**Pitch for Blueberries**

*Looking for Blueberries*, written and illustrated by Gina Capaldi, is a 32 page creative non-fiction picture book. It is based on the true story of Marianna Jatczak a young girl who witnesses the horrors of war when she and her family and neighbors become victims of the Nazi occupation of Poland.

Before 1939, life in Poland is simple and carefree for Marianna, who sells blueberries with her mother in an open market. When Nazi soldiers march into Krakow, her life abruptly changes. Her father is arrested and Marianna, her mother, and older sister are in terrible danger. Her sister joins the resistance. Her uncle hides Marianna and her mother in an old, broken bread oven. Their days are fraught with fear of capture. At night they struggle for survival in the shadows of the forest. The wild blueberries Marianna finds there are powerful reminders of the freedom and loving family life she has lost. When asked to carry a message for the resistance, ten year-old Marianna finds the courage to face her fears. She carries the message hidden in a basket of blueberries. At last, allied troops march into Krakow. Blueberries are all Marianna has to offer as a gift of gratitude to the liberators of Poland.

Gina Capaldi is the author/illustrator/educator of A BOY NAMED BECKONING (Lerner 2008), which received starred reviews from SLJ, Booklist, Junior Library Guild, & Rutgers University. It was a Bank Street Best Book of the Year, and a PEN honor award recipient. It is a Carter G. Woodson Silver Honor-medal award winner, and more. She is also the author and illustrator of RED BIRD SINGS: The Story of Zitkala-Sa (Carolrhoda 2012), which she co-wrote with QL Pearce. RED BIRD SINGS received starred reviews from SLJ, Horn Book, Library Media Connection and The Bulletin of the Center for Children’s Books. It is a Carter G. Woodson gold-medal award winner. Gina studied fine arts at Pepperdine University and illustration at Art Center College of Design. Several of her original pieces were purchased and are on display in the Mazza Museum: [www.mazzamuseum.org](http://www.mazzamuseum.org/).