



»books

Filling the Gap

Lectura Books publishes culturally relevant bilingual titles for children and young adults—and their parents

KATHERINE DEL MONTE woke up one morning while in college with a troubling thought: After being exposed to multicultural literature for the first time, she realized there had been a void in her education—she'd never come across any stories about being a young Latina. "I started asking myself, *Why are there no books that deal with my own experiences?*" recalls Del Monte, who grew up in Hacienda Heights.

That college revelation later inspired Del Monte to launch Lectura Books. Since 2001, the South Pasadena-based publishing company has released 13 bilingual titles targeted mostly at families who are learning English. Some of the books are designed to allow children to share their experiences with their parents. One of Lectura's titles, *El Sueño de Graciela/Graciela's Dream*, won second place in the young adult fiction category at this year's International Latino Book Awards. Cowritten by Del Monte and her husband, Max Benavidez (a *Ciudad* contributor), the book is about a young Latina who must persuade her parents to help her attend college.

"It gives parents and students a story they can relate to," says Del Monte, who also is a bilingual education consultant, "and practical step-by-step instructions on how to succeed in high school as they prepare for college." —ALISON TULLY

For more information, visit www.lecturabooks.com.