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## Author Jeanne Bender draws on her travel experience, including to St. Louis, in Lindie Lou children's adventure book series

The series offers a dog's-eye-view of the world.

BY KATIE POWERS NOVEMBER 2, 2021 7:00 AM



Author  
Jeanne Bender

[lindielou.com](http://lindielou.com)

Avid traveler Jeanne Bender answers the phone from Barcelona, energized after spending the day at the Sagrada Familia and Park Güell and set to embark on a cruise ship to the Canary Islands a day later.

"The adventures of author Jeanne Bender and Lindie Lou continue," she says with a laugh.

Bender's affinity for writing developed during childhood, so it felt natural for her to document her travel experiences and stories as an adult. Friends and family who engaged with her writing suggested that she write proper travel stories, given her capability to do so and how widely she'd traveled. Although she had retired, after a successful real estate career in Beverly Hills, she had an idea.

"I have this creative side of me that thinks travel stories might be a little dry," she says. "I don't want to write a book about going here and going there, so I decided to write my travel stories over my shoulders and through the eyes of Lindie Lou, my puppy."

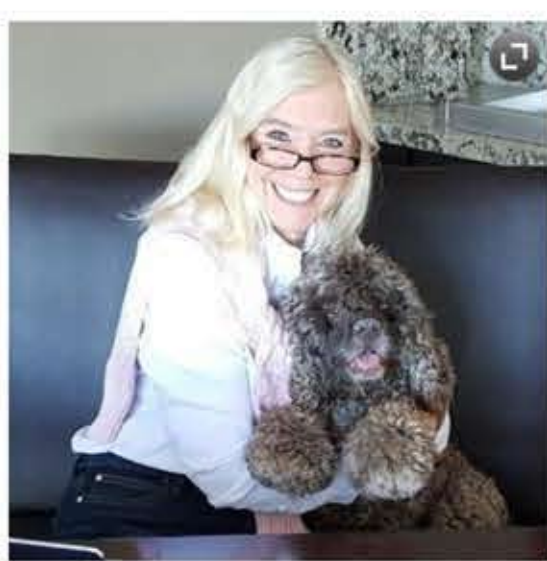


IMAGE COURTESY OF JEANNE BENDER

After deciding to write the series geared toward a second- and third-grade reading level, she enlisted the help of her sister, a school librarian with a master's degree in education. They worked with a group of teachers to provide insights into what these young students are learning. From the experience, she also decided to include educational materials, which are featured in the books and on the [Lindie Lou website](http://lindielou.com).

Bender describes the books as "a bridge between picture books and first chapter books," complete with large fonts and colorful illustrations by illustrator Kate Willows. Bender cares deeply about literacy because of her own struggles with reading as a child. She remembers looking at chapter books and thinking, *This is kind of intimidating to me*, and wondering, *How do I imagine things when they're just words?* Each book in the series aims to provide an entertaining, accessible story that engages with relevant learning material centered around a new city or place in the world.

"I visit the areas that I write about, I write about them realistically, and it makes the children want to go to those places," Bender says.

Bender chose St. Louis as the primary setting of *Flying High: Flying on an Airplane for the Very First Time*, the series' first book, to pay homage to Missouri, the birthplace of her dog. Before writing the book, she visited St. Louis to research the area and ensure the authenticity of the city's description. During that first visit, she spent a week exploring as much of the city as she could, seeing the Missouri Botanical Garden, the Arch, Forest Park, City Museum—which features prominently in the book—and more.

Throughout the first book, Lindie Lou and her puppy siblings go on adventures and overcome their fears while exploring the city and eventually traveling to new places after being adopted. By the end of the first book, Lindie Lou takes her initial plane ride to Seattle to meet her new caregiver, which is also based on the real-life story of Bender and Lindie Lou. The second book in the series, *Up in Space: An Adventure at the Space Needle*, takes place in Seattle, one of the cities Bender has spent a lot of time living in.

Lindie Lou's third adventure, *Harvest Time: A Celebration on an Organic Farm*, is based on time that Bender spent at her friend's organic farm in Iowa, where Black Angus cows grazed and soybeans were harvested. *Big City Magic: Uncover the Secret of the Big Apple* takes Lindie Lou to New York City, and the most recent book in the series, *On Ice: Exploring the Arctic with a Polar Bear Cub*, tackles the Arctic, where Bender has hiked on top of a glacier, explored an ice cave beneath a volcano in Iceland, and searched for polar bears in Greenland.

Currently researching for the sixth book, Bender and her publisher, [Pina Publishing](http://PinaPublishing.com), plan to cap the series at 12 books, with each book corresponding to a month of the year. Without spoiling too much of her work in progress, Bender says the next book will be set around New Year's Eve and prominently feature a character on the autistic spectrum, which she's been diligently researching.

The positive feedback from students, teachers, and educators has made it all worthwhile for Bender. "I came back from retirement because I have this need to help children who struggle like I did when I was their age with trying to learn how to read chapter books and have these books be so much fun."

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**Lindie Lou**  
Adventure Series



TRAVEL THE GLOBE WITH LINDIE LOU!

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