

# Former Flora Ottimer Employee Debbie Glade Shares her Award-Winning Picture Book with Us



## The Travel Adventures of Lilly P Badilly: Costa Rica



### Interview with Debbie Glade

#### When did you work for Flora Ottimer?

It was 1979, and I was 18 years old and attending a fashion design school located in an old mansion on the water behind the store. I ended up leaving to get my BA in Creative Writing from Florida State University.

#### What did working at Flora Ottimer teach you?

When I worked here, I really learned the meaning of excellent customer service. No one was ever rushed. The staff remembered customers' children by name and even what their sizes were! The quality of the merchandise was as exceptional as the service - just like it is today. This is a rare combination in retail. My husband and I owned a business brokerage for 8 years, so we really got to see the best and worst of S. FL businesses. When you have an independent store like Flora Ottimer, that has thrived since 1945, competing with mega-sized stores, you've got to be doing everything right! There's always a market for high quality and service.

#### What was it like working here back then?

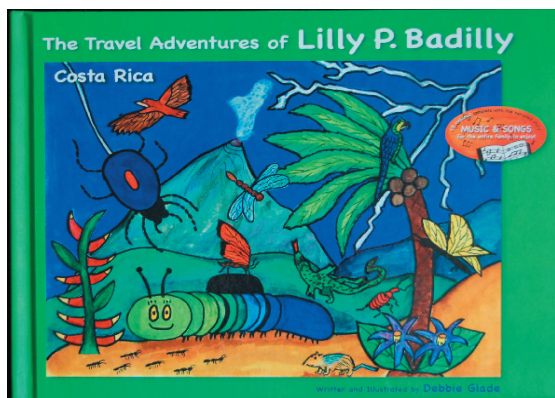
The store was located across the street, before Ohara's Pub moved in. I worked with two adorable older ladies, Betty and Jo, who really knew the business well. There was no cash register, so we had to figure out the change in our heads. Imagine that! It was very exciting when we got new shipments. We'd open the boxes and just admire the beautiful clothing. I have great memories of eating my lunch upstairs in the attic on an old rocking chair.

#### What do you remember about the customers?

There were a lot of grandmothers needing gifts for their grandchildren, and they were so loyal to the store, buying full wardrobes. Everyone knew each other by name. I recall the first time a lady came in and requested specifically that I help her with her purchases. I was so honored that she valued my opinion!



Debbie and her dog, Char in 1979 after a day of work at Flora Ottimer.



### Children's Bookwatch Midwest Book Review

#### Reviewer's Choice

The Travel Adventures of  
Lilly P. Badilly: Costa Rica

*The Travel Adventures of Lilly P. Badilly: Costa Rica is a children's book with accompanying audio CD following the adventures of a tiny millipede with a talent for playing the piano. Along with her grandparents, the plucky millipede goes on a wondrous journey deep into the Costa Rican rainforest! The Travel Adventures of Lilly P. Badilly features a number of catchy songs sung by various creatures; these songs are played with music on the audio CD, making for a most enjoyable reading and listening experience. Simple yet colorful illustrations round out this surprisingly long and involved picturebook adventure.*

*Highly recommended.*

[www.lillybadilly.com](http://www.lillybadilly.com)  
[www.smartpoodlepublishing.com](http://www.smartpoodlepublishing.com)

## Interview Cont.

### So how did you come to write *The Travel Adventures of Lilly P Badilly: Costa Rica*?

After college, I was a freelance travel writer for luxury cruise lines. Our daughter, Rachel was born in 1992, and after reading countless children's books to her, I decided to use my geography knowledge and writing and art skills to write, illustrate and record the book on CD.

### And now I understand you spend a lot of time visiting South Florida schools wearing a millipede costume!

Yes, I have Reading, Writing and Geography programs that I take to schools in the tri-county area. I absolutely love seeing children get excited about reading and learning about geography, a subject which is greatly lacking in our schools.

### What is unique about the book?

The book and CD are educational as well as very entertaining - not just for kids but their parents as well. There's an original musical score on the CD, written by my then 14 y.o. daughter and my husband. They perform the songs with me on the CD. I use various cartoon voices for the characters, and it really makes children laugh. There are even authentic sound effects from the Costa Rican rainforest on the CD! If children are too young to read at the level of the book, they can enjoy listening to the story on CD.

Well, Debbie, thanks for sharing your experience working here 32 years ago! We're excited to be able to share your book with our customers.

Thank you so much. I hope they enjoy Lilly Badilly as much as they do Flora Ottimer's clothing!

## Laughing and Learning with Lilly Badilly



### Debbie visits elementary schools with her book to teach:

- The basics of writing and illustrating a book and recording it on CD
- How original music on the CD was created
- The importance of reading and practicing writing
- The plants and animals of the Costa Rican rainforest
- Conservation of the rainforest
- How fears are common for children and adults and how to face them
- Peaceful problem-solving
- Interactive geography Q & A with maps

### Debbie speaks to middle school students about writing and publishing:

- Differences between traditional vs. self-publishing.
- How to take an idea and turn it into a book.
- Insight into the creative process and how to get inspired and improve writing habits.
- The importance of reading no matter what career path they choose.



**Debbie Glade** is the author, illustrator and voice talent of the award-winning children's picture book *The Travel Adventures of Lilly P Badilly: Costa Rica*, published by Smart Poodle Publishing. She visits South Florida schools with her reading, writing and geography programs. For years, Debbie was a travel writer for luxury cruise lines. She is a regular guest book reviewer for *LA Parent Magazine* and writes parenting articles for various websites.

She shares her passion for geography education as the Geography Awareness Editor for *WanderingEducators.com*. She blogs daily at [smartpoodlepublishing.com](http://smartpoodlepublishing.com), has a weekly comic strip and tutors students of all ages in writing and grammar. When she's not working, you'll find Debbie in her organic garden, waking her giant poodle, Darwin, doing aerobics or cooking, baking and sewing.

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