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THE *write stuff*

Kodie Bedford's story



THE UNIVERSITY OF
**WESTERN
AUSTRALIA**



HELPING KIDS BE MAD ABOUT SCIENCE



In 2011, when Rina Fu (née Wong, BSc (MedSci) Hons, PhD) was finishing her doctorate on combating malaria resistance, UWA was preparing for its inaugural involvement in the three-minute thesis competition.

The competition requires research students to present a compelling oration on their thesis and its significance in just three minutes – and in language that mere mortals will understand.

The biomedical research scientist – who has always loved music and singing, and who is a keen pianist – decided it was the perfect opportunity to blend art and science.

“So, I wrote up my research as a song and actually sang it,” she laughs. “I got into the top 10 in the end, so I was pretty happy with that!”

The mum of two has used the same approach for a new endeavour, a children’s book she wrote and illustrated, titled *My Mad Scientist Mummy*. She launched the book at Scitech in June, accompanied by a song and music video, *I’m a Little Scientist*. Both are targeted at three- to eight-year-olds.

“There’s definitely a little bit of me in there,” she says of the book, which features a scientist mum who takes her daughter into a laboratory full of exotic equipment.



“I think we have a lot of potential little scientists in Australia, and all the research shows if you get kids interested early, they’re more likely to choose STEM subjects when they’re older.”

Dr Fu says it was while coming out of postnatal depression in 2016 that she wrote and illustrated the book, after waking up in the middle of the night “with a manuscript just in my head”. During a visit to the library with her son, who had a hearing impairment, she had noticed how few books on science there were for young kids.

“I would read to Kazran all of the time and wanted it to be about interesting things, about the world and about science, but in a fun way that would engage his interest,” she says. Both four-year-old Kazran and daughter Astrida, two, seem remarkably happy about mum’s new adventures as a scientist-author.

Dr Fu is now engaged in presenting to libraries and primary schools as well as developing teaching resources based on her book, with links to the Australian science curriculum and aimed at children in early childhood through to those in primary school.

“I’d love to see my book translated into different languages, particularly into Chinese, with my Hong Kong heritage,” she says. “An idea that started here in Perth could soon help budding scientists around the world.”



In a note to potential publishers, she says she’s also got another book “scribbled down and ready to go”!

For more information, go to: rinafu.com

Top: Rina Fu’s biggest supporters, her children Kazran and Astrida, read through her much-loved book.