

The HU4K Focus



Newsletter 1, 2024

Dear Volunteers,

Here we are at the beginning of another year for students in our schools to have the benefit of having a “special friend “ to hear them read, support and encourage them, and take an interest in them as individuals.

I wonder if we will truly ever know the impact, we are having on the students we see? I don't know if we will ever have hard data that shows the difference volunteers are making in their school but I know from my working life that children need positive influences in their lives and they need to be a competent reader to make their way in the world. We have strong anecdotal evidence that shows that HU4K is making a difference.

Coming up at 1:30pm on April 15th we have our first VNE for 2024 at the Hudson Road Family Centre in Withers where our guest presenter, Judy Chitty, will discuss ‘Structured Literature’ which is the new buzz term in education at this time. Judy has recently retired from a career of teaching students with difficulties learning to read and has incredible knowledge of the learning process.

I am always in awe of the difference volunteers can make in our community. I recently attended an amazing event in a small wheatbelt town where the community was raising money for the school. The event was a huge success and so much more than a fund-raising event, bringing people together from near and far to create an uplifting day for all. It demonstrated that each and every one of us can help to make a real difference even by the smallest act.

Keep smiling and never underestimate the difference you are making as a HU4K volunteer. Kind regards,

Helen Foan,

Chairperson

Boost your mood with a book

Those who read 30 mins a week were 18% more likely to report an increase in self-esteem and greater life satisfaction.

Australia
= 4 Kids



Bunbury Volunteer Network Event

Our first information session and get together for the Bunbury region will be held on Monday 15th April, 1.30pm at the Hudson Road Family Centre, 95 Hudson Rd, Bunbury. Guest speaker will be Mrs Judith Chitty who will provide us with all we need to know about “structured literacy”. Please let Jan know if you are attending on 0499 240 371.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

- Term 1: Wednesday 31 January – Thursday 28 March
- Term 2: Monday 15 April – Friday 28 June
- Term 3: Monday 15 July – Friday 20 September
- Term 4: Monday 7 October – Thursday 12 December

Benefits of Volunteering

Volunteering has many benefits to health and wellbeing. It can:

- ◇ Give you a sense of achievement and purpose
- ◇ Help you feel part of the community and has a positive impact on your community
- ◇ Improve self-esteem and confidence
- ◇ Help you share your talents and learn new skills
- ◇ Help you meet new people, feel more connected and valued

Ref: www.healthdirect.gov.au

As a Hands Up 4 Kids volunteer, you are valued for your wonderful contribution to improving reading outcomes for many local school children.



Hands Up 4 Kids statistics for 2023 show our volunteers donated 3632 hours which, if costed at a conservative rate of \$40 per hour equals a WHOPPING \$145,280-00. A generous and worthy cause.

When do children start to learn to read?

In Australia, school is where formal reading instructions begin. Most children start to learn to read at age five or six (pre-primary – Year 1). In some other countries children can learn to read from ages 4 through to 7. Once school begins children should be taught the sounds that letters typically make in what is termed as “phonics”.

Children may take time to learn the sounds of letters, and thereby the collective of these sounds into words. Some children may learn at different rates to others, and the reasons for the variation may be complex.

However long it may take for children to learn to read, providing a supportive caring environment with opportunity to practice with Hands Up 4 Kids volunteers, parents and teachers is an important step.

Ref: *The Conversation*, when do kids learn to read, Daniel and Wegener, 9 November 2023.

Shhh! Little Mouse



Pamela Allen

Australia Day author honours

Aotearoa New Zealand children's writer and illustrator Pamela Allen has been appointed as a

Member of the Order of Australia (AM). Pamela Allen has published over 50 picture books since the 1980's. Some of our favourites are *Mr McGee*, *Alexander's Outing*, *Belinda and Shhh! Little Mouse*.



The Hands Up 4 Kids Website has recently been upgraded. It looks smart and interactive with testimonials, FAQ, Focus newsletters and so much more.

Check it out :

www.handsup4kids.org.au

Share special time with a book

86% of children said they **loved being read books aloud** at home or liked it a lot – the main reason being because it is a **special time with parents**.



Ruth Fiddian, Margaret River zone coordinator is *In the Spotlight* this newsletter. Many thanks to Ruth for taking part.

How long have you been a HU4K volunteer? I am currently in my 6th year as a volunteer of HU4K.

What do you like most about being a volunteer? I love getting to know the students and watch their progression throughout the year not only in their reading skills but also in their confidence. I also love our little chats we have in relation to their reading books and lives outside of school.

Where did you grow up? I grew up in a small market town called Spalding, in Lincolnshire, in the UK. I have 4 siblings.

What was your favourite childhood book? My favourite childhood books were the 'Milly Molly Mandy' books. I still have them!! This shows my age!!

What is your favourite comfort food? My favourite comfort food is Shepherd's Pie - the way my mum makes it! But I also love pasta in any guise!!

What are you reading right now? I am currently reading 'Still Life' by Sarah Winman. I have just read 'Lessons in Chemistry' by Bonnie Garmus, a great read.

If you were stranded on a desert island, what would you take with you? On a practical level, I would take my husband as he's a great cook and could build me a shelter! On an emotional level, I would take my music and a crate of books!

Any tips or advice for new HU4K volunteers? Just to relax into and totally enjoy the reading experience with the students. By giving up one hour or more per week you are making a big difference in helping the students, not only with their literacy skills but helping to build their confidence too. Staff are always so grateful for your help and you will find it as rewarding for yourselves as volunteers as it is for the students.

Feel connected with a book

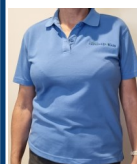
1 in 4 readers say that a book has helped them realise that other people have gone through the same thing and therefore feel better about their situation.



Margaret River VNE:

Margaret River Volunteer Network Event will be held on Tuesday 30th April. Ruth Fiddian will provide volunteers with more details closer to the event.

If you wish, HU4K polo shirts are available to purchase from *PromoteYou!*



(Ph 9791 8195)

Colour Iris and style JB's 210 Polo UPF 50+ (\$20+GST)*

OR if you have a polo shirt in the HU4K colour you can take it into *PromoteYou!* in Bunbury and they will embroider with HU4K logo (\$8+GST)*.

*prices correct at time of printing



An information and recruitment display was held at the Bunbury Forum Shopping centre on Tuesday, 6th February.

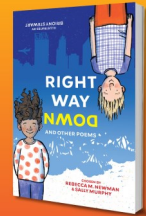
Pictured is Jenny Pyper and Laurel Eaton who were part of the team that signed 12 new volunteers up to the program, spoke to 25 others and handed out 42 brochures. A similar display was held at Savvy Seniors on Friday, March 15th.

Both events considered a great success in promoting HU4K to the community. Thank you to volunteers who assisted on the day.

New Book News – *Right Way Down* edited by Sally Murphy and Rebecca M. Newman and Illustrated by Briony Stewart is out now.

Right Way Down is a wonderful and fun anthology of children's poems, by Australian poets that will have you laughing, thinking and playing with words. Ages 9-12.

Suzanne Gratwick, volunteer with HU4K and compiler of this newsletter has a poem included in the anthology titled *The View From Here*. If you fancy a peek, *Right Way Down* is available at all good book stores.



Want more reading research?

Explore the Australia Reads Research Review.
australiareads.org.au/research-review



A Phonetically Rewarding Experience:

A volunteer recounts a rewarding experience with a 4th grade child who had been struggling with his reading for some time. The child was aware of the sounds each letter could make, but struggled with connecting them together. Hence, he could make the sound of C and A and T, but did not associate the sounds with the word 'cat'.

Recently, during a HU4K volunteer reading session, the child came across the word 'truck'. As usual he made the sounds of each letter a few times before the volunteer told the student the word was 'truck'.

Suddenly the student's eyes lit up and he shouted 'TRUCK'. The volunteer said his eye's lit up too and also did the teacher's assistant who happened to be nearby. We all exchanged big smiles and 'high fives'.

Phonics

A recent letter to the editor of the West Australian revealed an amusing anecdote from the perspective of a teaching experience and using phonics. The teacher in question arrived to WA from Northern Ireland in the 1970's. The teacher had a year 2 class who had not achieved the expected outcomes.

The teacher used a program based on phonics that allowed a student to progress from unit to unit as they became proficient. At the end of the year the teacher received a lovely thank you card from the parents of one student who were delighted at the progress their child had made in reading. However, there was one problem highlighted – the student could now read with an Irish accent!

A small poem that may amuse:

Rosie Rose

Wore pantyhose

But found it hard

With all those barbs

She shed a tear

And cried "oh dear"

I suppose

That's how it goes

When a rose

Wears pantyhose

By Suzanne Gratwick

all about Rhyming

Benefits of rhyming words in early language development:

- ◆ Talking about rhyming words helps children recognise similar sounds in words.
- ◆ Spotting similar sounds in words helps expand vocabulary.
- ◆ Understanding patterns of rhyme help children understand and develop phonic awareness.
- ◆ Rhyming words are a fun and engaging way to explore language.



The new Australian Children's Laureate for 2024 and 2025 is Sally Rippin. Sally has written over 100 books for children and young adults. Many children would be familiar with the popular *Billie B Brown* and *Hey Jack!* Series for early readers.