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WINTER NEWSLETTER 2016

DEAR FRIENDS OF SINGING KITES

We are very happy to welcome you to the **WINTER** edition of our newsletter bringing you updates and stories on happenings at the school, in our community, our Dental Clinic, Tith and Channa's visit to Australia, our Toowoomba fundraiser and a peep into exciting future Singing Kites plans on the drawing board.

We hope you enjoy this edition!



Project J094 Singing Kites partners with **Global Development Group** (ABN 57 102 400 993), an Australian NGO approved by the Minister for Foreign Affairs (as administered by DFAT).

The Tanop Village Pond



Sadly, many in our village community have been **without water** and in a **desperate situation**. The village pond supplying water to over 1700 people went from a thick grey sludge to dry.

We are immensely grateful to the two donors who so generously contributed the \$8500 USD needed so that we could deepen the pond to a depth of 4 metres. The villagers contributed what they could afford and are so grateful that we could help out. They say they are now unlikely to run out of water again.

Saturday the 16th April. Our Toowoomba Fundraiser!

A special thank you to everyone who came along to a very special fundraising lunch we held on Saturday the 16th of April. It was special because our **Cambodian Director Tith Tek** and our **Preschool Director Channa Tek** came out from Cambodia and were able to attend. Tith was our guest speaker and gave an inspirational insight into his past life and spoke about the journey he has taken, to show how access to education **can** change lives.

Over 200 people attended, many travelling very long distances to be part of our day. Our heartfelt thanks must go to each and every guest who helped us raise an astonishing \$11,500 in much needed funds to support our project. We were thrilled to have a very gifted Cambodian classical dancer, **Kanika Koy** perform a “Welcome Blessing” dance to open what proved to be a very warm hearted and successful event.



1 and 2.
Guests listening to Tith speak about his life.
3.
Kanika Koy, a Cambodian Classical dancer, who welcomed our guests by performing a traditional Khmer “Welcome Dance”.
4.
A group gathering of all those who have visited our school!



TITH AND CHANNA'S VISIT TO AUSTRALIA

We were overjoyed to have our school **Director Tith Tek** and our **Preschool Director Channa Tek** visit Australia for three weeks at the end of March. Both were able to attend our annual Toowoomba fundraiser, where Tith was invited to be guest speaker.

What delightful visitors they were and both went home with lots of ideas from the schools they visited and special memories from those who invited them into their homes.

It was the most wonderful and memorable time for all concerned.

Our gratitude to Greg Tucker for organizing a wonderful day at the Highfields State School, Karen and Sarah at Chiselhurst Kindergarten, Janet Fietchner and all those at Cifton State High School and Liz Derouet for organizing a visit for Tith and Channa to Toowoomba Grammar School.

Our deep gratitude to all, who made their trip to Australia a very special time for them.



1. Tith speaking to a class of students at Highfields State School.
2. Tith at Clifton State High School.
3. Tith and Channa at the Hotchin farm at Pechey.
4. Enjoying am icecream with the Moro family and a friend at the Gold Coast.
5. Tith and Channa with Jayshree Bharat at Southbank, Brisbane.
6. Tith after his interview with David Iliffe from the ABC Southern Queensland.

Hear his interview at:

https://soundcloud.com/abc-southern-qld/meet-the-pair-who-gave-singing-kites-its-voice?utm_source=soundcloud&utm_campaign=share&utm_medium=email

TCEC ONLINE LEARNING CENTRE

The proposal to develop an **On Line Learning Centre** at TCEC is an outcome of the ongoing review of our **English Language Programs** and the need to ensure that our school programs continue to meet the changing needs of our students.

English language programs at the pre-school, primary and lower to mid-secondary levels at TCEC are thriving but the drop-off in enrolments in the senior English classes and the subsequent regression of language skills at that level are a cause of some concern.

There appears to be two reasons for this:

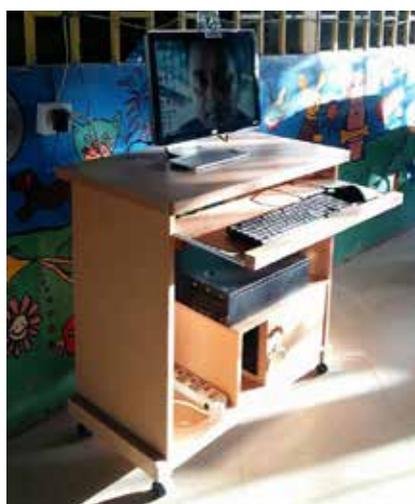
1.

English is not considered as important as Maths, Physics and Chemistry in the final year 12 exam results and carries a considerably lower “weighting”. Conscientious students inevitably prioritise their time to include as many “out time” classes in Maths, Physics and Chemistry as they can, to the detriment of attending English classes at TCEC.

2.

Students feel that by year 12, after many years of English at TCEC, they have sufficient grasp of English to manage and pass the year 12 English exam without attending classes at TCEC.

An additional problem, however, is that there is a lack of volunteers during the hot/rainy season, from March to September. We know that the presence of native English speaking volunteers at the school really makes a difference in improving the confidence and English skills of both teachers and students and this 6 month gap has a negative impact on this development.



The first purchase of a desk top computer to be used in the Pilot Program.

Why an On Line Learning Centre?

By establishing an On Line Learning Centre, we believe we will help re-dress some of these issues. This program will involve:

(a) online weekly/ fortnightly professional meetings with teaching staff.

(b) regular and targeted on line small group language tutorials for our senior students.

(c) regular, volunteer-led on line learning conversation sessions with all our students who show interest in improving their communicative skill base.

This is a brief overview of the proposed initiative. A Pilot project will be undertaken soon to help us identify and manage problems associated with setting up a Centre such as this.

The **On Line Learning Centre** will comprise of:

*a secure room refurbished for this purpose

*6 desk top computers connected to a reliable internet connection

*the installation of ZOOM, our preferred online platform

*a reference library

*a fiction lending library and a career information area.

We propose to enlist the help of ESL teachers, teachers and other volunteers who would like to help out with donated time.

Anyone who in the future, might be interested in donating an hour a month, or an hour in their school holiday time, might like to register their interest with us.

Contact **Carolyn Watts**: carolyn@singingkites.org

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are a very important part of our program. The volunteer program has been working well and we have had some outstanding volunteers contribute to student learning and school life this year. We extend our immense gratitude to all those who have volunteered with us.

The impact of volunteers in the [English Language program](#) cannot be underestimated. It is clear to us that senior students who regularly engage with volunteers greatly improve their language skills. Volunteers working with students in small- group Listening, Speaking and Reading activities make a real difference. Teachers have become more confident with volunteers and the program has become a de facto Professional Development experience for many teachers.



volunteer vacancies = carolyn@singingkites.org

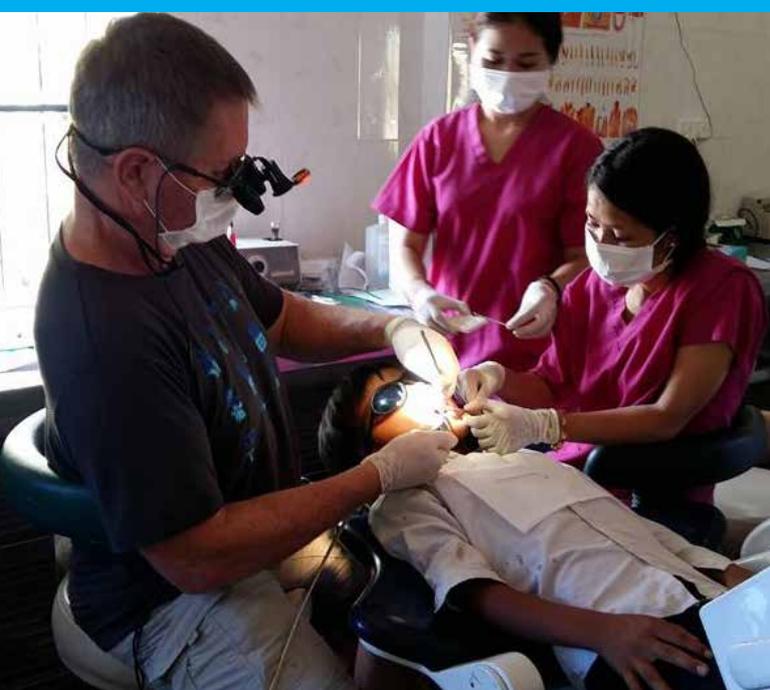
DENTAL CLINIC NEWS

We were very happy to welcome [Dr Greg McHugh](#) from [Oral Experts Group Toowoomba](#), who spent three days at our school Clinic recently. It was a very fruitful visit.

We greatly appreciate [OEG's](#) continuing support and Dr Greg's helpful ideas on making some improvements to the operation of the Clinic and the dental program we offer.

Our three trainee dental assistants Lyda, Rany and Nak are continuing to do well and have a busy life attending [Cambodia World Family](#) by day and studying in the evenings. We again thank [CWF](#) for their training support of the girls.

In our next newsletter we hope to share some exciting, new Clinic developments with you.



The IDEA of a MOBILE LIBRARY!



1



2

1. A library session at our school library.

2. New books for the Year 7 and 8's at Muy Mithona High School.

Five years ago we built a library at our school, realizing that access to books is such an important part of the learning process. Our students now have regular library sessions.

Singing Kites has a mission to fight illiteracy, in rural Cambodia, and increase school and community readership by thoughts of establishing a mobile library to service the local Government schools and village community groups who have absolutely no access to reading books. Even the Government schools have text books on hand, but do not have reading books.

Our goal is to make books available to develop school and public reading and through this interaction, introduce a stimulating reading and learning environment.

Urban dwellers can borrow books from libraries or buy them from bookstores, but rural people don't have that opportunity.

We are working on the above initiative and are tossing ideas around to help find the best way to redress this problem.

We would welcome any ideas anyone might have to offer us!

CLUB 100

Our club 100 was established in 2013 to find **100 people** who would be willing to donate **\$30 AUD** a month to become **school sponsors** and help us meet our school running costs. We have passed the halfway mark, and would warmly welcome anyone who would like to join our **Singing Kites** family and become an important team member.

For details contact : june@singingkites.org

We thank you for taking the time to read our newsletter and hope we will catch up again when we issue our Spring news update.

With our gratitude and very best wishes,



Tith, June, Carolyn and the Singing Kites team.