



# KEP GARDENS NEWSLETTER

JULY 2024



Hallo Everyone,

The extreme heat has gone thank goodness, now we have the rain. Hasn't stopped raining heavily for a few days now. I love the rain, cools everything down, washes away the dust and dirt on plants and buildings and good sleeping weather. Not so pleasant when the sun comes out though, gets a bit humid then, but we haven't seen the sun for quite a few days so overcast and cooler. I personally think the rainy season is the best time to visit Cambodia but all the tourist statistics show a different thinking. Here at Kep Gardens, rain, hail or shine, life goes on. Let's see what we have done since April. Heaps!

## LET'S READ ASIA

Let's Read Asia donated 15 tablets to Kep Gardens about 18 months ago. Since then our Khmer classes have been using them to practise reading in Khmer, other classes use them to read stories in English and read stories to younger classes. Class 4 is now using them to research a project in English and an older class has been using them to produce a book. A big thank you to Let's Read Asia.



## TRADE CENTRE

Recently the Trade Centre received a donation to provide uniforms for their apprentices. Thank you very much to the Riverside EDventure group for their donation. They certainly come up good with a scrub!



## DEBATES

We held our annual Kep Gardens debates in May. The students in Class 9 submitted 10 topics and voted to end up with the 5 most popular. Thank you very much to Martin Fisher and Uy Vuthy for judging the debates.



Recently we held the annual inter-school debate. Usually Kep Gardens and the Buddhist Library debate against each other but this year we welcomed Chum Kreil Language School to join our debates. At the same time 6 students gave presentations on an issue of their choice. Thank you Buddhist Library for hosting the afternoon. It was a unanimous decision that there would be no winners. It is not about who wins, but about each participant trying their best, gaining experience and confidence to speak a second language out loud in front of peers and strangers. Well done to all participants, the judges were very impressed with their efforts. It was decided that another inter-school debate would be held in December.



Thank you to our judge, Jamie Christopherson.





### **BAND FOR GOOD**

Thank you very much to Band for Good for inviting 35 of our students for health and dental checks by a team of doctors and dentists from Korea. Thank you also for providing a big bus to transport them. The bus was the highlight of their day!



### **CAMBODIA CLEAN KHMER CAN DO**

Class 1, 2 and 3 morning classes cleaned up the rubbish on the road leading to Kep Gardens. The Department of Environment is encouraging all schools and organizations to participate in the "Cambodia Clean Khmer Can Do" project by cleaning up areas around and outside the school. How much nicer to play in, and healthier our schools will be if kept clean and tidy.

### **PRESENTATIONS**

Apart from debates, Class 9 also gives presentations to visiting volunteers on a range of topics related to Cambodian culture. Both activities give the students public speaking experience and improve their self-confidence.



### **VOLUNTEERS**

Kep Gardens is very lucky at the moment to have 5 long-term volunteers: Victoria Christmas, Clara Sayers and Maja Flavell from Project Trust in the United Kingdom volunteering for 10 weeks; Antony Crifasi also from the United Kingdom for 4 weeks; and Yonaton Rinot from Israel for 2 weeks. Damien Lewis who lives in Kampot, volunteers every Tuesday and Thursday. Antony shares his football skills and Maja her volleyball skills. They all take part in our Reading and Conversation Programme as well as taking craft sessions and singing with the younger classes. They are presenting a whole range of experiences for the students who are loving the variety as well as their one-on-one sessions with the volunteers. Thank you very much for giving your time to the students of Kep Gardens.



Clara



Victoria



Maja



Antony



Yonaton



Damien

**Don't look back, you're not going that way.**

Our volunteer, Antony has spent a month training the enthusiastic lovers of football, coaching and games happening every day, much to the students' delight. It culminated in a class tournament this week. Thank you Antony for your dedication. Not an easy job in the hot sun every



morning and afternoon for several hours each day. We appreciate his commitment.



For the last week all the students have been entertained with music. One of the volunteers brought a travelling guitar with him (smaller version of a guitar, easier to cart around on your travels). Lots of sing-a-longs reverberating around Kep Gardens, lovely to hear. The older classes even wrote their own songs.



Yonaton, the volunteer who took every class for music lessons, has started a choir with 16 of our older primary students. They will perform at our school concert, just like our Khmer dancing groups. Thank you very much Yonaton for starting the choir, a new activity that we will continue every year.



## **PARENT WORKSHOP**

We had an excellent turn out last week at our parent workshop entitled "Being a Parent". We will hold two more workshops this year, "Living with Toddlers" and "Living with Teenagers". Thank you to the parents who attended. It is encouraging to know that we are also helping adults within the community.

**A child who reads will be an adult who thinks.**

## **DONATIONS**

Thank you very much to Chea Sophorn, Ieng Ravuth and their friends for supplying solar lights to light up the very dark village road before and after the dirt road leading to Kep Gardens. Also, a big thank you to the staff of Kep Power Supply Co. Ltd. for erecting the lights on their poles. Thank you to all concerned. A great example of the community working together to help solve a problem.



Thank you very much to Mr T for donating Kep Gardens a photocopier he is no longer using. He sent it to Phnom Penh to be serviced and repaired before he gave it to us. We do a lot of photocopying, sending home letters to parents, making workbooks for students, and making information booklets for workshops that we hold. We very much appreciate you and your family's support of Kep Gardens as well as the help you have given us over the years. Donations of reams of paper will be gratefully received.



## **CLASS 4 DEBATE**

We couldn't be prouder of Class 4 recently. They all participated in 2 debates, and one student acted as MC. They gathered their arguments by themselves and their presentations were excellent. The students' families came along to offer support and Victoria and Clara, offered constructive comments at the end of each debate. A wonderful evening that reminded Kimhean and I of why we do what we do.





## **CERTIFICATES**

Our Student of the Term Awards are chosen for many reasons. The teachers look for students who try their best, who happily participate in class activities, who are kind to their classmates, all sorts of reasons that make them worthy of this award. Congratulations! Kep Gardens is very proud of you all.



We needed to encourage library use, so we decided to reward the students who use the library on a regular basis. They were presented with a Reading Champion certificate at the end of the term. Well done, you are good role models for the student community. Keep up the good work!



To highlight good deeds by students we invented other certificates "Random Acts of Kindness", "Superstar Award" that are also given out at the end of term in front of peers. Examples of good deeds were handing in money found on the ground and looking after a student in Playgroup to help the teachers. Once again, examples of a good way to live, and hopefully encouraging others to follow suit, even if only for a certificate. Let's hope the nice feeling sticks.



## **TEACHER TRAINING**

We arranged a whole day teacher training course, not only for Kep Gardens' staff, but invited many of the local primary schools. Topics included "To be a good teacher", "Code of conduct of professional teachers", "Helping slow students", and "Class management". We hosted over 60 teachers. A successful community event.

## **SINGING COMPETITION**

The Term 2 competition was singing. Thank you to Kimsy, our judge. What a difficult job she had. There is so much talent at Kep Gardens, everybody deserves a certificate. Well done to the winners, you certainly entertained us.



## **IWA BACKPACKS**

We are a collection point for cement bags, rice bags, and bags made of thicker plastic. These are what IWA makes the backpacks out of—the backpacks that every new student at Kep Gardens receives each year. Let's support IWA, that also provides employment for women in Kep.



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.



So many activities happening simultaneously at the moment, thanks to the volunteers, Victoria, Maja, Clara, Antony and Yonaton. Craft, reading stories to classes, one-on-one reading and conversation. Add to this the music, football and volleyball coaching, the place is buzzing.

