

Hi Everyone,

Let's hope that things are as back to normal as is possible. Cambodia has been opened up since January. Most of the population have been vaccinated twice plus have had a booster and although Omicron is raging through the country there have been very few deaths and symptoms have been relatively mild. We still have to follow strict guidelines at Kep Gardens: temperatures, masks, social distancing but we don't have to halve the classes anymore which is good.

We started the new year opening up the Kindergarten class and the Playgroup, both of which had been closed for 2 years. We have grown to 13 English classes, 1 Kindergarten, 1 Playgroup, 1 Khmer class and 128 on our waiting list. Extra staff have been employed, staff training is a priority and the beauty of it is, except for one new staff member, all are past students so we have known each other for a long time and all understand the principles of Kep Gardens and work to uphold these principles with the old and new students attending our classes.

How I love to hear the sound once again of children playing and laughing in the playground and singing in class. We're back!!

Kindergarten

And the Kindergarten have got off to a roaring start.

Our Kindergarten children have been busy learning about shapes. The pictures below show them working together to produce posters for the classroom walls.



Here we show them planting lettuces.



Working together again as a team, our kindergarten children created an octopus for a craft session. A great addition to the walls of the room.

"Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember. Involve me and I learn." Benjamin Franklin



Wow, what a busy week for the kindergarten class. They have made posters for shapes, made an octopus for craft, planted lettuces in the garden and now they have been cooking. Very busy indeed.



Everyone had a yummy treat for morning break.

Every morning you have two choices: continue to sleep with your dreams or wake up and chase them.



Khmer Dance Classes

Thanks to sponsorship from Bettina and Stephan Gebhardt, Mala Srey and Daniel Danz, we have been able to begin Khmer dancing classes. Tem Tha holds classes twice a week for a younger group, primary age students and an older group, high school age students. Thank you very much to the sponsors for recognizing how important it is for young people to know about their own culture.



Donations

Various families have kindly donated boxes of masks and bottles of alcohol to the school. Thank you very much. It makes us very happy when families are willing to donate either time or goods to help other children in our school.



One of the little boys above who donated masks has become a self-appointed policeman checking that everyone is wearing their mask. The room where we live is in the middle of the school area. When I am inside I don't wear my mask but he looks through the window to check on me and reminds me continually to put my mask on. I can't relax in my own home when he is around !!!

Puthisastra University

Medical and dental students from Puthisastra University in Phnom Penh visited Kep Gardens. A few lucky students received basic health and dental checks and had their teeth painted with fluoride. Thank you to Meng Heng for organising the visit and to the Uni students who worked hard all afternoon. We hope this was the beginning of a fruitful relationship between our organisations.



International Women's Association

January saw the first day of school for many Playgroup and Kindergarten children at Kep Gardens. Every year IAW gives backpacks to the new students. Thank you very much to the

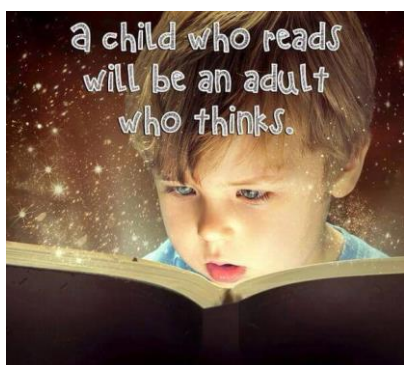
If you think you are too small to have an impact, try going to bed with a mosquito. Anita Roddick

International Women's Association for kindly donating backpacks again made from recycled plastic cement bags. The backpacks are great in the rainy season, keeping the students' books dry on their way to school. IAW is an organization that employs local village women and encourages recycling. Thank you to Vicki and Ian, the people on the ground in Kep, Melissa and the donors in Switzerland for helping to keep Kep clean. We are proud to be associated with your organisation.



Library

We were finally allowed to reopen the library and the playground in January. How nice it is to have the buzz around the classrooms with students borrowing books, hear the laughter of children coming from the playground. The students who were still children have suddenly grown into teenagers in the last two years, I almost don't recognize them!



Staff End-of-Year Party

The whole staff shared an end-of-year celebration at Martinis in the village. Thank you to Enzo and his staff for the excellent buffet of mixed food that suited everybody's taste. Very rarely do the teaching staff and Andrew's crew get together due to different schedules. We spent a very happy afternoon eating and drinking and cannot thank Stephan and Bettina enough for sponsoring this celebration.



You will never reach your destination if you stop and throw stones at every dog that barks.

William Churchill



Football Coach

Kep Gardens is looking for a volunteer who is willing to coach and organize two sports competitions. The first group is for primary children and the second for high school students. We already have sports uniforms, we just need someone who loves sports and children and is happy to help sharpen their skills. We also have teams to form a competition with already. Please note that this is not a paid job, it's just a job of love.

First Day of School



Kep Gardens held a parent workshop for the new Kindergarten and Playgroup parents. Kimhean talked about how to help their children during their early years of schooling, covering such topics as what expectations parents should have, the differences between Playgroup and Kindergarten, the importance of sleep and healthy food and the dangers of too much screen time. We intend to hold several workshops throughout the school year covering various age appropriate topics.



We hope that everyone is coming out of the covid despair, being careful and keeping safe.
Cheers, Janine and Andrew

We have a large increase of students this year. Consequently we have an increase in staff. I would like to introduce them to you.

Full-time staff:



Janine



Kimhean



Sokyin

Janine: Principal
Kimhean: Lead English teacher
Sokyin: Kindergarten teacher and English teacher
Chansophal: Playgroup assistant and Librarian

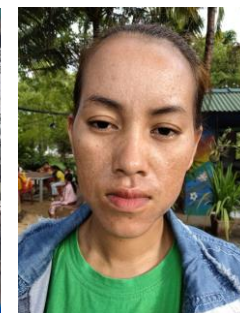


Chansophal

Part-time staff:



Vuh



Kunthy

Vuh: English teacher
Kunthy: Playgroup teacher



Long Han



Navy

Long Han: Grammar teacher
Navy: Khmer teacher

Support staff we can't do without:



Mr Huch

Mr Huch: caretaker, gardener, Mr Fix It, snake catcher



Pov

Pov: general cleaner, Covid alcohol cleaner of desks, equipment

Both love and care for children