

FOCUS NEWSLETTER

Newsletter 2/2026

Welcome

Hello and a warm welcome to the second Focus Newsletter for 2026.

Everyone will be well settled into their volunteer jobs by now and will have established connections with our young readers, school staff and friends within our HU4K community. To all our volunteers, both new and long term, our most sincere thank you for the invaluable job you do to assist children's literacy.

It is good to focus on the small positive things we can do in our lives, particularly when so much is happening in the wider world. Keeping it local and looking after local is vital.

I recently read about the Dutch trend of "dusking". It is the act of taking time at the end of your day, finding a place to sit outside, whether it be beside the sea, in your garden or perched on your front verandah and watching the light of the day disappear over the horizon. It is a way of disconnecting from your worries and brings your day to a natural close. I think finding some quiet time is a vital antidote to a sometimes busy and chaotic world. Focus Newsletter hopes you find some quiet time in your day (& enjoy the newsy articles we have to share with you).

HU4K STARS

Hands Up 4 Kids have two volunteer stars who have recently been recognised in the community.

Cheryl McQueen and **Teresa Welsh** are the two stars and we celebrate their volunteering achievements.

Teresa Welsh was recognised along with other 'Gems' by the Zonta Club of **Bunbury's Hidden Gems Award**. Teresa has been a dedicated volunteer with HU4K for many years in addition to the Country Women's Association and the St. John of God Hospital concierge desk.

Cheryl McQueen, a dedicated volunteer with Hands Up 4 Kids and Solaris Care was nominated by Solaris Care for **2026 South West Volunteer of the Year Awards**.

Cheryl was proudly named as one of the three finalists for her years long dedicated service. Congratulations to both Cheryl and Teresa on well-deserved recognition. HU4K are grateful for your dedication and service, not only for what you have contributed to HU4K and children's literacy but for all your community service activities.

Events

On Friday 22nd of May HU4K had an information table at the **Seniors Activity Day** held in Bunbury. Supported by volunteers Teresa Welsh, Cheryl McQueen, Jenny Piper and Jan Akacznek.

Our volunteers spoke with many attendees and handed out as many brochures. Many thanks to our lovely volunteers who helped on the day.

Photos from the day (right) L-R Jan, Teresa, Cheryl and Jenny

Positive Vibes

On Monday 15th of June HU4K Bunbury and regions presented a **Volunteer Networking Event**. Guest Speaker was Ms. Christine Fox, Deputy Principal at Maidens Primary School. Christine presented the topic on Positive Behaviour in Schools Support Plan.

Christine explained that Positive Behaviour Support is a proactive approach to guiding behaviour. It guides students to be safe, respectful and caring of others, the environment and themselves. For example, "I need to see you sitting safely with your bottom on the chair and your feet on the floor". This outlines what you want and the expectation of the behaviour.

This was a valuable VNE for our volunteers as it enables them to model the language shared by teachers in their schools.

Thank you to Christine for presenting and those who attended on the day.

Photo (right) of Jan and Christine





HU4K Focus Newsletter invited Athena Sofilas to participate in our Spotlight On questions for our newsletter. Many thanks to Athena for joining in the fun:

- How long have you been a HU4K volunteer? *I think I have been volunteering for over 10years.*
- What do you like most about being a volunteer? *The interaction with the students and the satisfaction that I receive knowing I am helping make a difference.*
- Where did you grow up? *I was born in Bunbury and attended Rathmines Primary School, Central School (now Bunbury Primary) and Bunbury Senior High School. I spent 40 years working in the retail industry starting at Boans.*
- What was your favourite childhood book? *My favourite childhood books were the Famous 5.*
- What is your favourite comfort food? *My favourite comfort food is anything savoury.*
- What are you reading right now? *I am currently reading Karen Slaughter – After That Night.*
- If you were stranded on a desert island, what would you take with you? *If I was stranded on a desert island, I would make sure I had plenty of books and crossword puzzles.*
- Any tips or advice for new HU4K volunteers? *For new HU4K volunteers I could not recommend a better organisation to be with and the wonderful schools that you get to be involved with.*

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

Volunteers know there's a silver lining; they see it every day.

Photo (right) of Trevor Pengelly volunteer at Boyanup PS. Trevor is also our HU4K statistician. Thanks Trevor.



A Hand of Friendship

An article published on ABC news online turns a challenging act into a positive one. The story is about a year 7 student who was born with a partial hand. Her classmates banded together with guidance from teaching staff and worked on a project to use a 3D printer to print a hand for their class friend. With much experimentation through processes, using design, various fibres, and over a 3-month period, the students successfully printed a hand for their classmate. They have since advanced the project to fine tune it even further and are looking to help others. This is an amazingly inspirational story of friendship and innovation.

Read the full story on ABC online.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2025-10-02/3d-printed-hands-made-by-port-macquarie-high-school-sudents/>

Pause, Prompt, Praise

When listening to students read remember the Pause, Prompt and Praise method for words they may stumble over – the shortcut tips are:

Pause – for 5 seconds (when a child makes an error).

Prompt – have a look at the word again, give a phonic prompt. If they still have trouble, tell them the word.

Praise – when they have read a sentence correctly or self-corrected. Look for the positives.

Picture This:

Picture books, unlike most other books are designed to be read aloud. Reading aloud is a vital first step to developing literacy. Reading aloud enhances brain development and helps children become familiar with rhythms and patterns in language. Hands Up 4 Kids volunteers know that reading aloud and sharing the experience of the book gives children an advantage on their journey towards developing literacy.

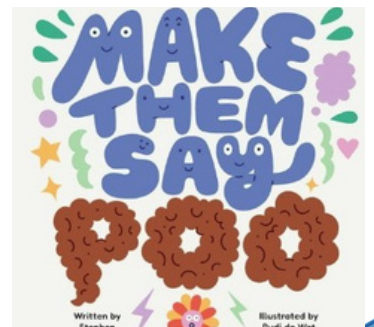
New Picture Book that will have children in giggles

Make Them Say Poo by Steve MinOn and Illustrated by Rudi de Wet

With bright and bold illustrations, this is the perfect story for classroom read-aloud or bedtime bonding. Phonics meets funny, and repetition unlocks skills that kids won't even know they're accumulating. The 'secret' joke hidden in the text (making their adults say 'poo!') is a delightful role reversal that empowers young kids.

I read *Make Them Say Poo* to my nearly 3-year-old granddaughter. She loved the brightly coloured illustrations and laughed at the last page when mormor (Grandma) said POO.

Make Them Say Poo is available at all good bookstores.



Days Gone By

A recent visit to Augusta sparked my interest in learning about the first school in the area. Investigation revealed that Karridale was the first Government Provisional school, established in 1883 by a Mr. W.A. Boyd within the Augusta area (13.8km north of Augusta). The original enrolment comprised of 19 boys and 16 girls, which seems a significant number for that period. It was located in the old Karridale settlement until 1961. Karridale appears to have been the larger settlement of that time due to the timber industry, hence its earlier establishment.

It wasn't until 1906 that the Augusta school was established between Hardy Street and Blackwood Avenue. There is a plinth with plaque on the site (now a bush block) that reads: Site of Augusta's First Government school 1906–1937. As of 1904 there were 14 settlers' children needing schooling. The first school operated out of Skipper William Ellis' house from May 1st, 1905. The first teacher was Miss Janet Taylor (Anglican minister's daughter). The first Education Department teacher did not arrive until 1926, a Miss Vida Baskerville who stayed until 1934. By then the building was situated in a swampy area and was in very poor condition.

You don't need too grand of an imagination to consider what the school in a swamp may have been like during those times; damp; muddy; mosquito's; bathroom facilities in the outhouse; limited education resources; vermin and more.

Unfortunately, I could not locate a photo.

Ref: Hertiage Council of WA, place # 26140. Inherit.dplh.wa.gov.au



Bookworms:

You would no doubt of heard of the term Bookworm an endearing term to describe an avid reader. Have you ever wondered what other cultures call their avid book readers?

In France book lovers are called "rat de bibliothèque" meaning library rat. Or in Spain "devorador de libros" meaning devourer of books. In Italy you may hear "topo di biblioteca" meaning library mouse – cuter than a rat. In Germany you may hear "Bücherwurm", meaning bookworm. How about "kutu buku" meaning book tick in Indonesian and then there is the great book loving nation of Finland, there you may hear "lukutoukka" meaning book caterpillar. And that reminds me of Eric Carle's *Very Hungry Caterpillar*. From rats to worms to ticks – it seems they all like to be lost in books.

