

Jean Craighead George Made My Son a Reader

Trish Carlucci

As a lifelong avid reader, I was distressed when my son, Pete, disdained books. He didn't like the library books available to him at school. He complained that they were all about girly things and just was not interested. He couldn't relate to them at all. Pete was an active child. He was always outside running and hiking, especially when we were in the Poconos. He blazed trails, marking directions with stacked stones, waded in streams, and caught pollywogs. I was worried, not only about his future in a world that increasingly requires strong reading skills to succeed, but that he would miss out on the worlds and experiences books bring to readers' imaginations.

When Pete was in first or second grade, someone suggested *My Side of the Mountain*, one of Jean's many books, as a book he might enjoy. Because he was still too young to get many of the words in a chapter book, I read part of it to him each night over a week. It was the first book he could relate to. He enjoyed hearing of Sam Gibley's adventures on his great grandfather's abandoned farm in the Catskills. Thrilled that I had found a book he loved, I sought out similar books. It wasn't easy finding children's books on nature, but I discovered that Jean Craighead George was a prolific writer and was able to keep Pete's interest.

Thanks to Jean Craighead George, Pete discovered the magic of books. As an adult he is an avid reader & shares his love of books with his own children.

