

## **Libraries + the Enabling Adult = Literacy**

Presenters: Jeannie Skinner and Pauline McCowan

Waiting at Auckland Airport for our connecting flight on the return home, I was struck by a vignette that summed up this presentation- a father and son, heads together as the child excitedly shared passages from the book he was carrying for the journey, with an adult who was giving him the courtesy of his undivided attention and obvious enjoyment. Everywhere I looked, there were other lifelong readers clutching their books. Somewhere along the reading journey, enabling adults will have provided books, stimulated the desire to read, demonstrated reading behaviour, and responded to the child's reading. Jeannie and Pauline described the school library as the foundation for school literacy programmes and a catalyst for the development of lifelong readers. Critical success factors in this process (documented in *The School Library and Learning in the Information Landscape: Guidelines for New Zealand Schools*) include teachers' use of the library, how well the library functions, teachers' knowledge of children's and young adults' books, the importance of role modeling, the creation of a school reading culture, and links with other libraries. In our library we have a policy of providing books that the staff will enjoy reading. Enthusiastic adults model good reading behaviour, and encourage students to read. Libraries are only as effective as the library team that runs them, and well-informed library teams of enabling adults who create libraries that meet the guiding principles of service, access, place and information resources with the passion Jeannie and Pauline displayed will entice children into life-long literacy.

Johnann Williams