

Author Annie Agarwal's New Picture Book 'The Magic of Diwali with Saara' Brings the Joy of Diwali to Young Readers

Author Annie Agarwal shares the why behind celebrating Diwali, reminding children that every new beginning is possible.

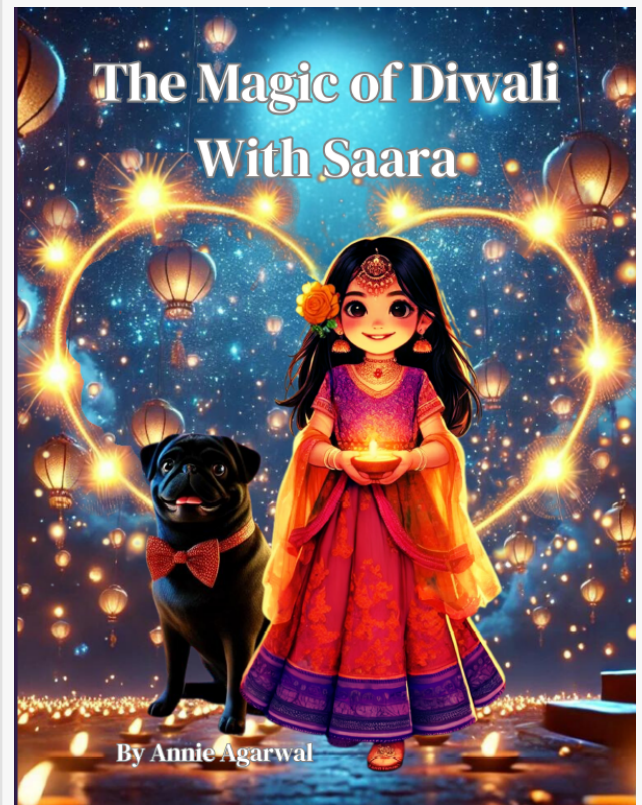
BROOMFIELD, CO, UNITED STATES, October 16, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Amid the pumpkins, ghosts, and turkeys filling fall bookshelves, The Children's Book Review is excited to share something different, "[The Magic of Diwali with Saara](#)." This new children's book from Author Annie Agarwal shines a light on the inclusion, empathy, and joy of Diwali, one of the world's largest celebrations.

When curious Saara wakes up to a home sparkling with lights and sweet treats, she is brimming with questions. Her family gently guides her through the meaning of Diwali and traditions like lighting diyas, making rangoli, sharing treats, and celebrating together.

As Saara listens, she begins to understand why we celebrate. She is reminded that Diwali is not only about choosing light over darkness, but also about the love, joy, courage, and hope that live within and inspire countless new beginnings.

"Diwali is one of the world's largest celebrations, yet it's rarely visible on seasonal bookshelves here," says Agarwal. "I wanted to create a story that children could truly connect with—whether they're celebrating at home or discovering it for the first time in school. Every child deserves to see their light reflected in a story."

Known as the Festival of Lights, Diwali is celebrated on October 20, 2025. More than one billion people globally participate in this joyful and unifying celebration, according to NPR and Statista. In the United States alone, over 5.4 million South Asians embrace Diwali, per SAALT (South Asian



The Magic of Diwali with Saara

Americans Leading Together), and it has become increasingly visible in schools, workplaces, and civic spaces across the U.S., U.K., and Canada.

However, while schools, civic spaces, and families aim to learn more, store bookshelves, libraries, and classroom reading lists remain virtually silent about Diwali.

This gap is particularly striking as recognition of Diwali reaches new milestones. On October 7, 2025, California became the third U.S. state to designate Diwali as an official statewide holiday when Governor Gavin Newsom signed AB 268 into law, following Pennsylvania and Connecticut. The legislation, which takes effect January 1, 2026, allows public schools to close on Diwali and gives state employees the option to take the day off with pay—a significant step for California's nearly 960,000 Indian Americans, representing 20% of the nation's Indian population.



Author Annie Agarwal

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Annie Agarwal

California Assembly member Ash Kalra, who co-authored the bill, captured the importance of this moment: "To have South Asian children be able to proudly celebrate and share it with others is a significant moment." Kalra noted that while he grew up celebrating Diwali with family, "it was an experience that was isolated from the rest of his life."

"Despite being one of the world's most celebrated holidays, it remains underrepresented in children's literature," continues Agarwal. "This absence points to a

larger issue – while Asian and South Asian children represent one of the fastest-growing communities in North America and the U.K., they remain one of the most underrepresented voices. As public policy evolves to recognize Diwali, we need stories that help children understand and celebrate this festival not just in their homes, but in their schools and communities."

"The Magic of Diwali with Saara" aims to bridge this gap, revealing the deeper meaning of love, joy, hope, and renewal that Diwali represents. Through Saara's eyes and with interactive activities

like coloring rangoli art and crafting paper lanterns, the book gives parents, teachers, and community leaders accessible tools to bring cultural inclusion to children's spaces—tools that are increasingly relevant as more schools gain the opportunity to observe Diwali.

Perhaps most importantly, young readers see a South Asian child at the center of her own joyful story. Children from the South Asian diaspora see themselves reflected, celebrated, and enjoying their tradition, while children from other backgrounds experience the beauty of cultural storytelling.

"Representation isn't just about inclusion," says Agarwal. "It's also about reflection, when a child can look at a page and whisper, 'That's me!' As states like California, Pennsylvania, and Connecticut recognize Diwali officially, children need books that help them share their traditions with pride and help their peers understand why this celebration matters."

The book has received multiple five-star reviews from verified parents and educators, praising its message, illustrations, and classroom appeal. The story naturally introduces culture without overwhelming context or requiring translation, and it connects easily to hands-on experiences to deepen an understanding of Diwali.

"Representation in children's literature is vital," says Nadia Younes, a global diversity, equity, and inclusion leader and public speaker. "It helps children of all walks of life to see themselves in the stories they read, giving them confidence to embrace their uniqueness and value the diversity of the world we live in."

To celebrate Diwali, Agarwal will host fall cultural programs and Diwali-themed storytimes at schools and public events. Her interactive read-alouds include activities such as rangoli coloring, lighting LED diyas, and tasting traditional sweets. Virtual story sessions and classroom visits are also offered by request.

"The Magic of Diwali with Saara" is available in both soft and hardcover. It can be purchased on Amazon, BookBaby, and Barnes & Noble. A portion of the proceeds from each Diwali season supports children's charities.

For more information or to schedule an interview, please [contact the author directly](#).

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Annie Agarwal is a children's author and community storyteller who creates joyful, representation-rich books that inspire connection and empathy. She hosts Diwali storytimes in schools, libraries, and bookstores, where children learn through play, like lighting safe LED diyas, coloring rangoli art, and tasting kid-friendly treats that bring culture to life. Her debut picture book, "The Magic of Diwali with Saara," grew from those experiences and from a heartfelt promise to her daughter: to make Diwali as visible on bookshelves as any other fall celebration.

Every Diwali season, Annie donates a portion of her book's proceeds to children's charities. In 2024, St. Jude Children's Research Hospital was the recipient, reflecting her belief that celebration and compassion belong together. She continues to write new stories that nurture curiosity, belonging, and wonder, carrying forward her dream of helping all children see themselves in the light of storytelling. For more information, visit <https://annieagarwalauthor.com/> and [@annieagarwalauthor on Instagram](#).

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