

PRESS RELEASE

SALINE, MI, March 20, 2015 –(PR.com)—The first time Claudia Whitsitt was asked to write a book that her students could read, she knew she would one day make their dream come true. Claudia had written four books at that time, all adult mystery suspense novels. But an idea immediately took hold.

Never one to miss a teaching moment, Claudia thought about the lessons she would impart in such a novel. Having taught historical fiction for years, she also realized that she was old enough to write her own historical fiction, and decided to set her story around the racially-charged aftermath of the 1967 Detroit Riots.

Claudia retired from teaching two years after being asked to write a middle grade novel. That November, she sat down at the computer and took part in NaNoWriMo, the write a novel in a month competition. At the end of the month, the novel was drafted.

One of the most unique parts of Claudia's process was her involvement of students. She visited the classroom frequently, talking with students about character development, sharing her charts and ideas with them, and even introducing them to the people she modeled the characters after. Many afternoons were spent engaging students in the writing process. Claudia has continued those visits throughout her retirement, and finds the time spent as rewarding and inspiring for her as for the students.

Her novel, *Between the Lines*, tells the story of three girls who become friends during the racially-charged aftermath of the 1967 Detroit Riots.

Hattie Percha is crushed when the riots start on her tenth birthday, and when she must move away from her treasured childhood home and friends, attending public school for the first time, she's afraid her life is over. Then, she meets Beverly Jo Nichols, her first black friend, and Crackers, a fearless tomboy. Despite opposition from Hattie's mother and a racist teacher, the unlikely friends join forces. As the self-proclaimed Dream Girls, they challenge bigotry and intolerance, willing to do whatever it takes to hold onto what's most precious to them all, their friendship.

March 20, 2015 is the release date. A launch party will be given by the students at Heritage Elementary School in Saline, MI, Wednesday, March 25, 2015 from 6-8PM.

All are welcome!