



Rachelle McIntyre, author of Mrs M, at home in Masterton.
PHOTO/ERIN KAVANAGH-HALL

Words take flight for Rachelle



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For many years, Rachelle McIntyre has dreamed of writing her own children's book — one in particular inspired by her young family's pet magpie.

Now, thanks to a network of "really lovely people" and a friend offering an extra pair of hands [literally], McIntyre's black and white protagonist has finally taken flight.

The Masterton local and former primary school teacher has released her first illustrated children's book, Mrs M — officially launched at an afternoon tea celebration at St James Union Church last weekend.

The independently-published story features McIntyre and her now grown-up sons, Jake and Jesse, as leading characters. They form a friendship with Mrs M, an outgoing magpie who made regular visits to their Alfredton home when the boys were little.

"My youngest gave the magpie the name 'Mrs M'. Though we had no idea if it was a male or a female," McIntyre laughed.

While writing their own book is a long-

held dream for many, McIntyre's journey has been more challenging than most.

She has been living with multiple sclerosis [MS] for the past two decades and has, over time, lost mobility in her limbs. She is now a tetraplegic, and uses a head and shoulder gesture-controlled wheelchair to manoeuvre around her home.

However, her dream of being a published author began to materialise last year, thanks to close friend and fellow writer Shona Daubé.

Daubé, who has self-published five short books about her own journey with MS, wrote down all the words for Mrs M while McIntyre dictated what had "been in her head for a while". Daubé then published the book under own label, Pink Cottage Publishing.

When speaking to Midweek, McIntyre recalled the performance appraisals from her teaching career, where she was asked about her goals outside of work.

"My answer every year was the same — to write a children's book. But life got busy and I never got round to it. Until now," she said.