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Author spreads kids' literary wings

Carly Laden Broome Advertiser

Friday, 15 June 2018 12:58PM



📷 Children's author Susanne Gervay reads her book *Elephants Have Wings* to the Our Mob playgroup at St Mary's College. Picture: Carly Laden



Pre-school children have been given the opportunity to experience a new love of stories thanks to a visit by a renowned children's author.

Susanne Gervay visited the Our Mob playgroup at Broome's St Mary's College on June 6 to read her new book, *Elephants Have Wings*, to the children and encourage them to read at an early age.

Gervay is also a committee member for Books in Homes, involving herself in the selection process of books to be sent to children in more than 40 remote schools in the Kimberley.

Gervay said she was inspired to become involved in Books in Homes after a trip to the Kimberley with World Vision to see its playgroup program.

“Their program involves both the children and their mothers in remote communities to give them an early educational experience before the children move into the strange environment that is a school,” she said.

“It helps the children motivate themselves to attend school more and get past the fear of moving into a new environment because they’re so used to being in community.”

The Books in Homes program provides playgroups such as the Our Mob playgroup with a curated selection of books that children are able to take home.

“For many of the children in these playgroups, the books they take home are likely to be the only books in the home,” Mrs Gervay said. “What we’ve found is that indigenous children, in particular, have a deep love of story and the program really helps them develop their pre-reading skills.

“We also want the parents to be present so they can help encourage their kids to continue reading when they see their kids engaging in the stories they read.

“We have also found that the children that attend the playgroups go on to be very successful at school.

“It is certainly a win-win situation for everyone involved.”

Gervay said since she had started reading *Elephants Have Wings* to children in remote communities, the children had been really engaging with the story. “I have found that the kids would start sitting down ready to listen and as I continue the story, they get closer and closer to me, looking at the books and the pictures,” she said.

“It is absolutely wonderful to see their reaction.”

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