



KEP GARDENS NEWSLETTER

JULY 2014

****Lots of pictures this issue so don't be put off, not a lot of reading****

Hi Everyone,

The rain has finally come; the dam has filled up so we have water; it is cooler so much more comfortable. All is all, life is good.

Volunteers

This issue is a tribute to all the volunteers who have passed through Kep Gardens from BeMore, World Challenge or individually and an acknowledgement of the fantastic work and commitment they have shown to the students of Kep Gardens.

“Don't ever question the value of volunteers. Noah's Ark was built by volunteers; the Titanic was built by professionals.”

Since the last newsletter we've met:



Liselotte



Sonja



Taylor



Justin



Yvonne



Inge



Wim



Tom

All lived at Kep Gardens for varying lengths of time, some from BeMore, some individually. Volunteering is not only about Kep Gardens' students benefiting from their commitment and desire to help others. The volunteers themselves gain much: tolerance and understanding of other cultures; the younger ones grow into adulthood, become independent. Volunteers are not always young students in their gap year between studies. Many that come to Kep Gardens are older: some looking to decide what they would like to do when they retire; others fulfilling a dream of volunteering overseas and in retirement have finally found the time; others on a long trip and want to put down some roots for a period of time and have a chance to get to know the local people. Many, many reasons why people volunteer; many, many age groups represented. But rest assured all are highly valued for their skills and experience that they pass on to our students and staff.

World Challenge



Another form of volunteering is in a group. A group of students camping at Kep Gardens during the rainy season!!!!!! I don't mind telling you that we were nervous before the first group arrived. No need to be. We didn't have a lot of rain so they weren't washed out. They were a great bunch of boys from a boys' school in

Christchurch, New Zealand. They worked very hard and by the time they left we had a miniature soccer field with goals and a swing set.



working in the school. Choun and I kept the home fires burning so it was up to Sopheak and Kimsy to look after our World Challenge visitors. We are very proud of them, they took on the challenge of something very new and different for them and rose to the occasion. Well done!



Our Class 4 attended a party on Saturday night and they taught the boys Khmer dancing. It was great fun, everyone joined in, even some of our shy girls.



Kimsy and Sopheak were in charge of running the World Challenge camp. Kimsy and her sister ran the kitchen and Sopheak helped the boys with tools needed and kept the camp site running smoothly. Sothea came from Phnom Penh to join in and help. Andrew and the rest of his crew were in Kampot working on a house. I had Bemore volunteers staying in the bunkhouse and



We made a makeshift kitchen out of one of our compost bays which has never had compost in it. Worked OK. We had to enclose it with bamboo sheets in case of rain.



World Challenge are school groups from Australia, New Zealand and England who travel around Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam for 28 days. They choose a country they want to do their project in for 6 days and World Challenge allocates them a place to go. They also pay for the materials needed to complete the project that they are working on. We attempted to introduce them to as many cultural differences as possible eg food, dancing, people. All in all a very successful visit. Thank you very much Shirley Boys High School for your contribution to Kep Gardens.

We are looking forward to two more groups in August from England, a day apart from each other. These visits should see a volleyball court, sandpit, balancing beams, stepping stones, all sorts of things in the playground. The students are loving it. Not only do they have equipment to play on and with but they get to meet and play with many other people that don't get tired of kicking the ball and pushing the swing!!

At the moment the playing fields and playground equipment are restricted to Kep Gardens' students only. Eventually it will become a community facility but we have a few logistical problems to sort out before we open the gates to everyone. Once we overcome these problems we envisage an official opening of the area to welcome the community.

BeMore World Mapping

A group of 16 teenagers from The Netherlands visited for two afternoons and evenings playing games and doing various activities from face painting to playing twister with the students. We had a similar visit last year and this year 2 of the young people on that trip have returned as volunteers, not to Kep Gardens but to other projects in Kampot.



**A VERY BIG THANK YOU TO ALL
VOLUNTEERS WHO HAVE
CONTRIBUTED IN MANY DIFFERENT
WAYS TO THE SUCCESS OF KEP
GARDENS**

Visit from Liger

Liger is an NGO in Phnom Penh who toured the country and chose 50 of the brightest 9 year old students from rural state schools. They took them back to Phnom Penh where they receive a western education. They will attend universities overseas but are expected to return to Cambodia to use their skills for the betterment of their country. One class had been studying electricity and the safety aspects. They came on a field trip to Kep and visited our school to give their presentations. They made books, powerpoint presentations, took small groups and talked about electrical safety in Khmer. We were all very impressed with the group and thank Liger for including us in their field trip. We hope to see them again soon.



A big hug to Tom who has returned after first visiting us 5 years ago. If nothing else, the living conditions have improved dramatically. Tom is a big supporter of our Career Students at uni. Thank you very much Tom.

Dental Clinic

As last year, the Buddhist Library Mobile Dental Clinic visited Kep Gardens for a week. Again, not only our students and staff but another monk's school students were treated over a 5 day period. Not so many had to go back this year but after 2 extra visits we still have 4 students left needing more treatment. A big thank you to the dental clinic for providing this service for us. There would be many more sleepless, toothache nights without your help.



Waiting their turn!!

Pretty tough kids. No injections for fillings or if they take out small teeth. But they do give an injection for bigger teeth needing extraction. Next year we will have an information day a week or so before the Dental Clinic visit as this year there were a few rumours going around about upper teeth attached to your brain and if they get pulled out, it affects your brain; the clinic just takes out teeth and you have lots of problems after. So we have to try and knock these rumours on the head as some did not attend this year because of them.



Trade Skills

I said earlier that while World Challenge was here, Andrew and his merry band of men were in Kampot working on a house. They took it down a few months back (see April newsletter) but now are putting it back up, adding bathrooms, electricity etc. Should be great when it is finished.

Workshop and Storage Area

Meanwhile, our workshop and storage area has been put on hold as the house in Kampot has to be finished. We did brick up the chicken shed for two reasons. Firstly, so that the chickens won't get stolen when they eventually return to their home and secondly, to provide an undercover eating and gathering area for World Challenge. It came in handy a few times.



We also built a toilet area for the visit and will have another completed before the next group arrives. We will eventually put the electric wires underground but a week of bad weather hampered our preparations and we ended up in a bit of a rush to get ready for the first group.

The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.



Menagerie

The situation has changed greatly since the last newsletter. All the kittens have found homes. We only have 2 cats left but we did acquire 2 puppies.



Coca and Sprite are their names. Kimsy named them. They have grown heaps since this photo. Got the local "vet" out to give the cats an injection but unfortunately it was too late. They are both pregnant again. Hopefully this will be the last time. Geese and chickens still hanging around the house but that's OK. Back to a manageable number!!



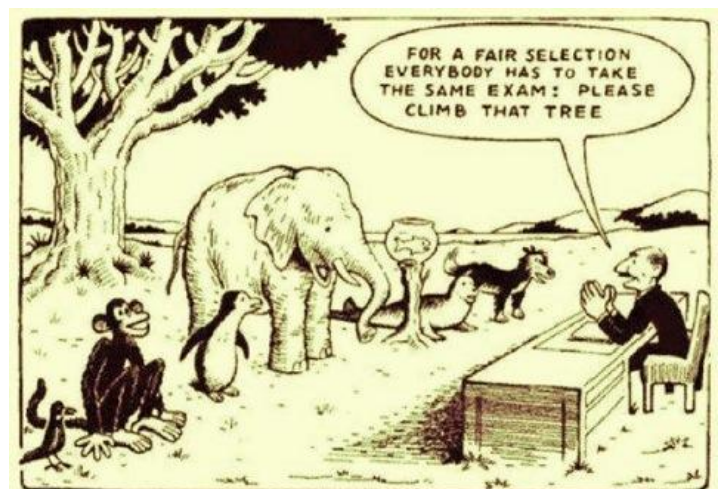
We hope everyone is healthy and happy.
Cheers Janine and Andrew

PS: If anyone has a good quotation or cartoon to include please send it.

Thanks heaps to Elizabeth and Joanne Doyle and family for helping Janet collect cans for recycling, the proceeds of which come to Kep Gardens. We appreciate your support of our project.

Bracelet Making

Puck, the BeMore representative in Cambodia, and her mother visited Kep Gardens recently. Her mother brought many bracelets made by Melanie at a school in The Netherlands. Thank you Melanie for thinking of the children at Kep Gardens.



Our Education System

"Everybody is a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid."

- Albert Einstein