

# GARBAGE BAG *Girl*

## Readers Group Discussion Guide

*Garbage Bag Girl* is a collaboration between *New York Times* bestselling author Richard Paul Evans and Celeste L. Edmunds, who, at the beginning of Evans' writing career was employed as his personal assistant. Today, she is the executive director of the charity Evans founded, The Christmas Box International, an organization that helps abused, trafficked and neglected children. To date, The Christmas Box International has helped nearly 150,000 children worldwide. In 2006, Evans based his book, *Finding Noel*, on Celeste's life. For years he wanted to write her full story, but, in Celeste's words, she wasn't ready to open herself up to it. After more than 27 years from their first meeting, Celeste's story is finally brought to the world.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- Why did you feel drawn to reading this book?
- Why do you think Celeste felt such a powerful pull to protect her siblings, especially her sister Tawny?
- Which of the people who abused Celeste, sexually, physically, or mentally do you feel the most anger towards?
- Unfortunately, most children who have a traumatic childhood like Celeste's do not turn out as positive and successful as she did. Why do you think she was able to succeed when so many don't?
- How do you feel about Celeste's birth parents?
- In what ways did the Child Welfare system fail Celeste?
- Writing the book was a difficult and painful experience for Celeste. She called it, "pulling off a very big bandage only to find that you hadn't completely healed." If you were in Celeste's position, do you think you would be willing to share your experience?
- Do you think the authors' were right in including graphic material?
- How do you think this book can help children in the foster care or child welfare system?