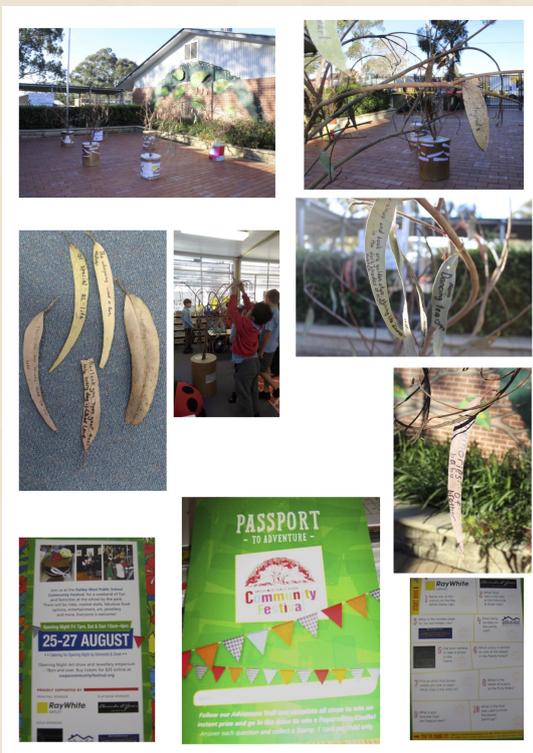


POETRY OBJECT

Jennifer, Teacher
Oatley West Public School



"A Poetry Forest Installation"

Students from Oatley West Public School have been involved in the Red Room Company's Poetry Object competition for the past three years. While students and their families have enjoyed reading each other's poems, we wanted a way of sharing their amazing work with a wider audience.

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POETRY OBJECT

Every year, our school holds a Community Festival. Art plays a large part of the festival, in that our school hall and library become a giant exhibition featuring quality Australian art and jewellery for sale. We felt that this would also provide a great opportunity for us to display the students' creative work.

Our school emblem is a giant fig tree, and rather than rules; we work on a values based system where students are rewarded with 'Values Leaves' when they demonstrate any of our eight school values. The tree and the leaves were an obvious choice for the basis of an installation. The trees were sourced from the local area after they had blown down in a storm. The bases came from 'Reverse Garbage' and the students found their own leaves.

This year, as each student in Years 3 4 completed their entries for the competition, we had them select their most powerful line and write it on a gum leaf. Each class hung their leaves from their trees. The trees became a 'forest', and they were displayed as part of the Community Festival in August this year.

The organisers of the festival were most supportive, and they included the Poetry Forest as a stop on their 'Passport' so that children visiting the festival had to find a colour mentioned on one of the leaves and write it on their passport in order to get it stamped.

The leaves from the trees became new poems as they fluttered and tangled themselves around each other. We encouraged visitors to 'talk a walk' as they read the leaves to each other. The forest was situated at the entrance to the school, and thus, our goal of reaching a wider audience was achieved.

We have been asked to submit another poetry installation next year!

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