

Are Book Awards Worth It?

By Kate Bandos, KSB Promotions

When we started working with Kathy Miller (March 2010), her first self-published children's book, **Chippy Chipmunk Parties in the Garden**, had been out around six months. The book was beginning to get a little recognition, including being selected as one of only 12 books named to the 2010-2011 Keystone to Reading Book Award List for Primary Grades (a high honor for the state of Pennsylvania). But she wanted more. One of her goals was to get additional media coverage and maybe some book awards.

Now seven months later, there have been feature stories in both her local Pennsylvania newspaper and her hometown paper in Canada, a syndicated review and lots of nice review coverage online and in various newspapers and magazines throughout the country. But most exciting, **Chippy Chipmunk Parties in the Garden** recently received its 12th book award...and there are still a few pending! (See list at end of article or see full list at her Web site, <http://www.chippychipmunk.com>.)

Receiving awards for your book can be gratifying, productive and effective but also understand that submitting your book for awards can be time consuming and expensive. Some of the competitions only require a few copies of the book sent with the appropriate forms, others require fees that range from \$50 - \$500 and multiple copies of the book. Finding the myriad of award opportunities and deciding which ones might be best for you to enter is a whole separate issue that I will try to address next time. For now, know that there are national awards, regional awards, industry specific awards, category specific awards, society awards where you must be a member, etc. And within each of the awards, there are numerous categories from the topics or genre of your book, the book's cover design, the book's interior design, to the best overall re-design of a book, and many more depending on the competition. Carefully research any award before deciding to submit.

Miller comments, "Also note that prices of seals vary widely, as do prices of use of the

logo. Only a couple of firms give the logo out, most charge to use their logo. One even charges per imprint if you are going to reproduce it on your book covers, as opposed to buying stickers.”

So, you are lucky enough to have won one or more awards. Then what? From our experience, here are some key ways to use awards to increase reviews and sales.

1. Send out a press release about winning the award. While most publications, including most of the trade publications, won't care since there are too many awards to cover them all, your hometown paper might run a story. If you are also the publishers, the local business publication might find your award newsworthy.
2. Use the award as an excuse to send out a new round of follow-up to those who have already gotten a book. Here is news that might get the book from the bottom of the pile back to the top.
3. Make note of the award, even affixing an actual seal, on all releases sent out. That shiny disk might get the release read.
4. Add to your signature block that you are a “national award-winning author” or have written or published an “award-winning” or nationally award-winning” book.
5. Add the award seal to your website and post a release or story about it on your site.
6. Send notice to any list of followers or customers you have. This may be via your company as well as on Facebook, Twitter, etc.
7. Order seals to affix to the book cover. Even if they have never heard of the award, the end buyer can be swayed by the fact that the book won an award.
8. Of course, notify all your distributors, sales reps, etc. who can in turn use this information to sell more books.
9. As you send out new releases or articles, make note of the award in a prominent way. Again, the award itself may not be news, but it might make the difference

of the media taking a closer look at what you are sending.

10. Make a sign to use when doing talks, signings, etc.

Make sure to be clear if you are just a “finalist” and not a “winner.” This can be valuable, too, but you must always be truthful in presenting yourself and your book.

Remember, an award can make the difference of getting a closer look by the media and getting you the coverage and ultimately the sales you seek.

Kate Bandos, KSB Promotions

Kate Siegel Bandos has been doing book publicity for more than 40 years, the past 22 on a freelance basis from KSB Promotions (<http://www.ksbpromotions.com>). Over the years she has worked with thousands of books and authors, and can't imagine how many media contacts she has made during that time. It still amazes her when she realizes she makes a living reading and working with books – the things she loves most (after her family).

Chippy Chipmunk Parties in the Garden has won the following national book awards (as of 11/10):

1. 2010 Benjamin Franklin Awards, winner of The Bill Fisher Award for Best First Book (Children's/Young Adult)
2. Writer's Digest Book Awards, Self-Published Book Award, winner in the Children's Category
3. iParenting Media Award winner
4. Learning Magazine 2011 Teachers' Choice Award for Children's Books Award winner
5. Mom's Choice Awards, Gold recipient
6. The US Review of Books: The Eric Hoffer Award for 2010, winner in the Children's Book Category
7. Young Voices Foundation Awards - winner in 3 categories: Gold in the Nature Category, Silver in Picture Books & Silver in Animals/Pets
8. Readers Favorite Award, Children's: Kindergarten Category
9. Moonbeam Children's Book Awards Best First Book, Bronze Medalist
10. 2010 IPPY Award (Independent Publisher Book Awards), Children's Picture Book (7 and under), Bronze medalist
11. NABE Pinnacle Book Achievement Award, Fall 2010

12. USA Book News' Best Books 2010 Awards, finalist in the Children's Picture Book Hardcover Fiction Category
13. Purple Dragonfly Book Awards, 1st place in the Animals/Pets Category

Learn more at <http://www.chippychipmunk.com>.