



KEP GARDENS NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2017



Hi Everyone,
VOLUNTEERS

October saw not only the beginning of the school year but also many volunteers which was great. November and December have been very quiet but this has also given us a chance to implement some new procedures and programmes.



Daniel



Meelike



Steffen



Tessa



Julie and Peter



Niko and Emma



Agnes

Julie and Peter have many years of experience in education and during heaps of meetings passed on ideas to increase participation in the library and ideas for Vicki and Ian to use with the special ed students. In addition, Peter totally updated, corrected and overhauled our library system and has lifted a big load off of my shoulders which has been sitting there for the last three years or so. Julie also sat with Sarak and talked about leadership as well as reassessed our reading books into more appropriate levels. So much information that I can't think of all we did but this quieter month has given us a chance to sit back, review it all and slowly start to put it into practice one idea at a time.

To all the volunteers, thank you very much. Without you we could not achieve half of what we do. You bring new ideas, differing cultures and interesting conversation into all of our lives at Kep Gardens. Andrew and I are very lucky to have the opportunity to meet you all. The last group represented Germany, Estonia, New Zealand, America, Australia, The Netherlands and Belgium.

Regular Volunteers Vicki and Ian

Below is an excerpt from a blog by Vicki and Ian who are living in Kep. They also have years of experience in education and teaching in Asian countries and have committed to volunteering two days a week. They also have their own project with some young monks and we share resources.



On the very first visit to Kep Gardens Association the vibe felt right. Coincidentally the owners, Janine and Andrew are Adelaidians and have almost ten years of experience. They have a proven track record with volunteers in all kinds of capacities and offer a wide range of training and education programs. Janine was quick to see exactly what we would be able to do within the framework of her English teaching program and took us up on our offer to volunteer immediately. By the second visit we had established starting times and doubled our commitment as she had realised the kind of assistance we could provide. We cycle out of town in the worst heat of the day to arrive at Kep Gardens for a 1:30pm start on Mondays and Wednesdays. The place is alive with the sounds of kids playing and learning well into the evening and we make the small contribution of listening to individuals read aloud and providing them with opportunities to build their confidence in communicating orally. The final class of the day includes older and more capable high school students and adults and we attempt to facilitate conversation and assist with preparing them for debating. Of course we have also found other ways to contribute and have already supplied photos for what will become a regular monthly display showcasing Kep Gardens events and activities. Perhaps less successfully we have also contributed food for the newly established canteen struggling to instill environmentally friendly eating practices and make a profit.

CANTEEN



In the end, we were unable to find anyone interested in running the canteen as their own business. So we set it up ourselves employing 3 young girls, 2 of whom left school at Year 8 and a 13 year old who is not allowed to go to high school as she has to look after her small brother while her mother works. We feel like we are striking a blow for women, giving them some independence and money of their own. You never know what the future brings. If we give them some skills they may be able to branch out.



So, our healthy food and drink, no plastic canteen has opened. One major plus has seen, quite unconsciously, a community centre evolve before our eyes. Parents and staff have breakfast with the small students and the afternoon classes all mingle together playing board games, Uno or reading books. Parents come in to buy coconuts and stop and chat, maybe eat. Volunteers love sitting at the tables with people of all ages around them and feeling part of the community. The cheapest price is 500 riel (12 cents) and the most expensive 1500 riel (37 cents). We are not going to make our fortune but all the positives far outweigh the monetary value.

A lot of the food is also bought from people in the village who either grow it or make it eg banana chips, khmer jelly, yams, swedes. What do you think about eating a raw Swede dipped into salt and chilly? Believe it or not, the students love it! Never my favourite vegetable.



Don't forget, tax deductible donations can be paid through GDG Project J674N.

Career Students

Andrew and I are so proud of our nursing students. We have recently received their Year 4 results:

Sreyleap	2 nd	GPA	4.10
Savry	3 rd	GPA	4.06
Tann	4 th	GPA	4.06

How good is that? Congratulations to all of them for working so hard to achieve such good results. I have tears in my eyes thinking back 5 years ago when we first started this journey with them. So very, very proud!



Thank you very much to the people who supported the nursing students financially during their 5 years. They have done you proud and proven that village kids from Cambodia are just as capable as the city kids if given support and the opportunity to do well. You should all be proud of yourselves for supporting students you didn't know and look how they rewarded you. Can't get a much better feeling than this!

Women's Health

Our nursing students are awaiting their exit examination from Life University at the end of this month (different from their Year 4 results) and their national registration examination in February. It seems hard to believe that we started supporting them 5 years ago. How that time has flown! Sreyleap and Tann have employment for the interim and Savry has returned to Kep Gardens to hold health workshops for the community and the older classes. Recently we held the first workshop on Women's Health. At the community workshop, 16 ladies attended, a number that we are happy with. They asked many questions so it was obviously beneficial for them. Thanks to Vicki, Ian, Emma and Niko who kept the boys from classes 4, 5 and 6 occupied while the girls also learnt about menstruation, menstrual problems and menopause. Without the boys they had the chance to ask lots of questions without being embarrassed. They asked so many questions we had to put aside another lesson for Savry to complete the topic! Happy to do this as it's obviously needed. Our next workshop will be Men's Health. This may be a bit ambitious but it will be interesting to see how many men from the community attend. Well done Savry.



Albury High School

Hi Albury High School. You will be happy to hear and see that we have finally added the verandah extension to the workshop that you kindly donated your fundraising money towards. We got sidetracked along the way but have finally finished it. Lots of columns for hammocks if World Challenge would like to sleep outside but under cover, plenty of shade, open to the breeze, a great undercover area for student activities, all in all a great addition to Kep Gardens. Thank you very, very much.



Playgroup Costumes

Kylie, a good friend of Kep Gardens and who also does the accounts for us, recently returned from a trip home to Australia. With her she brought costumes for the Playgroup. Thank you very much Kylie. They look gorgeous. Another friend from Belgium, Agnes, arrived this month also with some costumes. This is great as we have enough for them all to dress up at the same time. Thank you Agnes and Kylie for thinking of the Playgroup students.



One of Kylie's friends made some great sock toys. Playgroup has a lot of fun playing with them. Thank you.



Khmer Craft Thursdays

With today's technology, it is important that Cambodian culture, traditions and craft are upheld. We hold Khmer craft days every Thursday at Kep Gardens. An elderly lady from the village stays all day and makes something different each week. The first week was birds, fish and grasshoppers made from palm leaves. Before and after class the students crowd around Keat and she teaches and helps them to make whatever it is that week to take home and share with their family.



A special thank you to English School staff members Kimhean, Long Han and Sarak and long term volunteers Vicki and Ian for your valued help, support and ideas to keep Kep Gardens moving forward in a positive way. Thank you.

Reading Makes You Feel Good

While on the topic of Playgroup, Kimhean introduced a book to the littlies called "Reading Makes You Feel Good". This is in accordance with our big push on reading this year. We have started silent reading at the beginning of each class and next term will be introducing various activities in the library all afternoon for the various classes to attend while waiting for English class. Lots of diversity at Kep Gardens this school year and with Kimhean, Long Han, Vicki and Ian to help all should run smoothly.



World Challenge Trarlgton and Lowanna Colleges

Trarlgton and Lowanna Colleges from Victoria, Australia, spent 6 days at Kep Gardens recently working very hard. They painted murals on two walls, painted water tanks, dug compost trenches, dug up a path and relocated the gravel, repaired the flying fox in the playground and became very involved in the demolition and renovation of the old chook house/mess hut into 2 units for volunteers or visitors to stay as well as joining the Reading and Conversation Programme every day. They enjoyed bashing down walls and bricking parts backup. We had to pull them off the job when they were working by torchlight at 9.00 at night! Thank you very much also for your various donations of toys and books for the library.



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

Leadership Through English

The older members of the Leadership through English youth group are offering ideas and suggestions which is something that we have been working towards and which is now coming to fruition. It's gratifying to observe their growth.

World Challenge Clonard College

Clonard College, also from Victoria, Australia arrived a day after the other schools left. They dug some trenches, prepared the incinerator site for planting vines to hide it and participated in the Reading and Conversation Programme. One of the girl's grandma made some shorts and dresses out of pillow cases. The members of Class 3 who perform Khmer dances for visitors each chose a piece of clothing. They were a great hit. What an original idea, lovely summer dresses and shorts!!



**MERRY
CHRISTMAS!
ENJOY WITH
FAMILY AND
FRIENDS.**

**JANINE, ANDREW,
STAFF AND
STUDENTS AT KEP
GARDENS WISH
YOU A HEALTHY,
HAPPY AND SAFE
2018.**

Cheers,
Janine and Andrew



Latest batch of puppies. Always a baby of some sort around the place. One in particular wakes me 4 times a night, lost and crying for its mum - just like having a human baby in the house again.