

JULIE HOLMES CHALPAN AUTOGRAPHS HER FIRST BOOK

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Buchanan native Julie Holmes Chalpan was back in her hometown last weekend to autograph copies of her first book, "Titan's Tales ... and Other Dog Adoption Love Stories", at the Buchanan Art Center and the Union Coffee House.

Chalpan is a 1981 Buchanan High School graduate and the daughter of Don and Roma Holmes. She graduated from the University of Georgia and has spent most of her adult life living in Georgia and South Carolina. She has her own public relations firm and her husband, Keith, is a graphics designer.

This book combines two of her loves: her love of writing and her love of animals. She actually got her start in writing right here at the Berrien County Record when she

was in high school and her father was the publisher.

Chalpan got the idea for this book about a year and a half ago when she wanted to write down stories about their dog, Titan, who was over 13 years old at the time. She



Julie, her parents, Roma Holmes and Don Holmes, and her sister, Bonnie Chadderdon.

then started thinking about the fact that he had been a shelter dog and wondered if other people were out there who had adopted a shelter dog and had stories of their own.

"I got the word out on Facebook that I was looking for anyone with a dog adoption story," she said. "I did a questionnaire that I sent around to people and some gave short answers and some long ones. The theme was shelter dogs getting a second chance and how the people rescued them ... Who doesn't love a dog?"

The result was perhaps even a little surprising to Chalpan as she seemed to strike a chord with people. She got nearly 40 responses from people all over the country including several from current and former Buchananites. "I ended up with seven stories from people here or who had lived here," she said.

Since publishing the book this

year, she's heard even more stories and expects she'll end up writing a second volume and maybe even including a few stories of rescued cats. "I keep hearing all these stories when I have book signings, I've got more than enough for another book," she said. "It's so neat to hear everyone's story."

While she's written children's stories before that she ended up publishing online coloring storybooks free on the Internet a decade or so ago, this is her first effort at a full length book and she's loving it. "This is my first book, it's really fun," she said.

As for Titan's story, she said she and her husband were looking for a girl dog and one that was a beagle mix. When they went to the shelter, they ended up falling in love with Titan who is a male and more

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years ago Halloween and Titan was about two years old.

The book, which sells for \$14 retail, is available at three locations in the Buchanan and Niles area as well as the the Humane Society of Southwestern Michigan in Benton Harbor. The local outlets are the Buchanan Art Center and the Union Coffee House in Buchanan and Your Kitchen Connection in Niles.

Chalpan said that actually most of her book signings both here and in South Carolina have been in non bookstore settings, often in small shops and even in animal shelters. She's working right now to have the book be in national chains like Pet Smart or Barnes & Noble.

"Sometimes I do book signings in connection with adoption events," she said. "For me, the best thing to hear is that reading the book really makes people want to adopt a dog."

Wherever she goes for book signings, she makes sure that some of the proceeds go to benefit local animal shelters and national organizations. Here, part of the proceeds

go to the Humane Society and a portion of all internet sales goes to the national organization, "Helping Animals Needing Doctors."

On the web: www.titanstales.com.



Julie Chalpan signing books at the art center last Friday: from Left: Helen Jackson, Marie Remington with "Subito", Janis Sexton, Janice Hamilton and Mary Ann Blake.