

Camille Andros: Mother of Six and Children’s Book Author Turned Tuberculosis Advocate

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In this series, Pathways spotlights advocates of tuberculosis, the world’s leading cause of death from an infectious disease.

A successful writer, a mother of six, a global health degree holder, a formerly practicing member of the Mormon Church, and a former emergency room worker walk into a bar. How many people are in their group?

Trick question: it’s just one person, and it’s TB fighter, Camille Andros. Today, Andros is an acclaimed writer and champion for tuberculosis (TB) awareness and advocacy, but her life had a circuitous path.

Andros received a degree in global health in her early 20s, and then got married and had six kids. She’d always planned to go to school to become a physician’s assistant once her youngest child started kindergarten. But when he was about a year old, she took a leap of faith.

“I had always really wanted to write,” Andros said. With her youngest just a year old and kindergarten still years away, she decided to give it a try. “We’ll just see what happens,” she said.

It ended up working out better than she could have imagined. “I got an agent, I got a couple of book deals, and started publishing, started traveling... and then it was time to start PA school.”

With six kids at home and a fair amount of travel, she knew it just wasn’t realistic to start the program. So she decided to “ride the writer wave,” and write children’s books about medicine and science.

In late 2019, Andros became aware of another writer in the children’s literature space who had begun writing books about medicine.

“John Green... started talking about TB, and that just raised my antenna, because the main thing in my education that I was taught to do for global health was to find the biggest health problems in different regions and come up with solutions.”

She says that TB “just hadn’t been on her radar.” But, “when John started talking about TB, and that we’ve had a cure since the 50s, and we are just choosing to live in this world where over a million

people die... every year," she was shocked. "It's such a solvable problem," she says. Then something clicked.

"I was just like, I'm all in. I want to help with this." And that's where it began. She began volunteering, going to meetings on Capitol Hill to advocate for funding allocation toward TB treatment efforts around the world.

As she got deeper into her advocacy, she had a revelation. Andros had grown up Mormon, though she doesn't practice anymore. She realized that many of the places Mormons went for mission trips overlapped with places with a higher incidence of TB. People she knew had gone on missions and gotten sick. The Mormon Church also had a lot of money.

"I'm like, oh, this could be a redemption arc here," Andros said. Would it be possible to convince members of the church to advocate for TB funding?

In fact, Andros noted, the current President of the Mormon Church has had several tragic experiences with TB. "His dad died of TB," Andros explained, "and then his [dad's] wife was put in a mental institution – she had a mental breakdown.... I think he had a really hard childhood because of that."

After growing up in a Mormon family, Andros decided to get a degree in global health. This was a foundation that, decades later, would lead her to see the Mormon Church not as a closed chapter, but as a powerful, untapped ally in her mission to end the disease that had already devastated the families of its own leaders.

Andros is currently working on a nonfiction picture book about a dog who solves medical mysteries. The first case is the Brontë siblings, all six of whom died from TB. The book is, in many ways, a perfect encapsulation of who Andros is: a writer who uses storytelling to make the unbearable more legible, and a global health advocate who never stopped believing that the right information, in the right hands, can change the world.

The Mormon Church project remains a work in progress, built on a hunch that personal history and institutional power can intersect in service of a greater public health cause. The current president of the church lost his father to TB as a child, according to Andros. Now, the church plans to open a global health-focused medical school in 2027.

Andros sees clearly the overlap of mission territories and high-burden TB countries. She is working, one conversation at a time, to make sure others see it, too. She returns again and again to TB being a "solvable problem," with the conviction of someone who has spent decades preparing, without knowing it, for exactly this fight with other advocates.