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FEATURED

Gramma Diana hoping to reach more youngsters

By BILL McMILLEN Mohave Valley News
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BULLHEAD CITY — Diana Lestat noticed that her grandchildren were spending a lot of time watching educational videos on the internet. And enjoying them.

"I have my own grandkids," Lestat said. "They watch Ms. Rachel."

Ms. Rachel, a program developed by educator Rachel Accurso and her husband, Aron Accurso, a Broadway-credited associate musical director and big part of the program's creative team, has a series of video aimed at early learning, focusing on speech, language and social-emotional skills.

"I thought if they could watch her, they would watch their own grandma," Lestat said.

So she developed her own YouTube channel, therealGrammaDiana, and has launched her own branding of children's books and videos designed to provide fun learning opportunities for youngsters.

"I home-schooled my own kids," said Lestat, who has four children and three grandchildren. "I'm basically taking some of the things I did (while homeschooling) and putting them into videos."

Those videos — now at 222 and counting, including a number of original, self-written, illustrated and produced shorts — have received varying levels of viewership, she said.

"Some have seven views," she said with a laugh. "And some have more than 50,000."

The channel has more than 1,800 subscribers.

"Here on my channel, I create fun and educational videos just for little ones," she said in an introductory video on the YouTube channel. "Stories that teach manners, celebrate kindness and explore colorful worlds filled with wonder."

She calls her channel "my cozy little corner of the internet, where kindness, curiosity and giggles are always welcome."

Gramma Diana has been writing children's books for about 2 1/2 years and currently has five Gramma Diana titles listed on Amazon: "Cookin' with Gramma Diana," "Gramma Diana Teaches You About Shapes," "Gramma Diana's Colorful Adventure," "Gramma Diana and the Enchanted Attic," and "Alice and Kimi's Adventures in Mannersland."

She said the books are "perfect for storytime snuggles and learning together."

Toward that end, Lestat is reaching out to area schools, libraries, businesses and civic groups who might be able to incorporate the Gramma Diana stories into their own curriculum or community outreach.

"I'm trying to get the word out," she said.

So far, it has been primarily through self-promotion and making appearances at local venues. But she said she is open to just about anything that will expand the reach of her videos and her Gramma Diana persona.

Lestat, who by day works at the Bullhead City Smith's Food & Drug store, is an active member of the Bullhead City Elks Lodge 2408. But she said she really wants more people to know Gramma Diana.

She can be reached by email at TheRealGrammaDiana@gmail.com, through her website, GrammaDiana.com, or by phone at 442-232-7099.

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