



MEDIA RELEASE

14th August 2008

Celebrate Children's Book Week by helping children learn to read with St John

Children's Book Week 2008 will be celebrating its 63rd birthday this year and is the longest running children's festival in Australia.

Children's Book Week will be held from 16-22 August 2008 and theme them of the week with be 'Fuel your Mind.'

With an OECD study revealing that Australian students are beginning to fall behind their counterparts overseas, it has never been a better time to help students improve their literacy skills.

St John (NSW) runs Early Literacy Courses across NSW for parents, grandparents, family friends or community members who want to help teach kids to read.

The St John (NSW) course covers both the theoretical and practical aspects of the reading process as well as addressing values and attitudes and communication skills. It has been developed in consultation with the NSW Department of Education and Training K-6 English Syllabus.

The four day course costs \$25 and is held across NSW throughout the year. It is also available by Distance Learning.

People who complete the course receive a certificate, and are invited to join the St John (NSW) Program to Aid Literacy (PALs®), a volunteer program designed to help primary school students who have problems with reading and writing.

PALs® operates in primary schools across NSW, linking volunteers with a child who needs that extra bit of help with learning. Volunteers spend an hour a week during school time assisting children one on one or in small groups.

"Many PALs® volunteers have been participating in the program for a number of years and find it extremely rewarding to provide that extra help to a child learning to read and write," said Marcia Chalmers, Community Care Manager.

"The Early Literacy Course provides the skills for people who are interested in becoming a PALs® volunteer, as well as encouraging mums, dads and grandparents to help out their own young ones," she said.

So, if you think you can fuel the minds of young readers through supporting their reading and encouraging children to enjoy reading please call St John (NSW) Community Care on 02 9219 6842.

Course Details

Albury

Location: Mitta Mitta Canoe Club, Noruil Park, Wodonga Place
Date: Four-day course over the following days: 25, 26, 27, 28 August
Time: 9.30am to 2.30pm each day
Cost: \$25 (participants who apply and are accepted as a volunteer can apply for a refund after active volunteering for six months)

Nowra

Location: Nowra Arts Centre Annex, 12 Berry Street, Nowra
Date: Four-day course over the following days: 28, 29 August, 4, 5 September
Time: 9.30am to 2.30pm each day
Cost: \$25 (participants who apply and are accepted as a volunteer can apply for a refund after active volunteering for six months)

Surry Hills

Location: St John House, 6 Hunt Street, Surry Hills
Date: Four-day course over the following days: 27, 28 October 4, 5 November
Time: 9.30am to 2.30pm each day
Cost: \$25 (participants who apply and are accepted as a volunteer can apply for a refund after active volunteering for six months)

Newcastle

Location: St John Branch Office, Court Street, Adamstown
Date: Four-day course over the following days: 3, 4, 10, 11 November
Time: 9.30am to 2.30pm each day
Cost: \$25 (participants who apply and are accepted as a volunteer can apply for a refund after active volunteering for six months)

ENDS

Further information and interviews:

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