Contact: Meredith Wilson

Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Children’s Book Group

617-351-5968 / meredith.wilson@hmhpub.com

“*My Mixed-Up Berry Blue Summer* is like its protagonist, full to bursting with sweetness and summer light. . . . When things begin to look bleak and scary, you just know June has the grit and sunshine to pull through.”

**—Tim Wynne-Jones, author of *Blink & Caution***

“Mix a pitch-perfect narrator with serious themes and you have *My Mixed-Up Berry Blue Summer.* Tart in places and sweet in others, Ms. Gennari’s debut novel is satisfying in every way.”

**—Ron Koertge, author of *Shakespeare Makes the Playoffs***

**My Mixed-Up Berry Blue Summer**

**By Jennifer Gennari**

Twelve-year-old June Farrell is an expert pie maker, and years of perfecting her craft alongside her mother at the Stillwater Marina are about to pay off. This year’s Champlain Valley Fair pie competition is just a few months away, and nothing is going to come between June and a blue ribbon. Nothing, that is, except Eva. Without warning Eva has moved in and June’s mother is planning a wedding. The town is in an uproar over Vermont’s civil union law, and no one, not even June’s friend Tina, seems to be on her side. ***My Mixed-Up Berry Blue Summer* (May 8, 2012; Houghton Mifflin Books for Children),** by the debut author Jennifer Gennari, tells a tender coming-of-age story; as June struggles to fit in to a suddenly unfamiliar town, she is challenged to also find her bearing in a growing family.

Encouraged by the support of her best friend, Luke, and Ms. Flynn, the town librarian, June is determined not to give up on entering the pie competition. With wild blueberries, strawberries, and black raspberries in hand, June proves to the town, and to herself, just what a twelve-year-old girl is made of. With courage, June stands up to the adversity and prejudice that surrounds her. She learns to just be herself, and, most important, she learns to love and embrace her new family.

Though June’s story is unique, the themes in *My Mixed-Up Berry Blue Summer* are so universal that kids will find themselves identifying with her. The struggle of having a stepparent enter the family, bullying, the gay marriage debate, the idea of what a family is, and the meaning of a true friend are all at the core of this book. Touching and heartfelt, this is a middle grade story with all the right elements.

In 2002, when Jennifer’s daughters were in elementary school, she served on a committee that approved a video intended to reduce bullying. The video showed many different kinds of families, including those with two moms and two dads. The backlash to this video inspired Jennifer to write June’s story.

Jennifer Gennari has been a writer and editor for more than twenty years. She is a graduate of Vassar College, the University of Virginia, and Vermont College. She lives in the San Francisco Bay Area with her four daughters and her husband on a houseboat. Jennifer returns to Lake Champlain every summer. Visit her at www.jengennari.com.