

The Advocate

Centre's donation helps pupils put thoughts into words

By Ruza Zivkusic, 24 Aug, 2010 12:00 AM

WITH English being a second language for more than 60per cent of Sunshine Harvester Primary School pupils, teachers often need help in promoting a new vocabulary. But with a \$3000 grant from Sunshine Plaza shopping centre, the school is in the process of building a learning centre to help refugee students and others with a disadvantaged background.

Principal Alan Dash said the centre's three cubby-style buildings would make a difference. "If you cannot speak, you can't read and if you can't read you can't write. So it's an ongoing process of helping them and we have to give them a great start." Mr Dash said children would be rotated through the three buildings to play and work on language with mentors. "We have a Sunshine Harvester oral and language approach that teachers use, and we create the environment where we talk about things you can feel and experience."

Six building and construction students from Sunshine College's senior campus are erecting the centre with the guidance of teachers. Sunshine Plaza centre manager Glenn Jones said the donation for the new learning centre - where the project is being managed by not-for-profit organisation YouthNow - continued a history of supporting local initiatives, including the Brimbank and Lantern festivals.

YouthNow project officer Bill O'Connor said the plaza had taken the lead on raising funds for the project. The grant is a quarter of the amount required to complete the \$12,000 construction. "This donation is a great kick-start for this worthwhile project and sets a good example for others in the Brimbank community," Mr O'Connor said. "The project will coincide with the Sunshine 150 celebrations and will provide a lasting reminder to mark this special occasion, which the community can be proud of for many years to come."

Construction of the learning centre is due to be completed next month.



Project boost: Honey (centre) and other pupils celebrate the donation for their new learning centre.