

# The HU4K Focus



Newsletter 3/2024

Welcome to all in the *Hands Up 4 Kids* community to our third newsletter for 2024 and a welcome to all new volunteers.

We also extend a welcome to Augusta Primary School and their team of volunteers to the *HU4K* network.

We have lots for you to browse in this edition. Neville Eastman is our *Spotlight On* participant, we look at the NAPLAN results, book review, plus other articles to view.

Volunteer Network Exchanges were conducted throughout the region and are always welcome gatherings for volunteers to meet with others in our *HU4K* community. They offer a fabulous connection and opportunity to learn.

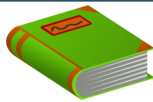
We hope you enjoy this latest offering of the *Focus* newsletter.



**Hands Up for Kids in Action** - Mike Evans, volunteer at Margaret River Primary School with a student at the recent Book Week celebrations. The student is dressed as a dragon with mask, fire and flashing lights. Mike is seen holding the fire (flag). (left)

*Children's Book Week* is an opportunity for all in the book community to come together and celebrate books. Schools, libraries, parents, children and the wider community participate in the celebration. The Book Week 2024 theme was *Reading is Magic*. It is a fabulous opportunity to connect with others around the shared value of reading for pleasure.

The theme for 2025 will be *Book an Adventure*. A significant year for the Children's Book Council as they celebrate 80 years of Children's Book Week.



*HU4K Focus* invited long term volunteer Neville Eastman to respond to our *In The Spotlight* questions for this newsletter. Many thanks to Neville for joining in the fun.

**How long have you been a HU4K volunteer?** I think I started at Picton Primary in 2015 the reason I chose that school was because first my grandmother would have started there. In 1893 she was a Forrest born in Picton and my mother would have started there in 1923+

**What do you like most about being a volunteer?** My greatest thrill from being a volunteer is to see the kids improvement each year to encourage and to get to know them as a bit of a role model

**Where did you grow up?** I was born in Bunbury educated here and my last 4 years of school was boarding at Hale School in Perth. Apart from about 7 years working and studying in Perth my working life has been as a Partner in Eastman & Co Chartered accountants in Bunbury until retirement in 2016

**What was your favourite childhood book?** My favourite children's books were the Secret Seven and Famous Five.

**What are you reading right now?** I normally get a couple of books a week from the library. Favourite authors are Peter James, Robert Ludlam, Jeffrey Archer, and John Grisham.

**If you were stranded on a desert island, what would you take with you?** Interesting question. I would hope I could have access to sporting news especially AFL games and any sport Australia is represented in. The recent Olympic games has been a highlight.

**Any tips or advice for new HU4K volunteers?** My advice to new volunteers is to take a genuine interest in each student. Learn about them and listen to them read with genuine interest and encouragement. Acknowledge improvement and become a sincere friend with each one.



HU4K Board members Nicki Phelps, Lee Mead, Teresa Welsh and Jan Akaczonczek attending Bunbury's CWA 100 Anniversary event. Teresa is also a CWA member and former CWA President.



**Save the Date** – The Christmas luncheon for Bunbury and surrounds will be Monday 16<sup>th</sup> December, 2024 at the Eaton Family Centre (same venue as last year).

Other regions Christmas functions to be advised.



According to the *Guinness World Records*, the longest book in the world is "Remembrance of Things Past". It has 9,609,000 characters, including spaces and was written by Marcel Proust in 1912.

**Joke:** What are ten things you can always count on?  
Your fingers!

### Focus on NAPLAN

The NAPLAN (National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy) is an annual test conducted in schools in years 3, 5, 7 and 9 throughout Australia. It was first rolled out in 2008.

In August the national 2024 NAPLAN results were released. The results garnered much negative attention throughout the media.

A recent article in *The Conversation* reassuringly stated that the media response is out of context and decidedly unhelpful. The results in 2024 are very similar to 2023, however, the way students are now categorised has altered how some have interpreted the report.

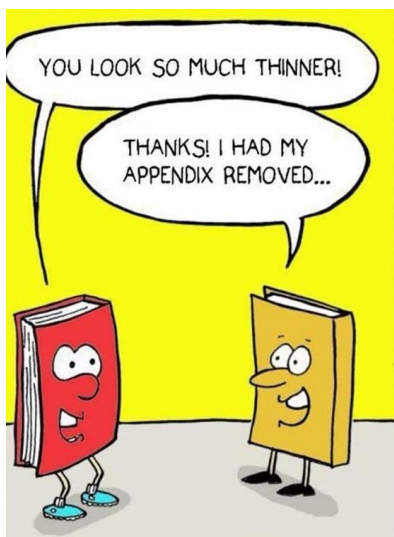
It is worth noting that NAPLAN is only one test used to assess student learning. Teachers use other methods to measure students' progression across subjects in the curriculum.

Despite the alarmist views in the media, our Australian school students have maintained their standing from last year.

theconversation.com/are the latest naplan results really an epic fail, Larson Sally, University of New England, 14 August 2024.



The first story ever written was "The Epic of Gilgamesh". It was written in 2100 BCE in the cuneiform script, which is one of the oldest forms of writing. It has been translated and is readily available to be read today.



### Volunteering and wellbeing

You will know, that when you help someone out, no matter how small the deed, it makes you feel good? Even helping someone carry shopping or offering a supporting arm navigating steps?

Feeling good is just one of the benefits of volunteering, not only are you making a big difference to the future of the children you listen and assist to read, but you are making connections and forging new friendships within the Hands Up 4 Kids community.





### Focus on Books -

**Kev and Trev** by Kylie Howarth is a graphic novel (comic style).

“Dodge flying coconut cannonballs, outrun ghost pirates, escape big sharks, pig sharks and a punch-throwing pelican, all while hunting for mysterious merpugs and the missing emergency boat snacks! Join Kev and Trev’s epic deep-sea adventure – full of kraken laughs and comic comm-ocean!”

Readership from age 5+. Written with neurodivergent readers in mind, equally appealing to confident readers.

Permission given by Affirm Press to publish book cover and synopsis May 2024.

The *Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Foundation* is a program introduced to schools to educate, inform and inspire children to learn about food from paddock to plate. It is a hands-on kitchen garden approach to teach children about healthy food that contributes to their own wellbeing.

One school as reported by *ABC South West* is Margaret River primary school. The students are involved with hands on learning in the garden, from picking the produce and cooking in the kitchen. They even have a produce stall for the community. There is enormous learning potential for all the students across many areas of the curriculum. The biggest benefit of all is the skills each student will retain for their lifetime.

If you would like to learn more you can visit [kitchengardenfoundation.org.au](http://kitchengardenfoundation.org.au) or visit [mrriverps.wa.edu.au](http://mrriverps.wa.edu.au)



### Finding “that” book:

The key element for children to enjoy reading is to enjoy what they are reading about. It sounds quite simple really, but it can be a challenge for children to find the right book to hook them. Of course, the book needs to be age and reading level appropriate.

If a book has too many big, hard words then it will likely put the child off continuing to read it. If it is too easy, then the child will not be challenged enough and bored with it.

Chatting with the child to discover their interests, sports, or hobbies is a great start to finding that all important title. Often the popular subjects will be horses, motorbikes, football, ballerina’s/dancing and dinosaurs, to name just a few. There are a number of books and series covering all these subjects and more.

Armed with the information, a friendly librarian can be approached, fellow students may offer suggestions or even a local bookstore will have knowledgeable staff to assist with book selection. Parents often find a series attractive as once one book is “gobbled up”, there are more to follow on with.

An online source of quality, award winning books can be found at the *Children’s Book Council of WA* website: [wa.cbca.org.au](http://wa.cbca.org.au)

Opinion piece by Suzanne Gratwick, ex-bookseller

**Joke:** Did you hear about the book on glue? You can’t put it down!

Education Department Term 4 dates:

Monday 7<sup>th</sup> October to Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> December



Merry Christmas to all Hands up 4 Kids volunteers. Thank you for your continued support. You are much appreciated.