

## EXPERIENCING LIFE THROUGH CHILDREN'S STORIES A PROJECT FOR SENIORS

By Shirley Campbell and Belle Alderman

yearlong project in 2011 with funds from the ACT Government Seniors Grants and Sponsorship Program. We

University of Canberra, a sponsor of the Archives, had recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Kangara Waters Retirement Community in Canberra. Perhaps members of this community and the Calvary Retirement Community might be interested in reminiscing about stories from childhood.

Members of the initially spoke with the nursing academics at the University, who encouraged them to contact the retirement communities. These managers were also keen and so our project evolved into Story: Mental stimulation, self-reflection and reminiscence, social interaction and personal wellbeing *for seniors through Australian children's literature*.

### Project Design

activities over ten months in 2011. We aimed to increase wellbeing and promote greater social engagement. Residents would be invited to include their friends and relatives in these sessions. The and offer choice, included:

- provide a focus for partic
- four facilitators
- a guided tour of the Lu Rees Archives with opportunities to view unique resources and
- an opportunity for interested participants to volunteer at the Archives under expert supervision.

### Project Planning

Belle Alderman, Director of the Lu Rees Archives, was responsible for overall supervision of the project and Shirley Campbell was the Project Manager. Planning began in November 2010. We met over lunch with the Activities Coordinators of the two retirement communities. Simultaneously, Belle Alderman recruited a desire to share that knowledge and

- Dates could not be set for the year.
- We were advised that many residents had downsized and would be unlikely to have their childhood to share.
- We were unable to determine specific interests and cater for these due to the changing nature of the group.

## **DELIVERING THE PROJECT**

### **Project Manager's Role**

This involved:

- assisting in identifying suitable presenters
- liaising with the retirement communities to schedule the program
- assisting presenters where required in the preparation of their topics
- liaising with presenters during the duration of the project
- preparing promotional materials
- attending each session and keeping appropriate records
- facilitating payment of presenters
- preparing a resource kit for future use with the assistance of the Lu Rees Archives
- meeting with the Activities Coordinator of each facility to evaluate the project
- assisting in writing a final report.

### **Presenters and Resources**

The presenters were not trained health professionals but individuals who were enthusiastic and knowledgeable.



<b>Date 2011</b>	<b>Numbers attending</b>	<b>Topic presented Purpose of session</b>	<b>Key resources</b>
08.07	10 low/high care residents (CRC)	Reading and reminiscing: Enid Blyton books To consider why these books are popular, how they reflect a specific aspect of the socio-cultural context in which they were written, and the discrepancy between the popularity of the books among children and the negative criticism in the mass media	The Boy Next Door The Adventurous Four The Famous Five on a Treasure Island Noddy Goes to Toyland Rumble and Chuff
12.08	9 low/high care residents (CRC)	Picture books that both entertain and enchant To recall picture books from pre- and post- World War 2,	
01.09	13 low/high care residents (KW)	comparing the contentr 2,	