

Autistic author tackles disability

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Sun Media

In most respects, Alexandre Lynch is every bit a normal kid. He's fond of his dog, loves to snowboard and shows a little shyness around adults.

But such normalcy hides something remarkable.

The 11-year-old has recently become one of Edmonton's youngest published authors – a feat obtained despite his daily struggle with Asperger's syndrome, a mild form of autism that can sometimes make school and socializing difficult.

My Goldfish Ate My Cat, a short children's tale about a fish who yearns to season and devour a feline, was officially released April 19 at NAIT's annual Literacy and Learning Day. Since then, the book has sold 80 copies, with some of those going to buyers from the U.S., New Zealand and Germany. In the process, the bilingual Alexandre has

become a sort of minor celebrity, appearing on CBC's *Le Telejournal* and Radio-Canada.

"It's pretty cool," he said, a smile spreading across his face.

The book originally started as a school project last year when Alexandre was asked to write a story about something weird.

"For me, writing is very hard and reading and math are easy."

Alexandre Lynch,
11-year-old author

Choosing to invert the traditional cat-mouse relationship because it made him laugh, he completed the story in one sitting with the help of an assistant.

Once done, the finished work greatly impressed Chantal Lynch, Alexandre's mom and also an author.

"When she saw what I had written, she thought it would be good and we could turn it into a book," said Alexandre.

But getting the story published turned out to be a bit more work than writing it. Chantal and her son had to line up an editor, track down an illustrator and get hold of a reasonably cheap printer. All told, the first run of 1,000 books cost over \$3,000.

Though Chantal would like to get her money back, a certain amount of benevolence lies at the heart of the project – \$1 from each copy sold will be donated to the Edmonton Autism Society.

Because he has Asperger's syndrome, Alexandre has had frequent dealings with the group.

"It can make you disabled with things," he said of his condition. "For me, writing is very hard and reading and math are easy."

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JORDAN VERLAGE/SUN MEDIA

Alexandre Lynch flips through the book he wrote, *My Goldfish Ate My Cat*, in his home. Alexandre, who has a mild form of autism, is donating \$1 from the sale of each book to the Edmonton Autism Society.

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