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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**New Children's Book Series from Focus Friends, LLC  
Designed to Teach Life Skills and Strengthen Relationships**

***Debut title, Joy is the Greatest Gift, guides readers in creating a joyful life***

Fort Collins, Colorado — Focus Friends, LLC, founded by Lisa Rey Marks, is a new line of inspirational books and products for young children based on unique characters called *Focus Friends*<sup>®</sup>. Each Focus Friend character possesses the essence of a special gift or trait and shows children how to apply that quality to their lives.

Our debut title, Joy is the Greatest Gift, written by Marks and illustrated by award-winning artist Eris Klein, introduces the first Focus Friends character, Joyann, who shares with readers her gift of creating joy. At times, all children feel angry or sad, and though these feelings are normal, Joyann shows children ways of celebrating joy every day, through the beauty of the world around them, by having fun, in time spent with loved ones and by spreading joy to others.

Using illustrations and flowing rhymes, the story captures the significance of the relationships children have with family members and friends, and emphasizes the skills children need to enhance creativity and to develop positive thought patterns and emotion. In addition to the illustrations and positive message, at the end of the book, a "Joy List" is included to prompt a discussion between adult and child about living joyfully and to actively apply the concept to the child's life.

"Children need guidance when it comes to creating a joyful life. They can learn that being joyful is a choice," says Marks. "We need to teach children early on to see the joy in everyday experiences and in the beauty around us. And, importantly, even when life presents difficult or painful circumstances, we must focus on the people and things that make us feel happy, secure, appreciative and hopeful so we may get through such times with strength and more ease."

Joy is the Greatest Gift is a 9" x 11" (Portrait) full color, hardcover book with a jacket, 32 pages. Books may be purchased at many retail locations throughout the U.S. (see [www.focusfriends.com](http://www.focusfriends.com) for locations) and are currently available to the trade from retail and library wholesaler Baker & Taylor, Inc., library distributor Quality Books, Inc., and retail distributor DeVorrs & Company. Retail Price is \$16.99 USD. ISBN-13: 978-0-9786028-0-2. LCCN: 2006904840. Review copies are available upon request.

### **About Focus Friends**

Focus Friends, LLC is dedicated to creating quality books and products for children ages 2 to 9. Each of the Focus Friends characters is imbued with a special gift or trait, and the characters, stories, and products provide a springboard for parents, grandparents, teachers, and caregivers to entertain young children while teaching them to develop positive thought patterns and emotion, strengthen relationships with family and friends, enhance creativity, and practice important life skills. Focus Friends products are designed to make a difference for children and families by bringing "focused" messages of beauty, joy, appreciation, wisdom, and inspiration into their homes and lives. For more information, call (970) 266-9185 or visit [www.focusfriends.com](http://www.focusfriends.com).

### **About the Author**

Lisa Rey Marks is a mother and lawyer with experience in child welfare law and policy, criminal justice, and private law practice. During the first year after having her son, Marks wrote the first stories in the Focus Friends series between the baby's late-night feedings. The inspirational world of motherhood prompted Marks to leave the practice of law and resign from her seven-year position on the Board of Directors for the Larimer County Child Advocacy Center to concentrate on raising her toddler son and launching Focus Friends, LLC. Marks earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Philosophy & Spanish from Dickinson College (Carlisle, PA), a Master of Public Administration from Clark University (Worcester, MA), and a Juris Doctor from Northwestern University School of Law (Chicago, IL). She lives in Fort Collins, Colorado with her husband Sandy and their son Andrew.

### **About the Illustrator**

Eris Klein has been a freelance illustrator since 1996. She has won several industry awards including the Colorado Independent Publisher's Award for Best Book Cover, and the 2001 Ed Press Distinguished Achievement Award. Klein was a guest speaker for the Spring 2004 Society of Children Book Writers and Illustrators Conference. As a gifted fine artist and illustrator, Klein's style gives a unique spirit to the characters and image of Focus Friends. She resides in Fort Collins, Colorado. More of her work may be seen at [www.erisart.com](http://www.erisart.com).