

HANDS UP 4 KIDS

READING VOLUNTEERS

— BUNBURY & SOUTH WEST WA —

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David Parsons

HU4K

Volunteer

since 2013

I was born in England at the start of World War 2 (which was not my fault!). I was schooled in England and migrated to Australia as a 10 pound Pom in 1963. I lived in Canberra, working in the Commonwealth Public Service until moving to Western Australia in 1973.

I lived and worked in Perth, Kalgoorlie and Karratha in a variety of Education Administration jobs. Our family then lived in Collie for 10 years before moving to Australind in 1994 when my wife, Janet, and I opened our Australind Physiotherapy Clinic. We have two sons, both now in their early 30s. Now aged 73 and supposedly retired, I am still very involved with the running of our physiotherapy clinic.

My involvement with pre-primary and primary education included 'Fruit Mum' at Kindy, volunteer classroom help, parent helper at school camp, P & C Vice President and the inaugural Chairman of the school governing body.

I have always been interested in community involvement and volunteer activities, including many years with Lions Clubs, but was restricted for a long time by back problems and chronic pain. My health has improved of late making it possible to commit to such activities again.

Early in 2013, I saw the HU4K call for volunteers in a local paper and put my hand up. I was lucky enough to be accepted and have been working with Years 1 and 2 ever since. I started with one hour per week but soon found I could manage two mornings a week.

It is a wonderfully rewarding and entertaining activity. I love the innocence and forthrightness of children at this age. Watching the kids grow in confidence and reading skills has been amazing and I always have some memory to cherish after each session.

As I often say, I arrive at the school with a smile on my face and leave with a smile in my heart.

Catch up with other HU4K special volunteers

Next Network meeting is at COOINDA PRIMARY SCHOOL, Allen Street, East Bunbury on Tuesday 24th June, 12.30—2.30pm. Come and meet some fantastic HU4K volunteers and swap 'notes' with them about your experiences. HU4K volunteers & teachers from all schools are welcome. **Be sure to come along!**

HU4K soon to have a logo and Volunteer Welcome Kit

Thanks to Lotterywest, we have consultants designing a HU4K logo, promotional materials and a Welcome Kit and Hints for new HU4K volunteers. These will help us all in attracting more volunteers which equates to more HU4K partner schools and MORE CHILDREN HELPED TO READ.

Winter ills and holiday 'leave' temporarily depletes our volunteer numbers

So.....keep an eye out for friends, neighbours, relatives who might enjoy being a HU4K volunteer—shift or part time workers are also welcome.

Current HU4K Partner Schools

2012: Maidens Park, Kingston, Parkfield & Australind

2013: Carey Park, Cooinda & Djidi Djidi

2014: Brunswick Junction, Picton & Tuart Forest

That equates to a huge number of hours of volunteer assistance helping local Bunbury Primary School children read .

...and together we are achieving success with reports of some children increasing their reading level by more than 1 year. Keep up the good work!



HANDS UP 4 KIDS

Helping young children overcome barriers to reading and comprehension - enabling them to achieve academic success.

What's New?

Since our last newsletter we have achieved incorporation and our organisation now operates as Hands Up 4 Kids Volunteers (Inc). We have also been granted an ABN and Tax File Number. This is another step along our strategic plan and we owe a great deal of gratitude to Jan Pedersen, Robyn Fenech (Chairperson of HU4K Committee) and our own Jan Akaczonok for all of their hard work, perseverance and attention to detail that now sees HU4K firmly established in the Bunbury community.

We now have ten schools in partnership and are in discussion with others with close to 100 people registered as volunteers. This is not bad when you consider that our first two volunteers started at one school, Maidens Park, in June 2012. Of course, we can't rest on our laurels and always need additional volunteers so that we can help more children and cover for volunteers taking holiday and other breaks.

Welcome to Tuart Forest, Dalyellup—our 10th partner school which commenced early this term—we still need more volunteers if you know anyone in the area.

NAB Unique Opportunity for raising HU4K funds

Did you know that the NAB is a supporter of HU4K? Not only does its staff volunteer at Djidi Djidi Primary School, but as a means to raising funds, we are in partnership through the 'Introducers' program.

For every drawn down home or business loan referred to NAB by a supporter of HU4K we will be paid a percentage commission. No extra fees for the borrower and no pressure. So if you, your family or friends are in the market for a loan, contact Jan for details.

NAB also generously donated two corporate tickets to a Perth Glory game for volunteers and raffle prizes at our Christmas get together.



Katie and Seana having a great time at the Perth Glory Game

How important is helping children read confidently?

Whether a child is a proficient reader by the third grade is an important indicator of their future academic success. Indeed, substantial evidence indicates that unless students establish basic reading skills by that time, the rest of their education will be an uphill struggle. This evidence has spurred efforts to ensure that all students receive high quality reading instruction in and even before the early grades. (*Martin R West, Prof Harvard School of Education Centre on Child and Families Economic Studies*)

A message from our retiring Chairperson – Robyn Fenech

'2014 is shaping up to be another year of solid progress for HU4K. We attained incorporation as a volunteer not-for-profit group and received a Lotterywest grant to help recruit and induct volunteers and highlight the many benefits of HU4K. Thanks to an expanding number of volunteers who give time to listen to children read, we now have 10 primary schools participating in the program across the Greater Bunbury area.

It has been a privilege being involved with HU4K for two years as Chairperson but I have had to resign due to relocation. Sincere thanks to the cornerstones of HU4K - our committed and enthusiastic volunteers, our partner schools, our fantastic coordinator Jan and the HU4K committee. Also, many thanks to our strong support base – the GSEDC, Leschenault Rotary Club, Australind Shopping Centre and NAB. Many children have, and will continue, to benefit from this great program.'

Management Committee Changes

Sadly, Robyn is not the only member of our Management committee who will be relocating to Perth. Our friend and supporter, Lee Miles, is leaving us as well. Lee has been a committee member since 2011 and her advice, knowledge and expertise will be greatly missed. We wish Robyn and Lee every success and happiness in their new ventures.

We welcome Fiona Fitzgerald EO of the Small Business Centre Bunbury Wellington; Marc Vanderplank, Store Manager of NAB, Bunbury and Asher Vukelic, Managing Partner of VPG Property who will bring their expertise to the management team.

As from June, long time committee member and EO of Investing in Our Youth, Carmen Gregg, will become our new Chairperson.

Call for Help Distributing Brochures

If you belong to a walking group or walk solo or with friends and would consider putting our brochures in the letterboxes you pass, please let Jan know.