

## Getting Batty with Citizen Science

**How one children's book author wants to bring hope to young readers on environmental issues.**

Bats are in decline in Pennsylvania and beyond, and on February 10th author Anna Forrester brings to light the troubles these nocturnal creatures face in her first picture book *Bat Count: A Citizen Science Story*. The endearing story blends family togetherness with scientific information for an inspirational read.

Kids can learn more about bats and bat counts with Anna Forrester at her book launch on Saturday March 25th, from 12 to 4, at the Smith Memorial Playhouse & Playground's Playapalooza, (3500 Reservoir Drive in East Fairmount Park). In addition to bat crafts with recycled materials, Anna will be reading and signing copies of *Bat Count*.

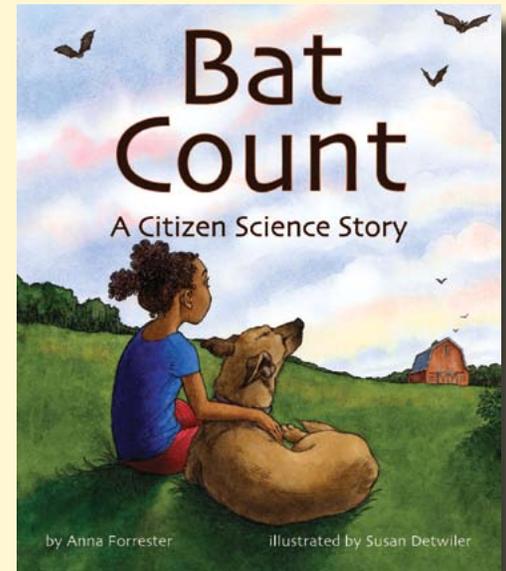
The book opens with a young girl and her twin brothers prepping for the evening's event. Through the story we learn that the barn, once filled with bats, is now practically empty. The family gathers each year to count the numbers and report them to scientists. The book concludes with a For Creative Minds section of educational activities and fun facts to extend the learning.

Forrester is a Philadelphia-based landscape architect and amateur naturalist, and spends lots of time outdoors. Through citizen science she has found a way to connect her interest in nature and ecology to her penchant for community activism, and she sees participating in bat counts and other citizen science projects as a fun and exciting way to make a difference. "My family has had such a great time doing bat counts and other citizen science projects – it takes us cool places and we have learned so much," said Forrester. "When people read *Bat Count*, I'd like for them to get a sense that citizen science is accessible to everyone. When you do citizen science you not only introduce kids to real science, but you actually help scientists do their job studying, understanding and finding solutions for real ecological problems, and kids love that!"

Through Susan Detwiler's illustrations, readers will feel the sense of togetherness as the family gathers on the farm lawn for a night of counting. Additionally, the detailed bat in the For Creative Minds section offers a great learning activity to young readers.

*Bat Count* releases February 10th to bookstores across the country in hardcover (9781628558944, \$17.95), paperback (9781628558951, \$9.95), and ebook (9781628558975, \$6.95). A Spanish language edition, *Contando los murciélagos: Una historia de ciencias cívicas*, is available in paperback (9781628558968, \$9.95) and ebook (9781628558982, \$6.95).

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Anna Forrester is an amateur naturalist who finds inspiration for her writing in the quirks and curiosities she encounters in the natural world.

**"Bat Count: A Citizen Science Story"**

is Anna's debut

picture book, and was inspired by counts she does with family and friends every summer at a farm in Pennsylvania. Visit Anna's website at [www.annaforrester.com](http://www.annaforrester.com).

Susan Detwiler is an award-winning children's book illustrator. She is the author/illustrator of *Fine Life For A Country Mouse*. Susan was educated at the Maryland Institute College of Art and lives in Baltimore. Visit her website at [susandetwiler.com](http://susandetwiler.com).

