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Book Club with a twist

What do you get when you combine baseball and children's literacy? A class of excited primary school students, of course.

On Thursday (December 2) the two worlds collided through an ongoing partnership between the Valuing Children Initiative (VCI) and Perth Heat.

Westfield Park Primary School students were delighted to meet players Megan Everitt and Conor Lourey, who delivered the VCI's Four Pillar Book Series in captivating fashion.

"The stories aren't just a good read, they're designed to serve as educational tools and provide adults with opportunities to connect and discuss important issues with children," VCI Development Executive Maddie McLeod said.

"With the use of such delightful characters as Kelvin the Kangaroo and Kooky the Kookaburra we are able to empower children through our four pillars of listening, voice, safety and growth.

"Thanks to Conor and Megan's input, they also learnt a bit about baseball too."

Every student in the room was gifted with a Perth Heat goodie bag, including one of the VCI's Four Pillar books.

"There's lots of great work happening at Westfield Park Primary School," Ms McLeod said.

"Congratulations to Principal, Steve Soames, and to all of the staff, for your innovative and creative approach to education.

"It's exciting to see three very different organisations working together to ensure children are at the forefront of our considerations. This is what valuing children looks like."

The VCI and Perth Heat have been in cahoots since 2019, with the baseball club hosting an annual Valuing Children game day and supplying players for school book readings.

Perth Heat CEO Steve Nelkovski said the readings are a unique way for the club to demonstrate their commitment to valuing children through sport.

"We are always looking for opportunities to champion children, whether that be through clinics, player meet and greets or other inclusion activities like the Book Club," he said.

"Sport is a fantastic way to promote children's literacy because the kids are just so receptive to the players.

"Studies show that physical education can improve brain function and academic performance, so to combine the two really is a no-brainer."

To arrange a Perth Heat VCI Book Club at your school or community group, contact Madde McLeod at mmcleod@valuingchildren.com.au

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About the Valuing Children Initiative

The Valuing Children Initiative (VCI) was established in 2016 to inspire Australians to value all children, promote understanding that children's wellbeing is the shared responsibility of the entire community, and ensure children are at the forefront of our considerations.

VCI's vision is the creation of a society in which all children in Australia experience the caring, safe, and supported childhood they deserve. The VCI recognises the important contributions children make to our society in the here and now and advocates to ensure children are treated with dignity and respect. This includes ensuring children and young people are provided with opportunities to express their views and opinions.

Valuing Children Four Pillar – Book Series background

Officially launched in April 2021 by Professor Fiona Stanley AC, the books use delightful Australian native animal characters; Kelvin the Kangaroo, Kooky the Kookaburra, Ellie the Echidna and Summer the Swan, to explore the Valuing Children Initiative's four core pillars of Listening, Voice, Safety and Growth.

In a partnership with sponsors Westbooks, 4000 sets of the books – which have been added to the State Library of WA's heritage section – have been donated to Western Australian primary schools, a further 250 sets to WA regional libraries and 100 sets to Perth Children's Hospital.

The books are available for sale at selected bookshops or can be purchased directly from the Valuing Children Initiative website – www.valuingchildreninitiative.com.au.