

Hi Everyone,

I am a month or more behind for this newsletter! For some reason, the time has just flown by. A lot has happened in second term. Busy but fun.

PARENT WORKSHOPS

- Many parents and staff at Kep Gardens came together for a workshop covering Child Protection and Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment. Kep Children staff also attended as did a member of the Early Childhood Learning Department of Education. This originally started out as staff training but we decided to ask parents if they were interested and were pleasantly surprised and very happy at the large number of parents who attended.
- The genocide carried out in Cambodia during 1975-1979 was highlighted at Kep Gardens in many ways over a week. Parent and staff workshops were one way. According to the Documentation Centre and general consensus, we all need to know our history in order to avoid similar events occurring again. Mr Peng Pong-Rasy, Director, Genocide Education in Cambodia spent the day with us, talking to parents in the morning and afternoon. Gaps were filled that were missing in some people's knowledge of the Khmer Rouge regime. It was an emotional day for some of our staff who suffered through this regime.
- The drug problem is growing throughout the world. Many of us are quite ignorant about drugs and don't know what to look for in our children or what to do if you find them taking drugs. Mr. Reatha from the Ark Foundation runs a drug rehabilitation centre in Siem Reap and visits high schools in Siem Reap to talk to students in Grades 7-12. Mr. Reatha conducted two parent workshops. Mr Reatha also spoke to students in Grades 10-12.



POL POT REGIME

A stupa is located in the compound of Kampong Tralach pagoda. There are two sections of remains. One holds various body bones and the other side holds some skulls of the 750 people

People may forget what you told them, but they will never forget how you made them feel.

who were killed during the Khmer Rouge regime in our area. The bodies were buried in 13 large pits, two of these pits were inside the pagoda grounds. 500 skulls and other bones were damaged when they were evacuated from 11 pits in Trapeang Stor Forest and transported to the pagoda. Another 250 skulls were dug out of the pits inside the Kampong Tralach pagoda. Inside the stupa are the names of the people from Kampong Tralach Village, our local village, who were killed. Keat, the wonderful lady from the village who comes to Kep Gardens every Thursday, lost her whole family during Pol Pot time: parents, husband, siblings, children, everyone. She has spent the last 40 odd years surviving by herself in the village. To fit in with the documentation Centre's visit, Keat was telling the primary school aged children her story. They felt very sad and decided that they wanted to go and visit Kampong Tralach pagoda and pay their respects to her family and the other people from their village who had died there. Classes 1,2,3,4 participated so it was 4 trips in the truck to the pagoda and back.



I think one's feelings waste themselves in words; they ought all to be distilled into actions which bring results.

Florence Nightingale



A very emotional day particularly for our older staff members.

ENGLISH COMPETITION

An English competition between NGOs and Associations has been organized by the Department of Education. Twenty-three children were chosen by the various organizations to compete. Win or lose it is a very good experience for the students to meet people from other schools. It also provided an opportunity for the leaders of the various organizations to meet each other and talk about what their organizations offer. It is being conducted in three sections: speaking; reading comprehension; written essay. Kep Gardens chose seven students to participate. Good luck to them all. The first section was last Sunday. A month in between each section, time to practice for the others!

You either get bitter or you get better. It's that simple. You either take what has been dealt to you and allow it to make you a better person, or you allow it to tear you down. The choice does not belong to fate, it belongs to you.

John Shipp



KHMER DANCING GROUPS

Our Khmer dancing teams were invited to perform at the Kep Children's 10th Year celebrations. What a great job they did and how very proud we are of them. We have two groups, primary school aged students and high/secondary school students. Parents volunteered to do the makeup and hair and some supporters donated the money to buy the costumes that we needed. One wedding organizer donated some skirts and belts which meant less for us to buy. Great community support. A young woman who has learnt Khmer dancing for many years comes twice a week to teach the classes. Yes, we do have 3 boys that participate.



FOOTBALL TEAM

We have finally found a football coach for our primary aged students on Tuesday and Thursday evenings. We have been trying for such a long time and still need a coach for the older students. I saw many happy faces when I watched from the sidelines recently.



Ronald Reagan said: "Both politicians and diapers need to be changed often and for the same reason."

STUDENT HEALTH CHECKS

Since 2013 our students have received annual health checks at Sonya Kill Memorial Hospital which is managed by Hope Foundation. Covid interrupted these checks but we have started again this year. The hospital is situated in a neighbouring province, Kampot. The health checks are provided free-of-charge by the hospital. We take lego, jigsaws and books to keep them occupied while they await their turn.



COMPETITIONS

So far this year we have held an Art competition where the students that want to, draw a picture and a Telling a Story competition whether it be a story they makeup or a story they have read in a

book. We then invite impartial, outside judges to choose a first, second and third in each class. It is an opportunity for students who are not necessarily academic to have their "day in the sun". A great thing to come from it is that Bettina, one of the art judges has offered to take art classes with all of the classes. More about this in the next newsletter.



LEARNING THROUGH ENGLISH YOUTH PROGRAMME

The students involved in the Kep Gardens' Learning Through English Youth Programme have identified several community projects they would like to fulfill this year. Some members completed their first project recently. They headed out wearing gloves, and armed with large bin bags, cleaned up sections of the main village road and the dirt road leading to Kep Gardens. Great job! Another group went into the village and explained to the people about recycling. They will play a large part in the organization of sports day later this year and of our end-of-year concert.

I love straightforward people. Their lack of drama makes life so much easier.

Anonymous



DISTRIBUTION OF BOOKS

Let's Read Asia supplied Kep Gardens with many reading books. Not only have we added to our library but all of our primary students have been given one or two books to begin their own library at home. We supplied all the primary schools in Kep Province with books for their libraries as well as extras for most of the primary students to take home.



We hope you are all healthy and happy despite what a hard year it has been for many around the world. Cheers, Janine and Andrew

Use this link to go direct to Global Development Group to ensure a tax deductible receipt for your donation or sponsorship.

<https://globaldevelopmentgroup.org/au/projects/j674n-kep-gardens-community-project/>

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

Excuse my use of quotations but there were so many blank spaces at the end of pages because photos wouldn't fit that I wanted to fill them. Just like this one!!



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