

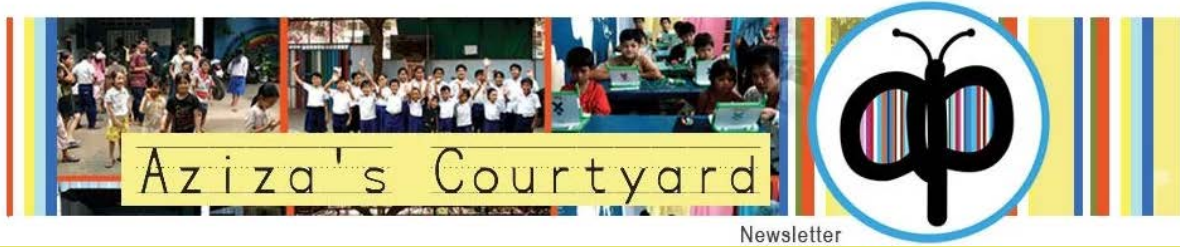
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Dear friends of Aziza's Place,

The months since the summer have seen some exciting developments at Aziza's Place. We welcomed two new staff members: our general manager, Anwaar Ahmed, and Sara Da Riva, who has assumed the new role of educational consultant.

We also took this period to revamp and develop some much-needed structure and accountability around our supplemental education program and offered full-day services to all of our children while the public schools were closed.

Read all about it in our November newsletter.

### In this edition, we'd love to share the following stories with you

- 🐝 Picture of the month
- 🐝 The stories of Sreysros and Naweenn...
- 🐝 An introduction to AP's new staff members
- 🐝 AP's summer activities
  - Dancing
  - Karate competition
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- 🐝 New progress assessment strategies at AP
- 🐝 Read about our volunteers' experiences
- 🐝 Our new AP puppy: Somnang

**Picture of the month**

***Happy Pchum Ben from everybody at Aziza's Place!***



Pchum Ben, referred to in English as "Ancestor's Day," is an annual 15-day religious celebration and one of the most important public holidays in Cambodia. To mark this year's religious festivities, the staff and children took a day trip to the nearby Sansam Kosal Pagoda on Friday, the 5th of October.

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The story of...  
**Sreysros**



Sros first entered AP in March 2007 when it was still a residential center and had just opened its doors in February 2007. She arrived as the first female resident and has had the longest tenure under AP's care than any other beneficiary!

Once AP commenced its reintegration program in 2014, Sros was "reintegrated" into a family setting in 2016 and has since been living in a rented room with her older brother Roth, an Aziza's Place graduate who now works as an English teacher at a local NGO, and her younger sister Vandy, who is 12 years old and also a current beneficiary of AP's services and programs.

Sros is an outstanding member of the AP community always will to help the younger children in their dance classes or with reading or with any assistance they require. She also recently graduated from Westline High School this past August, receiving passing marks in all the courses in which she was tested: : math, physics, chemistry, biology, Khmer, and English – her favorites being the latter two subjects.

Sros has fulfilled her dream of attending university and has started her 4-year university course in social work at the National Institute of Social Affairs in November. She says she wants to help people, especially children, in her future career. All of our heartfelt congratulations go out to Sros, who is an outstanding role model to younger AP children, a loving sister to her siblings, a dutiful daughter and a wonderful and talented young lady.

When asked about her time at Aziza's Place, she said that what she valued most was having access to education and extra classes which helped her learn. Sros is a vital part of our daily operations. She devotes much of her free time to playing with the other children, helping them with their homework, and assisting our social worker and volunteers during extracurricular activities.

She is also a very talented pianist and the sound of her playing can often be heard drifting around the halls at AP. We are immensely proud of her and wish her all the best for the start of the academic year!

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## The story of... **Naween**



We would also like to congratulate another of our long-standing students, Naween, who this spring graduated into high school. In Cambodia, students have to take a total of ten exams in all subjects in order to join a high school.

Naween, who is 16 years old, goes to Westline High School and says his favorite subjects are math and chemistry. In the future, he can imagine going to university and becoming a teacher in one of those subjects. He is also an excellent guitarist, so if his career in teaching does not take

off, he would also like to be a musician.

He joined AP in 2011 and, like Sros, was part of our reintegration program in 2016. He lives in a rented room with a former AP graduate called Cheng, who despite not being related to Naween, is like a brother to him. He comes from a family of seven and was born in Battambang Province. His mother is a farmer, while his father unfortunately passed away.

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## Introduction to AP's new members of staff

### Anwaar Ahmed

Anwaar started as AP's new general manager in September 2018. He was born and raised in Rome, and his studies and previous jobs have taken him all around the world including New York, Tokyo and London. He received a double BA degree in International Relations & Economics from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and went on to spend eighteen years at Morgan Stanley. Anwaar has since made the decision to commit his time to humanitarian work in Phnom Penh. Anwaar's responsibilities at Aziza's Place will include supervising our staff members, liaising with local donors and NGOs and, of course, engaging with the communities that AP serves.

### Sara Da Riva

We are also delighted to announce that in summer 2018, Aziza's Place welcomed Sara Da Riva. Sara joined AP in August 2018 as an educational consultant. Having moved from Spain to Cambodia more than a decade ago, Sara has devoted her career to creating and implementing educational programs in schools across Phnom Penh. Her time as the principle of the CIA PP International School has put Sara in an excellent position to consult on AP's current educational facilities, to research various models of teaching and, lastly, to offer recommendations on how to improve and build upon our current learning methods.



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## AP's Summer Activities

With the arrival of our new staff members and volunteers, we decided to change up our usual summer curriculum in order to help create a stronger bond between the new arrivals and AP's students. For this reason, we offered full day services with half of the day dedicated to arts and crafts projects, dancing, and outdoor activities and the other half devoted to daily classes in Khmer, English, Math and IT.

In previous summers when the public schools were closed, the children would only come to AP for five to six hours to take part in their classes. Changing up the schedule was a brilliant way to make sure the students got three nutritious meals a day, had access to their normal classes, and still had enough time to play and get creative.

### Karate Competition

On the 22nd and 23rd of September, a total of seven AP children took part in the Karate-do Shotokan Academy's two-day competition. The event took place at the Royal University of Phnom Penh and the families of the participating students, as well as AP's staff members and those AP children who were not competing, were all there to show their support.

11-year-old Vandy, who has been with AP since October 2015, even got to compete in her own category and made it through the first round. We were extremely proud of her and all of the AP children who competed that weekend. [Click here for photos and videos of the event.](#)



### AP's New Compost

AP has also seen the launch of a brand new compost, utilising a space in our courtyard that was unused while also seeing the start of a new food waste initiative. The children were heavily involved in the project, lending their gardening and painting skills to clear and decorate the area.

Our new general manager, Anwaar, then risked life and limb driving two bins on the back of his scooter to complete the project. Everyday, the children add any waste to the bins after our breakfast, lunch and dinner service and soon we will have fresh compost for use on our garden.



## Dancing

The children at AP have lessons every Saturday in the traditional Khmer dance Aspara. It is an art form requiring a high degree of concentration, discipline, and practice which is why we highly value these weekly classes as a vital part of the students' extracurricular activities.

To offer some more variety and teach the children about various genres of dance, [our new volunteer Merle has been choreographing hip-hop and funk routines with the help of the children](#). These genres are all about freedom of expression and adding your own individual style to a routine, something we want to encourage in every child.

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## **New progress assessment strategies at AP**

In cooperation with AP's teachers, our new education consultant has reviewed and revised AP's current progress tracking strategy.

Teachers are now submitting bi-weekly progress reports with details on every student's performance and their challenges. Furthermore, to assess the children's English skills we have chosen the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages as an internationally recognized and standardized grading system.



## Somnang: AP's puppy



We'd also like you to meet AP's newest and furriest addition: our little puppy Somnang (Khmer for "lucky"). One of our children brought Somnang from his community to Aziza's Place one morning when the little puppy was only four weeks old.

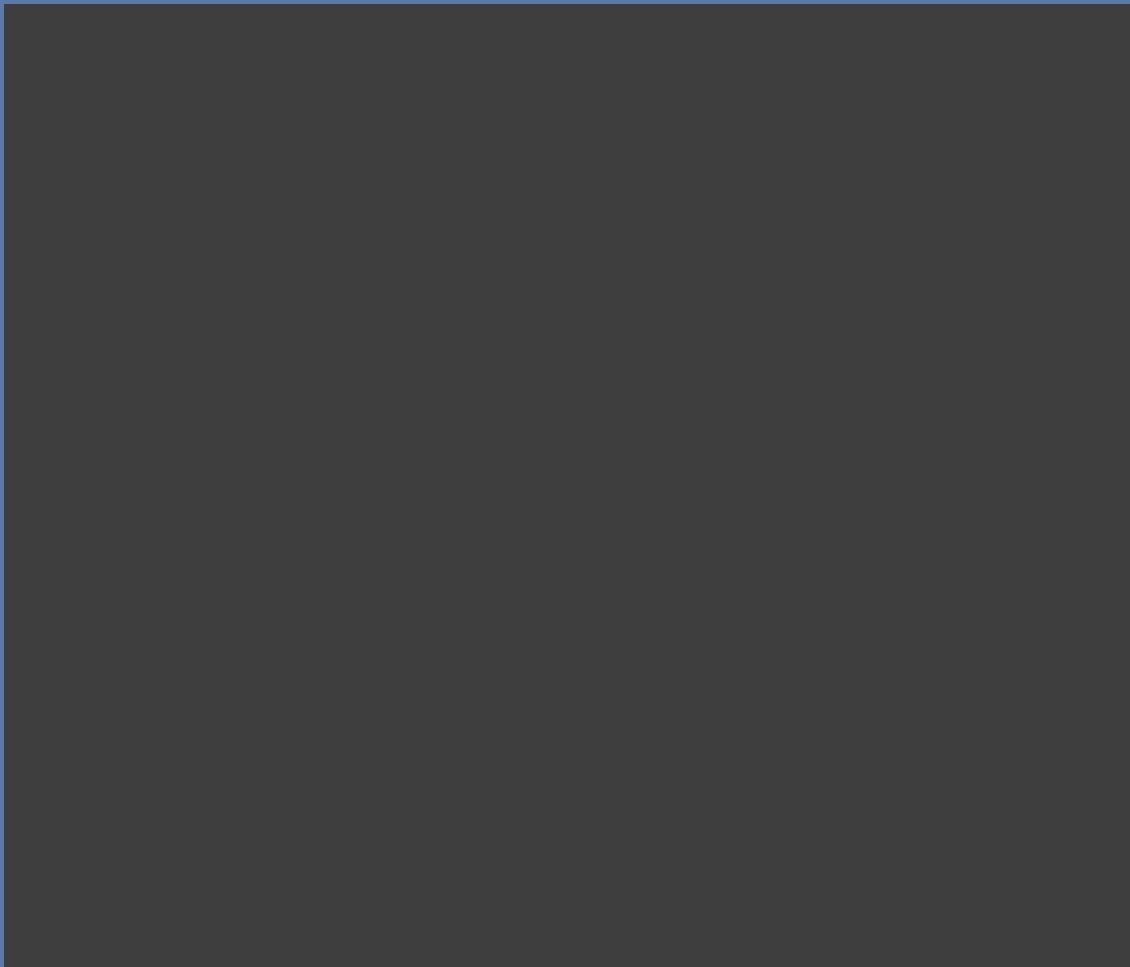
He was in fairly bad shape so after getting him checked out by a vet, we decided to adopt him and care for him. It's a great opportunity to teach the children about taking care of their pets and looking after him has become a fun team effort. Day by day, he is growing in strength and we are very thankful and lucky to have him as part of our AP family.



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## Volunteer news

# New volunteer arrivals





**Joe and Merle are AP's newest volunteers, having moved to Phnom Penh from London back in August.**

Our main tasks at AP have been taking over the daily English classes and working very hard together with AP's new Education Consultant, Sara, to revise AP's progress tracking system. All teachers are now providing bi-weekly progress reports for each student, and in order to create a seamless transition for the next English teacher we have started uploading our lesson plans and worksheets.

While it's definitely a challenge teaching children English without speaking a single word of Khmer, I do believe that this is ultimately an advantage as it encourages the children to pick up English phrases very quickly.

Because of AP's new full-day summer services, we were able to bond and spend time with the kids in the afternoons which were often spent teaching them Western-style choreographies and working on arts and crafts projects. This is how we discovered that Sreytoch, at only 7 years old, is an extremely talented dancer, picking up choreography more quickly than any of the older children.

Apart from teaching and taking over extracurricular activities with the children, we've been very involved with some of AP's administrative work as well. Joe has

worked tirelessly to consult on how to best improve AP's communications platforms, has designed and launched a brand new website for AP, and has been keeping all of AP's social media up to date.

Of course, working with a total of 40 children means that some days are chaotic and hectic, but we've enjoyed every minute of it. If you have any questions about volunteering at Aziza's Place, please get in touch with the management team at [info@azizasplace.org](mailto:info@azizasplace.org) and they will be able to provide you with more information.



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