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## WINTER NEWSLETTER 2017



### DEAR FRIENDS OF SINGING KITES

We welcome you to another newsletter update. The year is flying by and there is an urgency to bring you an update on happenings at the school before more months pass us by!

We hope you enjoy reading this edition featuring:

- [dental clinic news](#)
- [a university student update](#)
- [staff news](#)
- [our online E space news](#)
- [library news](#)
- [volunteering](#)
- [our fundraisers and donors](#)
- [special news!](#)

We are forever grateful to so many people who support us in so many different ways. Everyone is important in this role and contributes immeasurably to the success we have in the goals achieved. We are here and able to continue to offer what we do, solely because of the support we receive. If we have achieved much, it is only because someone has believed in what we are doing, and has offered to help us along the path we tread. Many have shared this journey with us from the beginning, and walk beside us still.

We hope you enjoy reading this newsletter.  
With our gratitude and warm regards to all,

**Lyn, Tith, June, Carolyn and the  
Singing Kites team.**

## DENTAL CLINIC NEWS

For quite some time we have experienced serious fluctuations in power which have caused havoc and endless problems with the dental equipment. It's one thing to have power, but another to harness it correctly to operate a dental clinic in a rural Cambodian village. It's a serious problem when power fails in the middle of doing dental treatment!

We are so grateful to the great generosity of [Oral Experts Group Toowoomba](#) who donated money for us to buy a 15 KVA generator as an independent power source to alleviate this problem, a new compressor and an airconditioner, so that robed dentists working in the clinic under intense lights in 40+ degree heat, don't melt away!

We were also most grateful to two members of [Project Vietnam Inc \( Cambodia \)](#) for offering three days of their time, and worked so hard to get these things all connected up and running for us. Thank you [Peter Angel and Sam Bugeja](#). We couldn't have done it without you!

Our three dental technicians [Lyda, Rany and Nak](#) will complete their dental studies at CWF next month and will return home to run the school Clinic full time. Lyda will take on the role as our Clinic Manager. We are hoping to have them come to Toowoomba at the end of August for three weeks, to be observers at the [Oral Expert Group Clinics](#) here in Toowoomba. This will be a wonderful opportunity and important training time for them, and we thank [Dr Greg McHugh and his staff](#) for offering this wonderful opportunity to the girls.

We would also like to extend a very warm welcome to [Dr Greg McHugh](#) from [Oral Experts Group Toowoomba](#) who has agreed to be our Dental Clinic Project Director, and [Dr Chris Quinn](#) who will assist him in this role.

[Dr Boran Seung](#), a trained Cambodian dentist, will assist us with the dental project from the Cambodian end.



Dr Greg McHugh and Dr Chris Quinn visited our clinic in February.

Peter and Sam drilling the cement wall to put the cable through.



## SCHOOL VISIT

Carolyn Watts and I spent two weeks at the school in February/ March and it was a very rewarding time for us both. We met in Phnom Penh and talked about our plan for the time spent at the school. For Carolyn it was a very comprehensive time spent working on PD with the teachers of English and reviewing the English program we have implemented. We had two new teachers, [Sokhun Cheng and Virak Choun](#), who had joined us since she was last there, so Carolyn was happy to have time with them and work with the other teachers in their new roles of responsibility. She found all the teachers are making a great deal of progress in all areas of their teaching.



## STUDENT NEWS

The owner of our University rental house in Phnom Penh limits the number of students we can take, to eleven. We support this number at the moment. Three of our students will graduate over the next two months, as an architect, engineer and journalist. This means at the beginning of the university year in September we will have places for only three more students. This is a work in progress so we can offer more students the opportunity of supported further education.

We are so proud of all our students and are assured that if they are anything to go by, the future of Cambodia is in very good hands!

One of our current students, **Phearak Soeung** recently took part in “World Press Freedom Day 2017”. He spoke on challenging the media’s role in advancing peaceful, just and inclusive societies.

We are so grateful to those people who have taken a university student under their wing and support them so that they are able to fulfil their dreams of receiving an effective education.



## WE WELCOME THREE NEW STAFF MEMBERS



**VIRAK CHOEUN** lives in Tanop Village. He was one of our first students when we opened in 2009. He has been a very dedicated student over the years and is studying Law at university in Phnom Penh at weekends. He is teaching English at our school during the week, and has taken on a very responsible role of leadership in our school’s new future plans.



**SOKHUN CHENG** lives in Tanop Village. He has come to us as an English teacher, and is such a conscientious, dedicated teacher. Sokhun is a devoted family man with one little daughter Ryha who attends our preschool.



**CHANTHAN TEK** lives in Tror Paingyoung Village. He was the receiver of our first micro-loan in 2009, purchasing a tuk tuk. He has been working as a tuk tuk driver in Phnom Penh for eight years. When we were in need of a driver for the “school bus” recently, he decided he would apply for the job. He is excellent in that position and he has a great natural knowledge of engines and vehicle care.

**We have the most wonderful staff, and we can’t speak highly enough of them and the support and dedication they give us. They are our strength and the soul of our school. They make a large and very positive difference to the success of an organization such as ours, and they deserve our deepest gratitude.**



We are excited at the endless possibilities of what having an internet connection at the school means to us. We have a long way to go, but already it is changing so much for us in connecting with students and teachers during those long, hot months between April and August, when volunteers are generally absent from the school. Now it is possible to have daily sessions with students, group meetings and face to face staff meetings with teachers. That important connection and presence is possible between all parties now.

We will have more news on advances in this program later in the year. They are exciting days ahead for us!



**It's great fun to volunteer or visit!** For details contact Carolyn Watts at [carolyn@singingkites.org](mailto:carolyn@singingkites.org)

## LIBRARY NEWS



Cambodian children, especially those in the rural areas, don't have access to books. We have always believed that our mission is to fight illiteracy in rural Cambodia. To increase the school and community readership, and through the interaction of our own library/ lending library, create a stimulating reading and learning environment.

[Sally May](#), a retired librarian from Herberton, and one of our treasured volunteers, offered her services recently to go over to the school and set up our lending library, train [Chettra Tep](#), our school Librarian and pave the way for our lending library to open. [Sally](#), [Chettra](#) and [Nop](#) spent days accessioning books, bar coding and entering them into the newly installed library system on the library computer.

At the end of Sally's stay, there were 555 books catalogued and 300 borrowers listed. A great start!

## OUR NEW INCINERATOR

Disposing of refuse is a huge problem throughout Cambodia, particularly in the rural areas where there is no collection service at all. Up until now we have burnt refuse in the open which causes a great deal of smoke drift.

We were so grateful to two people who recently made a generous donation for us to build an enclosed incinerator. It has a tall chimney above the roof line and is working so well, and alleviating all our past problems.

We are continuing to recycle bottles and other items that are not suitable for burning to a local village recycling business.



## OUR SPECIAL NEWS!

As many of you will be aware, for the past 10 years we have been a partner in our Singing Kites project with Global Development Group.

Last year we decided to take the very big step of applying to the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) for independent charity status in order to become a registered Australian charity in our own right. This has involved months of preparation, but our hard work has paid off and the great news is that the ACNC advised us last week that our application had been successful and has granted us our new NGO (Non Government Organization) status.

We are over the moon about this, but at the same time humbled that our project has met each of the stringent criteria set by the Australian Government to obtain this. We are now an independent, fully registered NGO!

Having our own NGO status not only benefits us as an organization, but also benefits our donors and the community we work with.

Our new status won't affect the day to day running of the school, the project, or the volunteer program, but will enable us to set the project on a responsible sustainability pathway, with the eventual goal of handing the responsibility of running the project over to the Tanop community in 6 to 8 years.

More information on our new structure and sustainability project ideas will follow in the next newsletter once we settle into this new phase.

We will soon have a new, updated website to share with everyone! A busy time for us, but a very rewarding one! We have truly come of age!



## FINALLY

I come to finish this newsletter, deeply grateful to so many people who support us in so many ways. We are such a small organization with just a very small handful of volunteers doing a myriad of jobs; who over eight years have kept the wheels turning.

Please be assured we are continuing to help change lives and are doing our best to help young Cambodians have a better future for themselves, their families and their country. The work we do can only happen because of the financial support we receive. This is the only reason we can continue this journey.

A very sincere thank you to all those people who have held fundraisers for us, donated towards the cost of items to make improvements at the school and in the community, helped us with the Club 100 organizing. Those who have generously donated their time to volunteer with us and go over to Cambodia to work with our teachers and students, and those others who help train and work with our staff.

We are deeply grateful to those who so generously support our university students, our teacher's salaries, the cost of the breakfast program, the senior's lunch, the music program, purchased library books, generously donated our new library system, our dental clinic equipment and the operation and training of our dental staff. Those who have donated rainwater tanks, (soon to be installed), helped us put down more community ponds ..... and the list goes on and on!

We know you are there, and think of you every day with deep gratitude!

Until next time,

Very warm regards to each of you.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lynn Hatch".