would also be a catchy name for the series and products to come.



How is your book and you as an artist unique or different than others?

Briana 's Neighborhood will continue to be an on going series. I do not have a final number of books for Briana . As long as there are topics that are relatable, I will continue to write. So far I have written about eight books and as Briana continues to grow within the community, I will write about more specific topics.

I feel like I have created a series for readers that truly enjoy to read but I have also added beautiful and vibrant illustrations to go along with the story line. Briana is very trendy and the setting is based in New York City but she travels to various places depending on the story line.

As an artist, I am extremely creating and have a background in performing arts. A lot of Briana is pulled from my own dramatic childhood experiences.

What community involvement responsibility do authors have?

I think as an author we have a responsibility to be a voice. It is up to us to influence the masses.

What type of person reads : Briana 's Neighborhood Children's Book Series ?

Briana 's Neighborhood is geared towards girls between the ages of 6 to 10 years. However little boys will enjoy certain storylines as well. I currently have adults that love Briana because she is smart and sassy and the illustrations are amazing. The overall appearance of the book was so important to me because I wanted to grab the readers attention. Every book will have the same attraction. Briana is for anyone who loves to read and loves illustrations. I think when people start to

read and get to know Briana , she becomes much more than a story book character.



Upcoming events: Why? What should customers expect?

So far I have co-partnered with Chick-fil-A for "Kids Night @ Chick-fil-A with Briana . It was an amazing turn out that consisted of games, dancing, a book reading and signing. I have also done several book readings with the GA libraries and will do several more with the GA Public Schools in the fall. On Aug. 4th, Briana will kick off a back to school event with the Ludacris Foundation. In the fall, I am heading to the west coast for a two week back to school road trip. It is all about promoting literacy and building the Briana brand. Customers should expect on-going books that are fun, educational and luring kids to be excited about reading. In addition, stay tuned for a Briana product line that includes, educational games, music, an interactive website, dolls and an animated cartoon.

What should readers expect in the years to come?

Briana 's readers should expect to learn and be influenced in a positive way. They should also expect a Briana Brand that becomes a household name.

What else do you want your readers to know?

A lot of Briana is taken from my childhood experiences so the audience is getting a true piece of me! I will always keep it interesting.

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