



# KEP GARDENS NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2017



**TO ALL OUR KEP GARDENS' SUPPORTERS, BOTH FINANCIALLY AND OTHERWISE, WE ARE ASKING FOR SOME EXTRA HELP TO NOT ONLY CONTINUE THE WORK OF THE PROJECT BUT ALSO TO MOVE FORWARD. PLEASE PASS ON TO YOUR FRIENDS YOUR THOUGHTS ABOUT KEP GARDENS AND ASK FOR THEIR FINANCIAL HELP; CONTACT COMPANIES WHERE YOU MAY KNOW MANAGEMENT (REMEMBER WE CAN OFFER TAX DEDUCTION RECEIPTS NOW) AND ASK FOR SPONSORSHIP OR DONATIONS; JOIN WITH OTHER SUPPORTERS AND ORGANIZE A FUNDRAISING EVENT. KEP GARDENS DOES NOT HAVE A PARTICULAR DONOR OR SPONSOR. THIS MAKES IT PARTICULARLY DIFFICULT RELYING ON THE SAME INDIVIDUALS CONTINUALLY FOR SUPPORT. PLEASE HELP US TO INCREASE OUR SUPPORT BASE BY CONTACTING WHOEVER YOU CAN THINK OF FOR DONATIONS. BANKING DETAILS ARE AT THE END OF THE NEWSLETTER. THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP.**

Hi Everyone,

I've started this newsletter on a rainy, cool Sunday afternoon. Very unusual weather for this time of year but I am not complaining as it is a nice change. It reminds me of lying on the couch watching the footy on a cold, rainy, Sunday afternoon - minus the chocolate coated peanuts or sultanas unfortunately.

We hope you all survived the Christmas and New Year season and had lots of fun.

## World Challenge - Albury High School

Right after New Year, Albury High School arrived from Australia. They built some new playground equipment mainly for the younger Playgroup children, began installation of some extra water storage tanks, laid electric cable underground for our driveway lights, painted playground equipment with sump oil to protect from termites, continued building the rope bridge as well as joined in with our Reading and Conversation programme. Thank you very much Albury High School for your valued contribution to Kep Gardens. A great group of teenagers who have made many friends in the local village.

**A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO ALBURY HIGH SCHOOL FOR THE DONATION TO PAY FOR THE VERANDAH ON OUR WORKSHOP. WE WILL KEEP YOU POSTED VIA PHOTOS. MANY THANKS.**







Corbin from Albury High School designed a bird feeder for us to hang all around the Kep Gardens' area to encourage the birds to visit. Great job Corbin, a simple but effective design. We will add a pulley and rope and hang them in the trees.



### **Drama Classes**

Tomas takes each class for drama classes every Thursday afternoon. Drama is all about listening, watching, following instructions and letting yourself go, forget your shyness. Perfect skills for learning and speaking English. Tomas used to be a producer of movies and plays. He and Ruth are living in Kep for a few months so will be available for drama classes all second term. We are very lucky to have him - a great experience for the students. He is making a music video "Happy" where all students have a part to play. Parents will be invited to come and watch the special premier. Should be a fun night for the whole family.



Tomas



Ruth

**MUSIC VIDEO PREMIER  
HAPPY  
KEP GARDENS  
SATURDAY, 25<sup>TH</sup> MARCH, 2017  
7.00 PM**



Ruth is also auditing our accounts. Kylie is setting up the accounting system for the past few years and Ruth will be auditing them. Thank you both so much for taking on a huge job which had to be done but with our limited time was taking so long. A big worry off our shoulders.

### **Salty and Chilly**

A couple of weeks ago, all classes from Kep Gardens, except for the Playgroup set off by truck (took a few trips) up the mountain to the Butterfly Farm and then onto the Butterfly Valley to see a play performed by Marine Conservation, Cambodia. The play was held in the amphitheatre at the Butterfly Valley. Salt and Chilly were two blue crabs in danger as their friends died around them. Tom, our drama teacher, organized the day mainly for the students to see and understand what a play is, words like stage and audience, costumes, make believe etc. The play was an entirely new experience for the students but they also learnt an important lesson of why to keep the sea clean as many of the families are fishermen or sell seafood for a living. Some classes visited the Butterfly Farm before the performance and others after. Thank you to Tom for making the day happen. Thanks to Tom, Ruth, Kylie, Dany, Vu, Sarak and Martin for keeping the troops under control. Thanks to Nikki and George for making the amphitheatre available. The cast of Salt and Chilly did a great job getting the message across.



**Big thank you to Pov Sokman for loaning us his truck to transport the children up the hill to the Butterfly Valley.**





Originally from Russia, Eugeny spends his life travelling between China, Vietnam and Cambodia volunteering at various projects.



Lovely to have our friends, Erwin and Marina back at Kep Gardens if only for a short time.

## **Volunteers**



Stephan and Nicole from Belgium volunteered in December. Thanks so much for the camera you left with us. It's had a lot of use. Your donation went towards buying many toys and games that the children use before and after school hours. Christian's donation also went towards these toys and games. Many thanks to you all.



Choe spent 3 days at Kep Gardens in December and gave lessons about the environment. The morning students planted 4 bushes and had the job of watering and looking after them.

Thanks Choe for passing on this important message.



Zoe came from Holland and lives on a boat on a canal. How good is that! She spent a lot of time playing sport and chatting with the students.

Consequently, she made a lot of friends who remember her fondly.

## **Heart Warming Story**

The Pol Pot regime not only destroyed millions of lives but it also devastated families. Thirty-eight years after the fall of the Khmer Rouge our gardener went to meet his younger brother who he thought was dead. Mau was in his 20s and his younger brother only about 12. Mau was in Prey Veng and his brother was sent to Battambang, never to be seen or heard of again, presumed dead. His sister lives in Battambang and recently found her brother. He came to Kep recently to meet with Mau. Mau and his wife, Pov, were so excited but also apprehensive. So happy for them. They are a lovely couple. They lost other family members during the Khmer Rouge time but to have one literally come back from the dead is a huge emotional upheaval but a heart warming story to remind us that good things do happen in life.

## **Debates**

Our four debates for Class 4 this year were held a few weeks ago. Everyone did a very good job. To make it even more amazing, the debates are in English, their 2nd language. What was heartening to see was how much the students have grown in confidence and ability from their first attempt at a debate 3 years ago. I am looking forward to watching the newcomers to debates grow in the next couple of years.

**IN ORDER TO CONTINUE AS WELL AS  
MOVE FORWARD  
KEP GARDENS NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT  
PLEASE HELP TO SPREAD THE WORD**





The Buddhist Library won our inter-school debate for the second year in a row 2-1. Congratulations!



### Phnom Penh School Visit

We had a visiting group along very different lines than usual. Instead of a teenage group from overseas, we have the French School, Rene Descartes from Phnom Penh, with children

ranging in age from 7 - 12. They are mainly French children but some Italian thrown in. Lulu from Place to Play was the resident activities person for this camp. Thanks Lulu for allowing our kids to join in with the activities and use your equipment. Mark, an Australian from Kampot who does landscape gardening, came on Saturday morning and talked to the children about organic gardening, prepared a garden bed and they planted a tree. The "holiday camp" complete with a camp fire at night was a success.



VOLUNTEERS ARE WELCOME AT KEP GARDENS. WE CHARGE \$15 PER DAY WHICH INCLUDES: 3 MEALS A DAY; TWO MEALS FOLLOWED BY FRUIT; A MIXTURE OF KHMER AND EUROPEAN COOKING; ALL THE FRESH WATER YOU CAN DRINK; ALL THE TEA AND COFFEE YOU CAN DRINK; ACCOMMODATION; ROOM CLEANED EVERY DAY; LAUNDRY WASHED 3 TIMES PER WEEK; INTERACTION ON A DAILY BASIS WITH STUDENTS AND MEMBERS OF THE LOCAL COMMUNITY.

**KEP GARDENS IS A HAPPY PLACE TO BE**

### Library Books

A big thank you to Juanita Cesar from America who sent over a donation last year and again this year. We used her donation to buy 86 more Khmer library books. The books cover all ages



and include fiction, non-fiction, health, career and agriculture. Thank you Juanita.



### **Grammar Teacher**

Once every two or three years we employ a Khmer teacher for one day a week to teach English grammar in Khmer. We want to make sure that the students understand. This year is the year. Long Han will be with us for Terms 2 and 3. A welcome addition to our staff.

### **Nursing Students**

Our 3 nursing students are well into their last year, graduating from Life University in September. This year they have done a lot of work experience in Phnom Penh and Sihanoukville followed by Takeo and back to Phnom Penh. At the same time they have to prepare a proposal for a thesis and if this is accepted they then have their thesis to write. After graduation they then have to sit the national exam to become a registered nurse. They are teenagers no longer but have become confident young adults with social consciences. Very proud of them.

Cheers,  
Janine and Andrew



*Proud to partner with Global Development Group  
(ABN 57 102 400 993) for project J674N.*