

Hallo Everyone,

In April we finished our third New Year for the year but instead of settling into a routine for the remainder of 2023 we had the SEA Games (South East Asian Games), which have just finished, held in Cambodia this year. We closed for 2 weeks for Khmer New Year and have another week off now May to allow the students to attend various events being held in Kep and Kampot. We still managed to pack in lots of activities during Term 1.

Staff Training

During the January holiday time, the staff attended a Jolly Phonics training session. Five of our staff and five teachers from the Buddhist Library attended. Our lead teacher, Kimhean did an excellent job organizing and running the training course, a learning experience also for her. Thank you very much to Mr Huch and his wife for providing lunch for everyone.

The first day back from celebrating Khmer New Year we held another staff training workshop. It was about games and fun activities which can help students improve their understanding of the English language including vocabulary, grammar, general knowledge, IQ, listening, writing, reading and speaking skills. Vorn Vuh, one of our staff members, did an excellent job organizing and training the other staff in this very important part of learning which as we all know is having FUN.



Volunteers

Cassandra and Hans spent a few days at Kep Gardens. They had lots of fun with the students and were a great help. They were happy to do anything that was needed. Wish you could have stayed for longer. Volunteers have been sadly lacking since Covid. There are four people booked in for later in the year but that is all.



Cassandra



Hans

Bachelors Degree

Congratulations to our lead teacher, Ngov Kimhean on her graduation ceremony for a Bachelors Degree in Accounting. Very well deserved. For the next 2 years, Kimhean will be studying for a Masters Degree in Education. Kimhean never stops learning and is an excellent role model to the students at Kep Gardens. Well done, we are very proud of you.



Costumes

Playgroup and Kindergarten children had a fun time dressing up in various costumes. Thank you very much to Agnes from Belgium for recently adding more costumes to our collection which she had begun herself, quite a few years ago. Agnes is a longtime supporter of Kep Gardens. We greatly appreciate and value her support.



Let's Read Asia

Thank you very much to Let's Read Asia for donating 15 tablets filled with many stories to read in English or Khmer. All classes at Kep Gardens have a 5 minute reading session at the beginning of each lesson. The village children are so excited at having an opportunity to use something so foreign to them. A big thank you to Andrew and our Vocational guys for making it so easy for us, setting up a streamlined system for recharging all 15 at the same time. We have worked with Let's Read Asia before and once again are looking forward to a long and fruitful relationship.



What a delight this experience has been for me and how much I will miss all of these students.

Greg Smith, Canada

CLASS 9 DEBATES

2019 was the last time we used debates as a teaching tool due to covid closures. Consequently, only one student in this class had participated in a debate before so it was a huge learning curve for everyone. Well done to the students for taking up the challenge and performing so well on their first try. Thank you very much to our judges, Uy Vuthy and Martin Fisher.



INTERSCHOOL DEBATE BUDDHIST LIBRARY

Our annual inter-school debate against the Buddhist Library from Kampot was a great success. A perfect outcome with each school winning one debate each. I was so very, very proud of all the students, including the Buddhist Library students. Study hasn't been easy for them since Covid but by putting their best foot forward and trying hard they are gradually catching up the ground lost. The debates are so important for their self-confidence and self-esteem but all competitors overcame their nerves and performed admirably. Well done to you all. Thank you to the judges, Martin and James, and to KP for taking the photographs. Until the same time next year



These three weeks of teaching English for the Kep Village children were unforgettable. You guys all have lovely stories and we had such a good time with you.

Alizee and Naomi, France



END OF TERM 1

The last day of first term saw three different activities taking place this year to celebrate Khmer New Year. First came our usual swimming and icecream day to wish all younger and primary students a Happy Khmer New Year. We had to move to Sabow beach this year. It turned out that it was a much more peaceful place and offered exploring opportunities in the mud flats which many students took advantage of. It will be a hard decision to decide whether to go back to Kep or return to Sabow next year! A big thank you to Chansopal and Kimhean for staying in the water for most of the day to ensure the children were safe. Kunty also swam with the younger children while other teachers sat on the beach continually watching and counting numbers. Thank you to Rim for driving the truck backwards and forwards and Mr Huch and Pov for keeping control of classes arriving and leaving Kep Gardens. It was a whole staff effort and I thank you all for your due diligence.



Secondly, Classes 7,8,9 chose horror movies to watch Friday night. Vuh was in charge of the movie night. Thirdly, Classes 5 and 6 spent Saturday at Kep Gardens playing games, cooking lunch and hiking. What a full day! Kimhean and Kuntly organized lunch with lots of help from the students.



DENTAL CLINIC VISITS

The Buddhist Library and Sonya Kill Hospital perform the dental and health checkups for free, services which we are very grateful for. But it is the transport costs which restrict the number of students we can take each year as we can only take small groups at a time, hence many trips. This year we took 120 students to the Dental Clinic.



I especially like how you tackle the problem of reading in Cambodia. I love that you engage the youngsters in reading activities and combine it with fun activities. Way to go.

Karen Schroeder-Ames, Germany



A very big thank you to the Buddhist Library for providing a dentist free-of-charge to the poorer students in the community. They have a mobile dental van that reaches out far into communities with no services, they offer invaluable service and help to needy communities. While at the clinic, our students also received a lesson on what they should be doing for their personal dental care. Thank you Buddhist Library for including our students in your care programme.

VISAKA BOCHEA

Visaka Bochea or Buddha Day commemorates the birth, enlightenment and nirvana of Buddha. Our morning classes 2 and 3 visited Phnom Se Sear pagoda, joining in prayers with the monks and taking food to share with them. They also ran up to the top of the mountain to see the cave and bats. A very happy morning celebrating an important day in the Buddhist religion.



I am late with the newsletter so I am going to put mainly pictures to show what we have been doing. If it's too long, pictures will be easier and quicker to look at. I would hate you to give up because of the length.

CLASS ACTIVITIES

After learning about weather and watching a video talking about global warming they are learning how to grow a mango tree from a mango fruit seed to help the environment by planting more trees. If the tree provides food, even better.



Before we closed for holidays, many classes played traditional Khmer games to celebrate Khmer New Year with their classmates.



Term 1 Kep Gardens held an art competition. Students submitted a drawing if they wanted to, we understand not everyone is interested. We certainly have a load of talent throughout all classes and age groups. Thank you to the students who participated, you all did an excellent job.



CLASS ACTIVITIES



Enough for the minute. I will do another one soon to finish off to the end of May.

Cheers,
Janine and Andrew

