

New Children's Book Wizzy the Worldly Tree Helps Kids Explore Culture, Curiosity and Belonging

Author and educator Jalpa Vaidya Patel introduces a joyful new approach to cultural curiosity, helping children understand that every family has a story

LOS ANGELES, CA, UNITED STATES, September 3, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- At a time when conversations about culture, identity, and belonging can feel increasingly complicated, author, educator, and social worker Jalpa Vaidya Patel is offering families and schools a simpler place to begin: curiosity.

“

Kids are coming to school questioning, ‘Do I belong? Do my parents belong?’”

Patel says. “And this is the answer: Yes, you do.

Everybody has a different story on how they came to this land.”

Jalpa Vaidya Patel

Her new children's book, *Wizzy the Worldly Tree*, introduces young readers to the idea that while every family has a different story of where they come from, those stories are connected by something universal: everyone belongs.

“Everybody has a family story, and everyone belongs,”

Patel says.

The message grew from a lesson Patel taught her own children.

Drawing on her background in social work and Native American Studies, Patel wanted her children to understand that Indigenous peoples were the first caretakers of the land and that, over generations, families arrived carrying their own cultures, histories, and stories. Rather than beginning with what makes people different, she encouraged her children to become curious about how everyone came to be here.

That became the foundation for *Wizzy the Worldly Tree*.

A Different Way to Teach

As a former school social worker, Patel believes diversity education often begins with an

important message: everyone is different, and those differences should be celebrated.

But she believes another lesson should come first.

“There’s a lesson that needs to happen before that, that teaches us that we’re all interconnected through the stories of the land,” Patel says. “Wizzy is the first lesson in diversity education.”

Through an accessible story and whimsical, bohemian-inspired illustrations, Wizzy the Worldly Tree encourages children to ask questions about their own family histories and those of their friends. By the final page, she hopes they are turning to their parents and asking: “Where is our family from?”

The question creates an opportunity for parents and educators to introduce culture and heritage without making the conversation feel intimidating or overly complicated.

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From a Lesson at Home to a Bigger Purpose

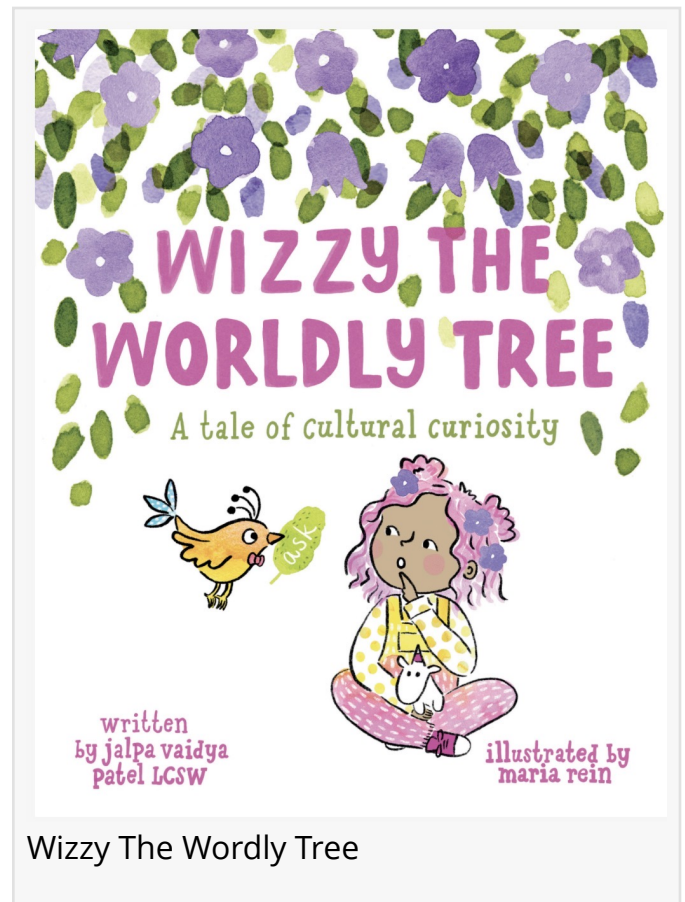
The book came unexpectedly while Patel was traveling abroad after a couple asked how to teach children about culture. After sharing the lesson she had taught her own children, Patel woke up the next morning and wrote the story on her phone.

Patel connected with illustrator Maria Rein and Deepika Sandhu, founder of Soul Sparks Press, to bring the book to life.

“This is bigger than me,” Patel says. “This was made for a bigger purpose.”

Originally titled The Wise Old Tree, the story evolved into Wizzy the Worldly Tree as Patel sought a more joyful way to share its message with children. Patel’s children began singing their own “Wizzy the Worldly” tune, a jingle that has since become part of the book’s growing identity.

Bringing Cultural Curiosity Into Schools



Wizzy The Wordly Tree

Patel's vision extends beyond the bookshelf. She is developing Wizzy the Worldly Tree as a resource for parents, teachers, and schools looking for an approachable way to introduce conversations about culture and belonging. Patel has also shared the concept in the news and begun meeting with school, education, and conference leaders about her companion workshop, "Inspiring Cultural Curiosity with Wizzy as an Anchor," designed to help educators bring the book's underlying lesson into the classroom.

Ultimately, Patel hopes Wizzy the Worldly Tree reaches classrooms, homes, and communities nationwide, helping children become curious about one another and understand that belonging is not reserved for any one group. It belongs to everyone.

Wizzy the Worldly Tree is available on Amazon.

For more information about Jalpa Patel, Wizzy the Worldly Tree, speaking engagements, or the "Inspiring Cultural Curiosity with Wizzy as an Anchor" workshop, visit www.wizzysways.com.

About Jalpa Patel

Jalpa Patel is an author, educator, and social worker whose work centers on cultural curiosity and belonging. Drawing on her background in social work, Native American Studies, and years as a school social worker, she created Wizzy the Worldly Tree as an accessible starting point for conversations about culture, family heritage, and the interconnected stories that shape our communities.

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