

# Bright sparks show interest in reading



**Shining bright: A representative from the Australian Business and Community Network helps Upfield PS Year 4 student Maher read aloud, as part of the Spark reading program.**

**By Rachel Skinner**

COMMONWEALTH Bank volunteers swapped number crunching and meetings for reading and book discussions at Upfield Primary School last term, as part of the Australian Business and Community Network's (ABCN) Spark reading program.

Mentors visited the school once a week to take part in one-on-one reading sessions with students experiencing reading problems, to improve their literacy and conversational skills and increase their vocabulary.

Established in 2005, the ABCN is a forum for business leaders, students and educators to work together on programs to improve outcomes for primary and secondary students.

Leading teacher Senay Karaca said the most common problem children have with reading is

comprehension.

"It's the higher-level questions, the more difficult questions where they have to think for themselves to find the answer," Ms Karaca said.

The trained mentors begin by reading and discussing a familiar book with their 'buddy', before introducing new books at the child's reading level.

Ms Karaca said the response from students was "fantastic" and the school hopes to continue the program next year.

"They developed really good relationships with the mentors and enjoyed sharing the books," she said. "They were sad when the program had to come to an end."

#### CONTACT

Senay Karaca  
Upfield PS  
karaca.senay.s@edumail.vic.gov.au  
9359 1966