



[www.singingkites.org](http://www.singingkites.org)

## SUMMER NEWSLETTER 2017



### Dear Friends of Singing Kites

The world is a better place because there is always someone out there willing to help others. Whether it is through words of support, or their generous actions, small organizations such as ours would not be able to continue without all those people behind us. It is not one person who has made this difference, but a collective team of hardworking and generous people.

Over the last eight years there have been challenging times for us financially, and we still continue to be challenged in this way, but it is important that we looked to the future in a positive way and continue to believe that these challenges we have faced on occasions, make us stronger as an organization, and more determined to firm up our belief in something amazing that has been built up by many people over the years. Sometimes we have to believe that there is something greater than any obstacle put in front of us.

We will never be able to find words to express our deep gratitude to all those who have shared our journey with us, and who choose to continue to walk beside us.

We hope you enjoy reading this, our last newsletter for 2017.

With warm regards to all of you,

**From all the Singing Kites Team**

## DENTAL CLINIC NEWS

With a passion to improve the lives of Cambodian children through better oral health and dental treatment, Singing Kites has partnered with **Oral Experts Group (Toowoomba)** and **Cambodia World Family (Phnom Penh)** to establish “**Smile Dental Clinic**”, a free Dental Clinic at our school.

It has taken us a little while overcoming the challenges of running a dental clinic in a rural village, and implementing directives from Australia. There were lots of challenges to reach the point we are now at. We have had issues with power outages causing equipment failure, juggling the study hours of our dental technicians with their work hours, finding a qualified Khmer dentist who was willing to work alongside our girls in the clinic... and work with the dental team here in Australia who oversee the project, and to help manage and help direct the operations over there.

Luckily that has been resolved!

While our dental technicians **Lyda Sann** and **Rany Chann** finish their university degrees, we will open our clinic two days a week.... on Friday and Saturday.

**Dr Boran Seung**, a well qualified Khmer dentist, has offered to be our **Clinical Director** and travels down with the girls on these days. **Lyda** is our new **Clinic Manager** and **Rany**, **Assistant Manager**.

We will continue with this working model and after the girls complete their degrees, we hope to open up a full mobile education program of preventative dental care for students attending government schools.

We are looking to train at least two more village students to become dental assistants and so guarantee the future of the work we have started, continues.

### Our Cambodian Dental Team



Lyda Sann, Dr Boran Seung and Rany Chann



Our clinic in operation.



Lyda and Rany giving a class lesson on dental care.



Our Staff . . . . . That last afternoon.

## SCHOOL VISIT

### October 2017

I spent a few wonderful weeks at the school during October. It was a time to consolidate ideas and make plans with the staff for 2018, welcome our new students at the start of the Khmer new school year, settle in our new supported university students, catch up with out graduated students, spend time with some very special volunteers, witness the start of our agricultural sustainability projects and watch Joey Connor, an IT expert from the UK fine tune and progress our online communications network.

It was a very worthwhile and productive time spent there.

**Lyn Hotchin**

## OUR STUDENT NEWS



Phearak

Ponlork

Leng

After four years of study, three of our supported university students graduated in August and have already secured wonderful jobs.

**Phearak Soeung**, graduated with a degree in Media Studies and is a journalist working for **Radio France Internationale**, a French public radio service that broadcasts in Paris and all over the world to 35.6 million listeners.

**Ponlork Sie**, graduated with a degree in Electrical Engineering and works for **Khmer Beverages** an international award winning brewery in Phnom Penh,

**Leng Sok**, works as an architect at **Vispan** architectural firm which is one of the most prestigious architecture firms in Cambodia .

We are incredibly proud of the achievements of all our students ..... and feel a great sense of pride that we are helping to ensure that the next generation of Cambodians will contribute greatly to their country's future.

We have been able to support another three new university students , which brings the total of current supported students to ten. We are looking to fill the last places with two new dental technician trainees.

## OUR NEW UNIVERSITY STUDENTS



### TRY SUEY

From Tanop Village. One of 5 children. He is studying a Bachelor of Agriculture (a 4 year degree) at the Royal University of Agriculture in Phnom Penh . He eventually hopes to work for the Government in the Department of Agriculture.



### SREYLA TAB

From Tanop Village. Sreylla is one of 4 children. She too is studying a Bachelor of Agriculture at the Royal University of Agriculture in Phnom Penh and eventually hopes to work for the Government in the Department of Agriculture.



### NOCH PICH

From Tanop Village. youngest of six siblings. Noch is studying a Bachelor of Khmer Literacy (4 years) and will eventually become a secondary school teacher teaching Khmer Literacy.



## RAKSMY TAKES TOP MARKS!

**Raksmey Mark** .... one of our supported university students who attends the Royal University of Phnom Penh, won the award for top first year Bio Engineering student (out of 600 students) in 2017.

We are deeply grateful to all those very generous people who have chosen to sponsor one of our graduated students. The students know who their sponsors are and appreciate greatly, that they have been given this opportunity to study hard and improve their lives and those of their families.

## STEPS TO SECURE OUR FUTURE AND WORK TOWARDS SUSTAINABILITY

As you know we are now our own entity and ACNC (Australian Charities and Not-for profit Commission) accredited/registered NGO.

As we have said before, having our own NGO status not only benefits us as an organisation, but also benefits our donors and the community we work with. It won't affect the day to day running of the school, the project, or the volunteer program. Life goes on for us here in the same way, but our new status will enable us to set the project on a sustainable pathway, with the eventual goal of handing the responsibility of running the project over to the Tanop community in 6 to 8 years.

In the end this is what every organization hopes to aim for, because in the end, community responsibility for a project fosters a strong feeling of community ownership, and with this feeling comes a much better guarantee of success for everyone concerned.

In saying this we are asking that people please continue to support us financially while the wheels towards sustainability slowly turn! Without support, we cannot continue along this new path with any success.

Our first sustainability project is the trialling of a poultry farming project. So far it has been a resounding success. We hope to raise organic meat chickens to sell to restaurants in Phnom Penh and for sale to the local trade. Chickens are selling at \$4USD a kg in Cambodia, and over time we hope our success continues so that we are eventually turning over a few hundred head a month.

We have put down two ponds to secure a permanent water supply, built the first poultry shed complete with an incubator, roosting sections and a place to rear young chickens under lights. We employ two local, village men as "chicken shepherds", to look after the health of the poultry and protect them from predators as they free range during the day. Sam Oeun is in charge of the farming operations.

It is early days yet, but we hope our success to date continues, and we avoid many of the challenges faced raising poultry in Cambodia.



The roosting shed



## NEWS SNIPPETS



Audiologist **Dr SOPHANY KITH** generously gave three days of her time last month checking the hearing of all our children and staff too! We are so grateful to her for this wonderful service she gives us, and we look forward to seeing her again next year.



Our **Online Learning Centre** is slowly becoming the busy hub for online PD with teachers.

How fortunate we feel that we can implement this program and fill the void of regular communication and support between us here in Australia and our staff in Cambodia.



We are so grateful to **JOEY CONNOR** an IT specialist from the UK, for spending three weeks checking and fixing our computers, setting up and fine tuning our online network and taking online workshops with the teachers.

Our online communications is now clear and reliable. Thank you so much Joey!



**IONA NIVEN** in the online room talking to Carolyn Watts in Australia about developments in the English program. This online capacity is changing so much of what we offer and has great promise of future advances in this fields that will benefit both students and teachers.



We have fenced off part of the pond used for crop growing and are raising ducks to help our breakfast program become cost sustainable.

We are experimenting with cash crops to see what grows best in our soil and in our conditions.





## VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are of huge value to us at [Singing Kites](#) and to all nonprofit organizations. Three areas of activity in which volunteers help are —governance, programming and fund development.

### Governance

Volunteers who serve on boards of directors and their committees are our lifeblood.

### Programming

Trained volunteers can be invaluable in helping to deliver services to NGO's such as ours. They reduce costs through their work and can often provide better services since they serve because of their passion for the organization's vision. Many volunteers also bring free expertise or experience to the organization.

### Fund Development

While fundraising is a chief responsibility of the board, there are other ways that volunteers can help to advance the organization through fundraising activities.

## A THANK YOU!

We sincerely acknowledge the wonderful work done at Singing Kites by all volunteers in these areas of activity.

To those who have not been involved before and who would like to help us, please consider becoming involved with us in volunteering your time to help at TCEC, the dental clinic or in a fund raising activity.

For details see our website: [www.singingkites.org](http://www.singingkites.org)



## LETTER FROM A VOLUNTEER

*After a few weeks exploring Cambodia, myself and partner Joey arrived to TCEC just outside Phnom Penh. We were greeted by the Head teacher Nop Pich, who gave us a tour of the school and introduced us to the staff. We then settled into our cottage, unpacked our things and got ready for our 3 weeks of volunteering.*

*The next day we visited the school and I was overwhelmed at how hard the children were working. They welcomed us with open arms and asked us many questions. I then started to support a class of 15-year olds. They were very polite and were eager to learn English. We played lots of grammar games and we played drama games, which was a lot of fun. There was such a buzz and energy around the school as all the classrooms worked hard.*

*I also spent a lot of time in the Kindergarten as this is the age group I teach in the UK. The children were so excited to learn, and they had a fantastic teacher Channa, who is so much fun and passionate about her job. We worked together looking at planning and the learning environment. Whilst I was having fun in Kindergarten my partner Joey supported the teachers with the IT around the school. He helped to fix any computers and helped to set up the Skype connection, so the staff could receive professional development support from Australia. Joey and I did some teacher training where we shared our knowledge with the teachers.*

*The last week came around very quickly and we met Lyn Hotchin, the founder. Her passion and care for the school filled us with hope and excitement. We also met Tith Tek the director, who worked closely with Lyn to make the school a wonderful place for the children and teachers to work.*

*On the last evening we had a delicious meal cooked by Joey and we shared stories and memories from the experience. The staff and children at TCEC made our experience very memorable. The energy from the school was fantastic and everyone was so welcoming. I would strongly recommend coming to volunteer at the school and to get involved with such a wonderful place.*

*Thank you for having us and keep up the good work.*

by IONA NIVEN

Iona spent two years working at the Kinabalu International School in Malaysia before coming to us, and returning home to the UK.



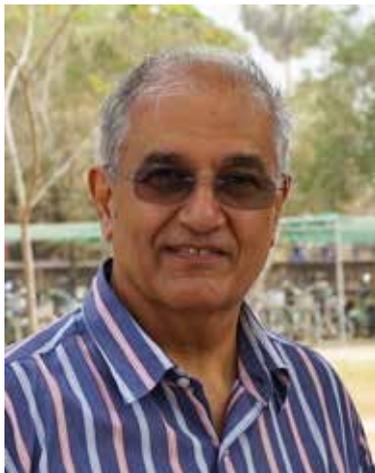
## A WELCOME

Becoming an ACNC accredited NGO has meant the establishment of a [Singing Kites Board of Directors](#) who are responsible for overseeing the management, financial and legal aspects of all [Singing Kites](#) projects. As part of that new structure, we would very much like to introduce and extend a warm welcome to the Singing Kites

**Volunteer – Founding Board Member and Executive Director, BHARAT VANMALI**

Bharat is invaluable to the future success of our organization and has offered his expertise in helping us work towards the very important task of future project sustainability.

May we add here that every person involved in the running of [Singing Kites](#) does so on a purely voluntary basis. The only people [Singing Kites](#) employ are it's Cambodian staff members.



Bharat lives in Brisbane and has been in business since 1984 in various industries. He is an Executive Director of several private companies and trusts designed to invest in and manage business and equities in Australia that donates part of its profits to its foundation, which is registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC).

[Bharat has a strong commitment to help build up the capacity of rural Cambodian communities, as they work towards sustainability and move away from the cycle of poverty.](#)

**\* Please visit our website to learn more about the new [Singing Kites team](#).**

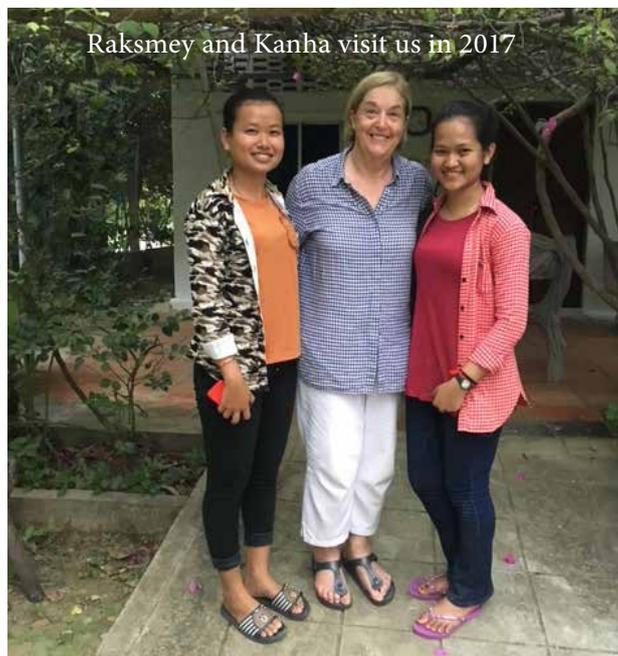
## WELCOME TO A NEW STAFF MEMBER



Raksmei Ouch was a student at TCEC before she graduated (above left) and went on to study Pedagogy at University in Takeo. She graduated with that degree in August and is now studying for a Bachelor of Education degree at the weekends.

She works as a full time primary school teacher at a local government school during week day mornings and teaches at [TCEC](#) in the afternoons.

She is a very gifted English teacher and we feel most fortunate in having her with us for the next two years until she finishes her current degree and works full time at a Government secondary school.



## A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

### FINALLY the most important message of all!

I know we say the same thing every year at this time, but as the year draws to a close, what is absolutely foremost in our minds, is the deep gratitude we feel to all those who make the difference in us being able to continue what we started over 8 years ago. People's contributions support our staff wages, support our university students, fund our breakfast program, pay for the running of the "school bus"..... all in the name of helping educate the next generation of disadvantaged, Cambodian rural children. Those wonderful children who would not have a strong voice, to become leaders of tomorrow. Every aspect of our running costs, need to be covered. Costs rise, disparity in the AUD/USD mean at times we struggle to find the funding. We feel committed and compelled to find ways to continue what we started almost 9 years ago. We keep costs as low as we can, but there is always more that needs to be done to alleviate poverty in our community. It's hard being there to witness things that , in our world, would not be allowed to happen. These stories are compelling and are what keeps us going.

Again, this Christmas 2017, I repeat my gratitude with great sincerity. There are too many to thank individually. Those who have funded new water tanks, funded the breakfast program, supported staff wages , supported university students, helped with the cost of infrastructure improvements, fundraised for us, supported those who fundraise too, who fund our dental clinic and importantly help and support me personally, so that I can continue to do everything I can, to keep our wheels of change turning. I feel deeply grateful.

I promise every person reading this newsletter that we continue to made a difference in our rural communities with your help; and my dearest wish is that we can continue to empower the people there into the years ahead.

Wishing you and your families a memorable, happy and safe Christmas,  
Kind regards,

