

Books get babies started on reading

Waikato Literacy Association celebrate International Literacy Day

Members of the Waikato Literacy Association visited the Te Awamutu Birthing Centre to donate books to each baby born during September.

The Books for Babies initiative marks International Literacy Day (September 8) — a day set by UNESCO to highlight and celebrate the importance of literacy.

The Waikato Literacy Association is a branch of the New Zealand Literacy Association, a professional organisation for educators supporting literacy development. The organisation supports

teachers to develop engaging literacy programmes that promote enjoyment of literacy learning.

The books — *Hush: A Kiwi Lullaby* by Joy Cowley — were purchased with funds raised from the recent New Zealand Literacy Association conference, organised by the Waikato Literacy Association committee last year.

The Waikato association was supported by Scholastic NZ for the purchase.

Waikato Literacy Association president Sandie Haddock was also at the presentation in Te Awamutu and says the association is made of schools and individuals interested in literacy education.

She recently stepped out of being a primary school teacher into the role of territory manager for Scholastic.

"I cover the Waikato-Bay of Plenty region and am loving working with schools and supporting them with their literacy development," says Sandie.

"The committee are all volunteers who enjoy organising events that support teachers and students as well as to promote literacy in the



Waikato Literacy Association members Judith Woodham and Wendy Carrs (right) with mothers Lucy, with baby Ellidh (left) and Betina, with baby Martin, at Te Awamutu Birthing Centre.

Photo / Supplied



Waikato Literacy Association president Sandie Haddock.
Photo / Supplied

community.

"We offer professional development, often around needs that are identified within schools."

She was joined by Judith Woodham, a resource teacher of literacy in the Morrinsville

area.

Also making the presentation was member Wendy Carrs, a Te Awamutu local who taught here for a number of years then joined the Waikato University Faculty of Education as a lecturer.

She has recently been

elected to the Board of the International Literacy Association (ILA).

Sandie says this is a huge honour — one that only three New Zealanders have achieved.

As part of International Literacy Day ILA launched a year-long glo-

bal Children's Right to Read campaign (literacyworldwide.org/righttoread).

This includes 10 fundamental rights that ILA asserts every child deserves and frames reading as an issue of equity and social justice.