

SUCCESS STORY
BLACK HISTORY MONTH

PETOS JOURNEY

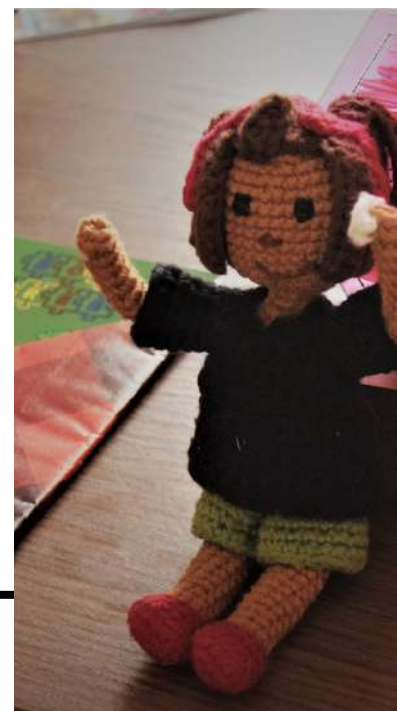
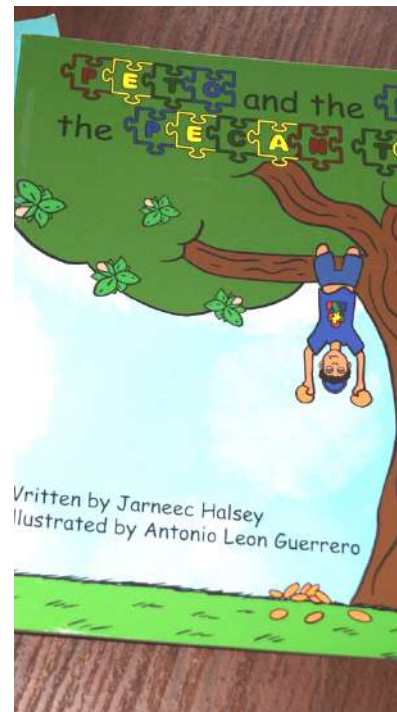
By: Faith Antol, PISBDCN Network Program
Associate
February 2023

In celebration of Black History Month, we peek into a Guam small business owner success story – Ms. Jarneec Halsey. Ms. Halsey was born and raised in Columbia, South Carolina. She is the daughter of Tonia Johnson and Calvin Hall. She has a twin sister and four (4) younger brothers. She is the proud wife to Joseph Halsey, Jr., as she described in her words as “a dashing military serviceman who I adore more than words can express” and a beautiful mother to Nat, a “loving, smart, and animated” young man. Ms. Halsey shares a great love with cultures, people, and language. On her days off, she enjoys watching K-dramas with her fur baby named Snow.

In 2017, Ms. Halsey found herself in the hospital room watching her brother taking his last breath.

She said, *“I remember the thinness of his hands and the bones seen in his face that his death was God’s grace. My faith in Jesus Christ allowed me to turn the grief of losing my younger brother into a story that would inspire hope.”* She wrote a note in her phone as a story document and drew a watercolor drawing on printer paper. After writing Peto’s story, she placed the photo on a shelf. She said, *“A year later, I was sitting in my living room. I noticed the photo still sitting there and I felt like God was telling me it cannot do anything sitting on a shelf. That’s when I decided to take a leap of faith. If Peto’s story could inspire one person with hope, laughter, love, and joy then it’s worth it. Sharing his story is worth it.”*

Ms. Halsey is the publisher of a children’s book called



Petos Journey. The book is about her brother, Peto, who died from sickle cell anemia. It was created to tell his story and educate kids about the disease. She has been successful in selling these books on her website, and a portion of her sales goes to non-profits for youth and other medical related organizations. As part of her outreach, she contacts hospitals across the US to get her book in gift shops or to share a portion of the funds with. Ms. Halsey has been able to overcome some challenges throughout her start-up process to which included her gaining knowledge of writing and publishing a book, building a strong trust and foundation by herself and with the support from her family, and being resourceful whenever experiencing a steady stream of dead ends. She was able to celebrate memorable triumphs along the way.



During the interview, Ms. Halsey said, *"I had a lot of "YES" moments, but I believe finally figuring out how to work InDesign to format my book was a moment that I remember crying about. This challenge frustrated me for days because I had a mind frame that it would be easy but it was such a hard battle. I had to remind myself that I never did anything like this before and I can't expect perfection from the lack of knowledge. You can imagine my enjoyment when I was able to send my 1st book to our printer (Trevett's Printing in Columbia, South Carolina). Once the books were printed and sent to us, I cried. All the tears, grief, and hardship were worth it."* From no experience in starting up a business to being a successful owner of a self-publishing book that serves a great purpose in education, Ms. Halsey is a true definition of a success. She mentioned in the



interview, *"I have zero experience in running, owning, or knowing anything about operating a business. I started everything from the bottom. I was so confused on where to start, and I have made many mistakes getting to where I am now. I wish I knew about SBDC when I first started and I would have had a better foundation but I am so grateful now. I was able to go to free business classes to find more resources for my specific business. I am still learning and of course it can be overwhelming but knowing I have this foundation to guide me is really comforting."*

By planning ahead, Ms. Halsey noted a few short and long term goals. She is optimistic about locating



funding to continue her goals of raising money for 1,000 Peto books to send across America. She started a campaign called “Peto’s Journey Across America” in 2021 where she wanted to donate 1,000 copies of her first book, “Peto, the boy with the C shaped blood”, to hospitals, schools, and libraries across all 50 states. She desires to establish this as a non-profit section of Petos Journey. She has had great success so far and she notes that there is more work to do until the goal is reached. She has donated copies in regular print and braille to 28 schools here on Guam and various hospitals stateside. She wishes to ensure that kids have access to books that teach them how to build connections with people who are different from them; as well as teach them how to become true friends. Ms. Halsey also plans to set-up a workshop called “We Can Be...” This will teach and encourage kids to write their own children’s books and will allow for them to pair with other students who love to draw. In the long-term, Ms. Halsey plans on releasing four (4) more books. She stated that these books will “... highlight other illnesses, disorders, or unfortunate things. And after, we introduce each character’s spin off to dig deeper into their own personal story.” She also plans on building a team that will help her navigate the non-profits, as

well as finding other clients who want to publish their own books. Additionally, she looks forward to expanding her business to include animated series, comics, Peto dolls, and merchandise for kids and parents to enjoy.

During the interview with Guam SBDC, she was asked, “*what advice would you give to others who want to start a business at this time?*”

Ms. Halsey replied, “*Don’t let the hardship of the start determine how you finish. The reason why you start anything is enough. My reason will always be to spread awareness about Sickle Cell Anemia and other illnesses that are often misunderstood. Your journey to grow your business may be different from others but it’s still your own personal journey. Remember that even though Peto’s blood cells were shaped like a C, it was his heart that changed the world.*”

Business Name: Petos Journey, LLC.

Owner(s): Jarneec Halsey

Type of Business: Self-Publishing/ Publisher

Location: Dededo, Guam

Hours of Operation: 9am-5pm (Monday-Friday)

Contact information:

Email:

Petosjourney@gmail.com

Phone: 671-989-8985