



Naomi's World

Follow Harmony the Hen through the world
of children's author

Naomi Lake



Carers WA acknowledges the Traditional Owners of country throughout Australia and recognises their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respects to them and their cultures; and to elders both past and present.



Acknowledgements:



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Naomi Lake
Author, Speaker
www.harmonyhen.com

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Contents

 Introducing the author	4
 This is me	5
 Early memories.....	6
 Fitting in at school.....	7
 Inspiration to write	8
 Dreams are important	10
 Coming to life	11
 My career, my community.....	13
 Ideas are all around us	14
 Achievements and the road ahead	15
 Shine, shine, shine.....	18
 Friends and community are important	19
 Naomi, the actress and performer.....	20
 My favourite things	21
 Thank you.....	22

My name is Naomi. I am a children's author and I live in Albany, Western Australia.

I was asked by Carers WA to write a book about about my life.

I hope you all like it.

I am also an ambassador for Down Syndrome WA and I attend meetings and workshops in Perth. I have had afternoon tea at Parliament House with the Minister for Communities, Stephen Dawson.

Being a role model for others and encouraging children to read and write is a passion of mine because it has opened up the world for me. I love learning and trying new things whenever I have the opportunity. You just have to go out to explore the world because the world won't come to you.



***At the gala dinner for
Down Syndrome WA***



This is me

I haven't always lived in Australia. I was born in England, the youngest of four girls. As I was growing up my family found many ways to ensure that I did not feel different or excluded and could join in whatever activities I wanted.

My sisters always helped me to achieve my goals.

My family have told me that when I was 3 years old I started to spell my name using foam letters that my sister Paula and I used to play with in the bath. After that, Mum taught me to read and it opened up the world for me.



Holding my first book

Early memories

For as long as I can remember, I have enjoyed reading and writing stories. My family have always encouraged and supported me, although it sometimes drives mum mad because there's paper everywhere!! I write with pen and paper and then transfer it to the computer or iPad afterwards. I never go anywhere without a book and I read to my nieces and nephews, just like my sisters used to read to me.



My three sisters Jayne, Karen and Paula

Fitting in at school

When I was at school, especially high school, I had a hard time trying to fit in, but I always found comfort in the library, reading.

My favourite subject was English and I knew I would become a children's author. I love reading because it transports me to another world filled with magic. I can become part of the story and travel from the real world to the make believe.



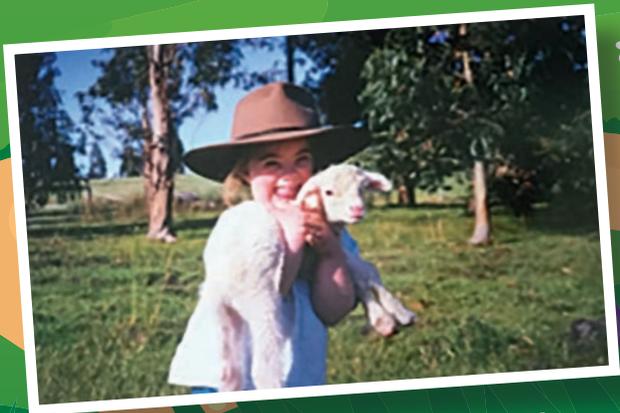


Inspiration to write

I lived on a farm when I was young, I loved watching the chickens scratching around the farmyard and holding the baby chicks. It gave me inspiration to write my stories about Harmony the Hen. Mum and I sat on the patio one day watching the chickens and one of them kept darting in and out of the bushes.

I said to Mum "I think she has lost something"
Mum said, "What would a chicken lose?"
and I said "Her eggs of course!"

After that, I started writing a story about Charlotte the hen. I took photos and made a little booklet about her. Later on I decided to re-name the hen Harmony and I expanded the story to include other farmyard animals.



Holding a lamb on the farm in Bridgetown



Following the sheep



Dreams are important

My sister Paula knew I dreamed of becoming a children's author. She asked mum for one of my stories and mum chose Harmony. Paula gave it to her artist friend Dave to illustrate. Then she sent the story and illustrations away to make it up into a book as a surprise Christmas present for me. I was in shock, I stood there with my mouth wide open, when she gave me the book.



Feeding the chickens



Selling books with Paula





Coming to life

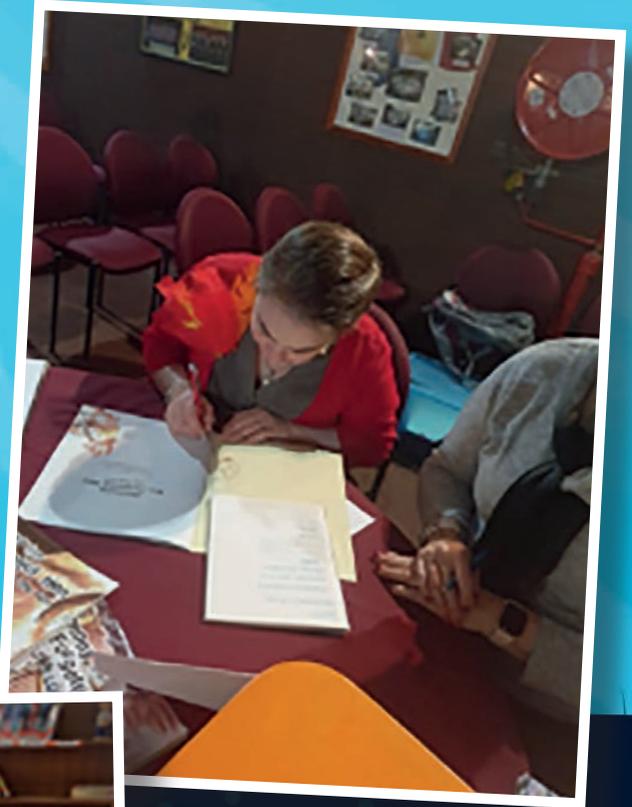
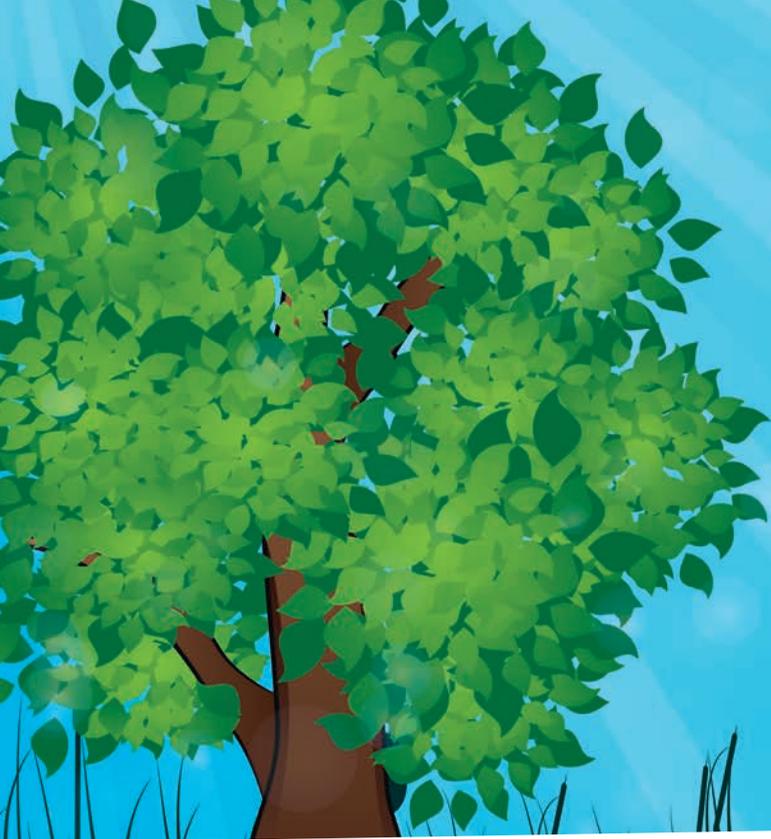
I showed my family and friends my book. Dave's illustrations had brought my story to life. Everyone just loved it and wanted a copy so I decided to publish it to the world. There is so much involved in printing and publishing a book! Writing the story was the easy part. Thanks to my darling sister Paula, my dream had come true.



Discussion with graphic artist



Signing final layout

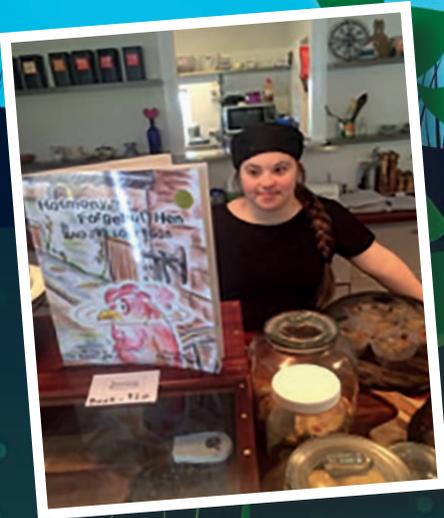


Book signings

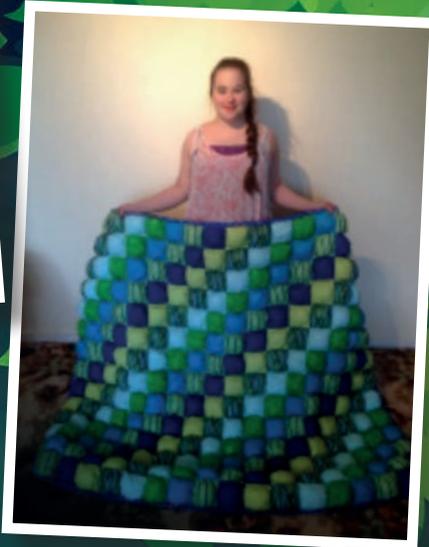


My career, my community

After leaving school I started work in a local café and was there for ten years. I liked the interaction with the customers, especially the regulars. I am studying fashion design and technology at TAFE, and have made many gifts for my family and friends. Previously I have completed certificates in hospitality, retail, photography and an advanced course for iPad. I volunteer with meals on wheels where I help in the kitchen putting together meals to be delivered to the vulnerable members of our community.



Selling books at the café where I worked for 10 years



I made a blue and green puff quilt



Preparing for christmas at TAFE



Ideas are all around us

People always ask me how I go about writing a story. I get ideas from everywhere just by looking around me. The ideas start in my brain but I write from the heart, then it travels down my arm and flows out through my hand. I always have a notebook or pen and paper with me and I write down anything that interests me. Writing is like everything else, you have to practice all the time if you want to get better at it. I write a journal every day and I write out recipes to try because I really like cooking and trying new dishes.

I have now written two children's storybooks titled 'Harmony the Forgetful Hen and the Lost Eggs' and 'Harmony the Forgetful Hen and the Fox'.



Holding two published books



Reading my book to one of my fans



Achievements and the road ahead

Following the publication of my first book I received a 'Tomorrow Maker's Award' from AMP which allowed me to travel throughout the North Eastern Goldfields, the Gascoyne and Murchison Districts to visit small schools and remote communities. It was an awesome trip, we covered over 4000kms. I read to the children and completed activities with them in class. After reading, I had a question and answer session and sat down talking to the children who didn't want me to leave. I love being a role model for them and encouraging them to read lots of books. I am looking forward to another road trip, perhaps to the Pilbara or Kimberley. Teachers have used my book as "book of the week" and some have used it for a whole term for all sorts of literacy lessons and learning experiences. How cool is that!



Pictures of my book tour, visiting remote schools





I won AMP Tomorrow Makers award





Shine, shine, shine

I love performing and acting and have participated in four productions called 'Let's Shine Again', 'Let's Shine Forever', 'Let's Shine Together' and 'Let's Shine Brightly'. These shows were organised by the Light Opera Company in Albany (ALOTCo) Western Australia, to showcase the talents of people with disabilities. I danced and sang the night away and that's how I got my nickname "Dancing Queen"! People of all abilities are included. For example, you can choose any type of act that you would like to do and they help you to put it all together throughout rehearsals.



Back stage at port theatre performances



Performing and singing on stage



Friends and community

We have a lot of fun, the shows are very professional and the audience just love them. We frequently get standing ovations and that means 'good job everybody', well done! Thanks to the directors, light and sound engineers, stage managers, costume ladies and front of house people who are all volunteer members of ALOTCo who give up their time to do these shows. We are very lucky to have them.



Group performance on stage and the finale

Naomi, the actress and performer

Along with these four productions, I have been an extra in a couple of tv series and a movie and have acted and performed in other shows organised through local drama groups.

Public speaking is something else I enjoy and I have written and delivered speeches at many events. These include the Butterfly Ball, Gala Dinner and workshops with teachers and education assistants.



Butterfly Ball and book launch speeches



Backstage waiting to go on



My favourite things

My favourite thing to do is look after my chickens. I give them food and fresh water everyday and clean out their run. Mum uses the manure in the garden. I sit and have a chat with them but sometimes the conversation is a bit one sided! They follow me around the yard and let me know when they have laid an egg. The best part is I get lovely fresh eggs for my breakfast!

I go to the gym and swim three or four times a week. I would like to become an actress and have my own home one day.



***Sitting with my chickens,
holding a fresh egg***

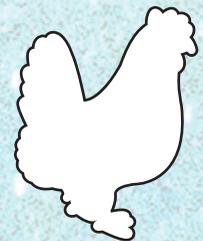


Thank you

Thank you to my darling sisters, Jayne, Karen and Paula who gave me stacks of books and read endless stories. I can't forget my dad who sang me lots of songs and nursery rhymes even though he often forgot the words!! Most of all I have to thank my wonderful, beautiful mother, who has always believed in me. My family really is amazing!



***With my support crew,
My sisters Jayne, Karen and Paula***





***"You just have to go out to explore the world
because the world won't come to you"***

Naomi Lake

