

My name is Barbara deRubertis, and I am the author of *Count on Pablo*. I want to tell you about how I came to write this book, but first I want to tell you a little about myself and why I think math is so important.

I live in Washington State, where I taught at the elementary and middle school levels for 31 years. I also started writing books for kids 30 years ago. As of this summer, 64 of my books have been published.

My family has pear and cherry orchards where fruit is grown and sold as a business. In addition, we have about 25 different kinds of fruit and nut trees to supply our family and friends with a variety of tasty foods every summer and fall. AND we have a vegetable garden every summer. (I'll get back to this garden....)

When I was growing up, I loved numbers and math. My father taught me to appreciate math: it's fun, challenging, and helpful in SO many ways! And he taught me to be smart with money—to be financially independent. What are the most important things he taught me?

*1. Money you receive (for any reason) should be divided into four stacks: saving, giving, spending on needs, and spending on wants. Decide how much of every dollar goes into each stack. What is the importance of each stack?*

*2. In time, you will have enough savings to buy one share of stock. When you have saved enough money, buy another share! All dividends should be automatically reinvested. You can watch your savings GROW. My father liked to say, "Your money can earn a lot more working for you than you can earn working for yourself."*

Let me tell you about something my husband did 25 years ago. He found a penny! He put it in a piggy bank, and then our two sons and my husband and I added any money we found over the next several years. When we had \$20, my husband bought one share of stock, and we named it our "Found Money Fund." We kept on saving our found money, buying more stock, and watching our fund grow and grow and GROW. Can you guess how much that Found Money Fund is worth today? Over two thousand dollars!

Now let's get back to that vegetable garden. I had been asked to write a book about SKIP COUNTING, and I was trying to come up with an idea for the story. I went out to the garden and started gathering onions and tomatoes and jalapeño peppers to make salsa. Suddenly the idea came to me for Pablo's story! Over the next few weeks, I worked on the story. Then I gave it to my neighbor, Mrs. Martinez. "Does this work?" I asked. She said it was a great story, and she made a few important suggestions for the illustrations. I was so grateful, I put Mrs. Martinez in the story!

I hope you have fun with Pablo and his abuela. And I hope you learn skip counting! Some of the kids I know learned it just from reading this book aloud several times a day for several days!