



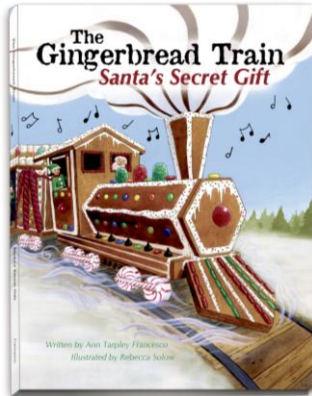
**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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## *The Gingerbread Train* destined to be a holiday classic

*The first in a series of children's books inspires imaginations, reading, baking, learning and more!*



**Concord, NC** - *The Gingerbread Train – Santa's Secret Gift* children's book and baking gift set by author, Ann Tarpley Francesco, was 13 years in the making. Inspired by Francesco's love of baking and teaching, combined with her son, Matthew, and his love of trains as a young child, she originally wrote a short story introducing *The Gingerbread Train* as a Christmas gift to her son when he was in first grade. Building a gingerbread train with Matthew and Courtney, her daughter, as a family activity when they were young continued to inspire the possibilities for the story and her idea to evolve it into something magical.

Over the years, she enjoyed life as a stay-at-home mother, elementary school teacher, college admissions counselor, and personal chef. All of these passions combined gave her the vision for what *The Gingerbread Train* could be. With her children now grown, Francesco knew she had something more than a story to share, and decided it was now or never.

### **About the Author**

Ann Tarpley Francesco developed an interest in writing before the age of ten. She started out writing rhyming poetry for family members, given as birthday presents, anniversary gifts, and for other special occasions. Francesco attended Radford University in Radford, Virginia, where she earned her teaching certification for early childhood and middle education. Ann also earned a B.A. in business administration at Lynchburg College in Lynchburg, Virginia. Two lesson plans she developed were included in teacher resource books entitled, "Sweet Numbers" (Learn Every Day About Numbers, Gryphon House Books) and "Yummy Colors" (Learn Every Day About Colors, Gryphon House Books). Her writing continued to serve her well as a college admissions counselor at Lynchburg College and as a fifth- grade elementary school teacher in Stafford County, Virginia. Ann's love of education continued in a different capacity after moving to North Carolina, where she worked as a classroom presenter for King's College in Charlotte, NC, and later owned and operated a tutoring franchise, and then a personal chef business. Both Matthew and Courtney were the inspiration behind the two lead characters in the book as well. In her spare time, she enjoys playing tennis, yoga, working out at the gym, traveling, cooking, and

creating unique sugar scrubs and body butters. She is an impassioned advocate of healthy living and an active lifestyle.

### **About the Book**

*The Gingerbread Train - Santa's Secret Gift* is the first in a series of children's books and baking gift sets featuring the characters Matthew and Courtney, and author, Ann Tarpley Francesco's personal recipes. The Gingerbread Train will make stops at all popular holidays for a collectible series of stories. Each baking gift set will feature a cookie cutter of a different part of a train. In the works are manuscripts focused on Easter and Halloween. Timing of their release is still being finalized. Also of note is the fact that everything is Made-in-the-USA, something that was important to Francesco. A specialty U.S. manufacturer of cookie cutters developed the mold based on the illustrated Gingerbread Train locomotive. The website, [www.thegingerbreadtrain.com](http://www.thegingerbreadtrain.com), features Tarpley's recipes, activities for family, and will be offering lesson plans based on the book for teachers of grades K-5. The book is currently available for purchase on Amazon ([www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)), and directly from the publisher at [www.thegingerbreadtrain.com](http://www.thegingerbreadtrain.com).

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