

(right)  
"Footprints  
in the Sand",  
the first book  
written by  
Peterstown  
native, Josie  
(Tropeano)  
Varga, will be  
released on  
April 23, 2004.

The book can be ordered from Publish America  
(ISBN# 1-4137-0696-7) at [www.publishamerica.com](http://www.publishamerica.com) or  
by calling (301) 695-1707. Visit [www.josievarga.com](http://www.josievarga.com) for  
more information or to contact the author.



(above, l-r) Author Josie Varga, lives in Westfield, NJ  
with daughters, Erica (4), Lia (2), and husband John.

# FOOTPRINTS IN THE SAND:

## A Disabled Woman's Inspiring Journey to Happiness

If you need a reminder about what is truly important in life, run out and get the provocative and heartwarming new book, *Footprints in the Sand: A Disabled Woman's Inspiring Journey to Happiness*. This true story, written by Peterstown native Josie Varga (maiden name Tropeano), will challenge readers to concentrate on the positive no matter what life may bring.

Based on the author's life and the many challenges she encountered due to having cerebral palsy, severe bilateral hearing loss and skin cancer, the book details how she refused to give up and later finds success, love and happiness.

Once the reader begins, the book is very difficult to put down. Each and every page is jam-packed with strong emotion as the author hooks her readers from one chapter in her life to the next.

"Despite my relentless efforts to gain the acceptance of others, I was often ridiculed and picked on", she writes. "There were many people who did not accept me and probably still don't today. The difference is back then I thought I had to make everyone like me. But today, I know that it is impossible to satisfy everyone. And I'm O.K. with that because the only person I need to satisfy is me."

Although this story is autobiographical, Varga writes with a compelling style that grips the reader like a suspense novel. Readers feel as though the author is actually talking to them because of the book's very conversational manner which makes it flow easily from start to finish.

Throughout the book, Varga talks openly about many events in her life which teach readers lessons about life in general. Here are a few inspirational examples:

- It's all up to you. You can't blame every little misfortune in your life on someone or something.


- You and only you control your destiny.
- It's not what happens to you in life that matters, but how you choose to respond.
- You can't go back to yesterday and you don't even know if you will have tomorrow. The one thing that is for sure is today.
- It is only in giving that we truly receive.

Varga paints a vivid picture of her proud Italian heritage and what it was like growing up on Redcliffe Street in the Peterstown section of Elizabeth. It is absolutely impossible for the reader not to sense the pride she has in her family.

"I am very fortunate to come from a very close-knit family with about a thousand first cousins," she writes. "O.K., maybe not that many, but I do have a lot. Some people say Italians call everybody their cousin and I do agree with that to a certain extent. But in my family, I really do have a lot of cousins from all different age groups. Despite the age differences, we all get along. We all care about each other."

My whole family played a very big role in building the blocks to my confidence and who I am. I am grateful for their love and support. Without them, I don't know where I would be today."

The last chapter is followed by an inspiring epilogue by Rich Lee, a friend who died in the World Trade Center attacks on September 11, 2001. Two years prior to his death, Lee had written about the death of his father in which he talks about the importance of life. His message is so powerful the reader can almost feel his voice.

This is a book that will stir every possible human emotion in its readers. They will laugh and cry and even feel angry at times. And when they finally come to the end, readers will discover a priceless lesson or two about life. This is a book that should be read by all. 





(above & below) The Tropeano family.



(above, l-r) Michael, Virginia, Carmine, Ann and Josephine.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Josie Varga does not consider herself disabled and never will. Her handicap, she believes, is her strength not her weakness.

Despite having both cerebral palsy and severe bilateral hearing loss, her relentless determination brings her success and happiness as she lives a dream come true preferring to focus on the positive not the negative.

Discovering her passion for writing as a little girl growing up in the Peterstown section of Elizabeth, New Jersey, she went on to earn a degree in journalism and, after many setbacks, worked her way up to director of communications, editor and consultant.

In her youth, Josie Varga was Josephine Tropeano. She makes reference to her family and the community in

her book. Many people knew her dad, Carmine, as the owner of Ann's Dinner, named after her mom, on Division Street in Elizabeth. He later went on to own the Rainbow Club, also on Division Street.

Josie's mom, maiden name Oliveri, is from Palermo, Sicily. Her father, Carmine, is from Grottolella, a small province in Avellino, Italy. They met and married in Elizabeth. Josie has a brother, Michael, and a sister Virginia Pennell.

Josie went to grade school at Holy Rosary then to St. Mary's High School. She received an Associates Degree from Union County College and a Communications Degree with specialization in Journalism from Rowan University. 🇺🇸



Josephine's father, Carmine, with members of the Italian American War Veterans Club (above, seated, l-r) Rafaelc Santagata; Felice Mummolo and Carmine Tropeano (standing, l-r) Frank Antonacci; Paul Coladonato; Joe Nastasi; Mike Morano; Duke DiMeo and Nick Dammiano