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Main character from local author?s children book made into doll

Written By **Paula Brown**

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

A young local author is hoping to bring comfort to other kids by bringing to life a main character from her book.

Amaya James, an 11-year-old Shelburne resident and author of the children's book Afro, No!, has announced the launch of Lil' Emmie ? a doll based on one of the main characters from her book.

?I wanted to make this doll because I thought it'd be a great wash day companion because my book is about getting your hair done on wash day,? explained James. ?I thought we should make a doll so there's always someone who knows how you feel on wash day.?

Afro, No! features main characters Emmie and Afro who explore the sometimes complicated relationship that young Black girls can have with their hair. It also touches on the beauty, uniqueness and joy that comes with the pain and challenge of getting their hair done.

James initially began writing her children's book in August of 2022 and illustrated the entire book as a self-taught artist. Starting with a sketch of the book's cover she eventually digitized the artwork and slowly began to write and draw what would eventually become the 32-page story.

?Having unique hair like mine, it's a bit of a challenge to get your hair done so that's why I wrote the book. The main character in my book, which is Emmie, she has this giant afro that never cooperates and we basically talk about that story,? said James.

After attending local schools in the area to share the published book, James came to the decision that she wanted to create something that other kids could have to interact with the book and came up with the idea for a doll.

In August of 2023, James began developing the specs for the Lil' Emmie doll, including the colours, outfit, and how her hair would look. Early prototypes of the doll saw challenges with proportions, but the Lil' Emmie doll eventually came to be.

?It was a really exciting process to make something of my own and design it myself,? said James.

In addition to creating a physical companion for other kids to have with them for comfort during their hair wash days, James is also hoping to create an online movement called ?Wash Day Emmie', in which other kids can share and embrace their wash day moments with Emmie by using #washdayemmie.

?My favourite part about being a young author is inspiring other young kids,? said James.

?I hope that more feel inspired, that they feel they can do anything, and they can celebrate their hair and their uniqueness.?

Lil' Emmie is only available for pre-order and can be purchased through James' website ? www.thejameses.ca.