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For Immediate Release

LOCAL CHILDREN'S AUTHOR FINDS SHARING THE BEST THERAPY

Cristina Ortolani was in need of short term rehabilitation following a recent injury. As an educator and author, she knew how important it was to do her research and come up with a plan. After much consideration she selected Bethel Nursing and Rehabilitation to complete her "course". Little did she know it would provide a life experience that would heal her body AND her soul.

Cristina had shared with the Recreation Therapist some exciting news. She had recently published her first book for children, **Turtle**

and Bird Spring. As a special needs educator, she knew the value of imparting lessons into everything she did. Turtle and Bird is a story of an unusual friendship between an eastern box turtle and a song sparrow that begins on a backyard compost pile. As their friendship grows they learn how to accept the limitations of their differences, how to support each other through challenging times and grow to care deeply for each other even while separated. A simple message of learning, says Cristina, "how people can be friends even though they are different".

Cristina asked if there might be anyone at Bethel who would enjoy listening to her book. The Therapist thought the Memory Care unit might be the perfect spot and arranged the event. The residents were mesmerized. Cristina gave each character their own unique voice. The residents followed the lyrical recitation as Cristina brought each of them to life.

Although she has returned home, following her rehabilitation stay, Cristina plans to return to Bethel after her discharge and volunteer. She also found participation in the Bell Choir therapeutic and hopes to continue with that group in the future.

Bethel Homes and Services has been serving the community for over 100 years and is the only not-for-profit, full continuum of care in Northern Westchester offering healthcare and housing for seniors. Located on two campuses, in Croton-on-Hudson and Ossining, Bethel's continuum includes: Home Care; Adult Day Services; The Pines-Independent Senior Living; Bethel Springvale Inn-Assisted Senior Living; Bethel Nursing and Rehabilitation Center; Bethel Nursing Home; Respite; and Hospice Care. For information on any of these programs, please call 914-739-6700 x 1204..