

DIARY OF AUSTRALIA

NOTES FROM A SEASON OF COMING OF AGE

.....

Hello everyone! My name is Trang, and I am 15 years old. This summer, I am proud to be one of the students selected for the experience trip to Australia, organized by Mekong Organics and Australian volunteers.

First of all, I would like to sincerely thank Mekong Organics, Reclink Australia, Mallacoota P-12 College, all members of the Mango group, and everyone – especially Phil and Kate – for your companionship and wholehearted support. Thank you all for creating such an open and friendly environment for us.

During my time living and studying in Australia, I experienced many new things, and every day was a valuable lesson. We took part in sports activities and community programs. Every Monday afternoon, we went to the sports center, where we practiced playing basketball. Everyone was friendly and considerate of one another.

In addition, an unmissable activity was the Judo class with Mr. Ben every Thursday afternoon. This was always one of the happiest moments for me during the whole journey. He taught us basic Judo techniques and always hoped that everyone, especially the girls, would gain more knowledge about self-defense against bad people.



Every Thursday morning, we went to the community center, where older people gathered to play board games and chat. My partner, Khả Ân, learned how to make coffee and served it to everyone. People felt happy and truly welcomed there. I think she is a really good barista!

Besides, the school in Mallacoota was truly wonderful. The teachers were friendly and dedicated, the students were active, and everyone was very cheerful. This was also where I realized my dream of becoming a good teacher. I truly hope that in the future, I will have the opportunity to work and teach here.

My favorite activity was learning lino printing with Ms. Yo. She is a wonderful teacher. To me, she was not only a devoted teacher but also like a grandmother, always giving us great love. Yo, Kate, and Phil were my greatest sources of encouragement in making art. Here are some of my artworks:





I also did art with Ms. Step, the school's art teacher.





In Australia, I learned a lot about the culture and history of this beautiful country. What impressed me the most was the “Christmas in July” festival. Because the climate is the opposite of Europe – the homeland of most Australians’ ancestors – Australians celebrate Christmas in July in order to enjoy the cold atmosphere and to honor their mother culture. Khà Ân and I experienced this special festival at the house of Kate’s brother, Rob. It was one of the most wonderful parties I have ever attended.



In addition, Kate taught me a lot about the First Nations people of Australia. That was very meaningful to me. I admired their paintings and listened to their music. Those were truly some of the most beautiful things I had ever experienced.

Phil and Kate were the two most important people in my journey. Even though it was only two months, the love and care they gave me were sacred and rare. They always thought and acted for the community without caring about personal benefit. They were happy when they could share and see others happy. Maybe that is why they always live so optimistically and joyfully. They not only taught me how to love myself and others but also helped me improve my health and English communication skills.

I love them so much!

Now, to nurture my dream of becoming a teacher, I am planning a project to teach English to children in the highlands where I live. I want to inspire them to learn English with joy and confidence, because I believe it will open many doors for their future, just as it has for me.

In the future, I also dream of coming back to Australia to study and visit everyone again. I hope to see my teachers and friends who gave me so much love.

Once again, thank you to everyone for always being by my side throughout this journey!

With gratitude,
Trang

