

# PAW PRINTS

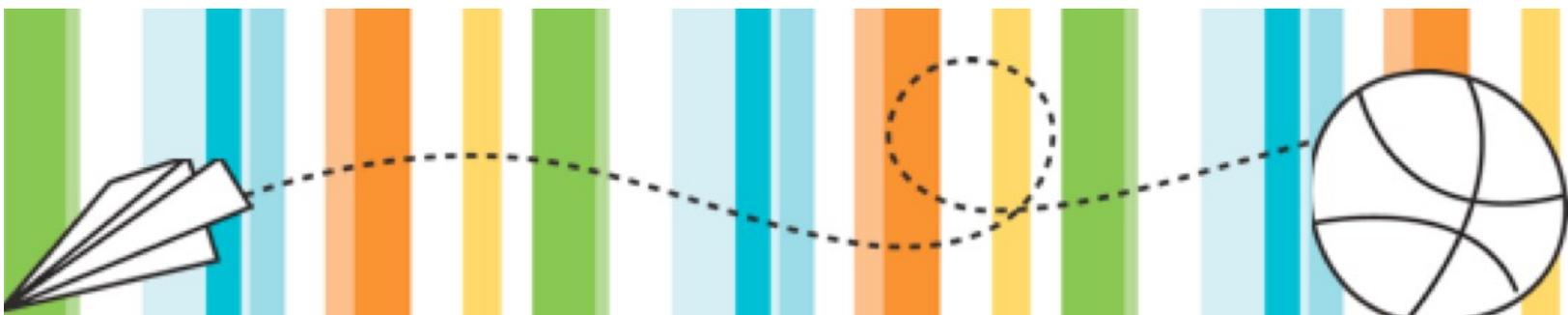
Edition 15

## PAW Alumni & Friends of PAW, December 2019

### PAW MISSION STATEMENT:

To broaden the worldview of University of Alberta students through a cross-cultural service-learning placement as they facilitate play, recreation and sport opportunities for children and youth of all abilities in collaboration with the communities who serve them.

Team Cambodia, 2019



# PAW Team 2019: Team Cambodia

When we arrived in Phnom Penh we found ourselves right in the middle of a heat wave. Let's just say, that prior to Cambodia, I wasn't aware that I didn't know the meaning of the word "hot". As we began the transformation from relatively healthy university students to nothing more than a human shaped puddles of sweat, any tiny smidge of reprieve from the 47 degree was crucial to our survival.

Peaceful Children's Home, a small non-profit just outside of Phnom Penh provided that little reprieve. Being just outside of the city was a true treat, the opportunity to experience parts of the Cambodian countryside was a unique experience. One of the favourite past times for the children living in the non-profit was swimming in a little watering hole just a short walk from their classrooms.

Although the water we were swimming was only about 40% water- the rest I don't really want to think about- swimming with the children every Sunday was the highlight of my week. Playing in the water with the children, seeing how much absolute joy being in the water brought, was something I was beyond excited for. It was gross, exhausting and stinky and sometimes things would brush against your legs that still haunt me to this day, but some of the brightest memories I have leaving Cambodia come from that gross little watering hole. The silliness, the true free playfulness that came from that time, the kids that would dunk us in water, throw cow patties at our heads, and laugh so, so loudly throughout the whole afternoon, made this experience one that I will hopefully remember forever.

- Madeline Au, Team Cambodia 2019



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Other than Peaceful Children's Home, we also had the opportunity to work with 3 other incredible organizations: Cambodian Children's Fund, Rabbit School and People Improvement Organization. Each with its own challenges and triumphs, the lessons we got to take back home with us were not in shortage. It's hard to chalk down an experience to a few paragraphs and somehow still properly convey what your time in-country is like but, if I had to start somewhere, it's how different all kids can be. Mary Ann loves to say how play is universal and she is definitely not wrong; a game as simple as red light, green light can allow you to share joy and thrill with a child you do not share a common language with or have even ever met before.



The kids at Cambodian Children's Fund showed up with an itch for competition every single day – their unwavering energy kept us on our toes both physically and mentally. We met kids that were fascinated in being taught ballroom dances so between our breaks we would dance cha-cha and rumba.



Rabbit School fostered an incredible attitude of celebrating victories, no matter small or big, and it created an exceptional group of kids who were always excited to cheer on their peers and recognize each other's accomplishments.

And finally, People Improvement Organization, where the three of us were introduced to rough and tumble play. The class sizes here were large with limited space for movement which evidently challenged how we approached play-planning and game development.

All in all, this experience is unmatched and it's honestly not as simple as "we got to play with kids for three months", because it was a lot more than just creating games for children to play. When we provide kids with the space to challenge their imagination, we not only get to witness pure joy but also have a role in facilitating it – a feeling we could never properly communicate through words. So, besides the interpersonal skill development or the adaptability that we gained from an educational aspect, our gratitude more so lies in the fact that we had the chance to experience human connection with a lot of amazing people.

- Julia Zarkov, Team Cambodia 2019



# PAW Team 2019: Team Peru



The team was able to grow relationships from prior years while developing a new relationship with San Borja, a school right in the heart of Cusco. The team was involved with their physical education classes, where the kids loved playing any games involving basketball and soccer. “What time is it Mr. Wolf” was a favorite game at this school, and the kids even taught them some different variations of the games. The team is excited for PAW to grow this relationship in the years to come!

Team Peru had the chance to play with children and youth aged 2-13 from six different organizations. They engaged in all different types of play, including creative, exploratory, competitive, cooperative and (the kids’ favorite) rough and tumble play. One of their favorite play memories was at Altos Los Inkas school when they were working with a very high energy group that couldn’t stand still, so a game of ‘Pulpo’ (octopus) morphed into a zombie-apocalypse like game where all the kids pretended to be zombies and chased/crawled all over the Xavier, Cassidy and Kennedy until they “transformed” into zombies as well.



The team was afforded a wide variety of cultural experiences, whether it was learning traditional Inca games, going on adventures with their Spanish teacher Esther, or witnessing all the festivals and celebrations in Plaza de Armas. For the first time in 44 years, Peru made it to the Copa América Finals so the team was able to experience the national passion and unity surrounding soccer. Team Peru learned so much from the kids, teachers, organizations, teammates and everyone else involved in PAW, and feels so grateful for this experience full of lifelong memories.



# PAW Team 2019: Team Thailand

Team Thailand worked with 8 different organizations throughout the summer, with each one offering unique opportunities and experiences to the team. Being able to play with kids as young as preschoolers, to teenagers and all ages in between, in a variety of different play spaces, with a range of abilities, allowed the team to really get creative in providing the best play opportunities for all of the kids!



One of the schools we worked at (with roughly 160 students ranging from grades 1 to 9) was called Baanbuengtonchan. It was located in a remote area with beautiful mountains and lush greenery all around. The children at this school absolutely loved to play no matter what the activity was, no matter the weather, and no matter what else was happening in their day. When we showed up that school it was as if class was no longer in session. Children from all grade levels would quickly rush out of their classrooms to join in on the fun.



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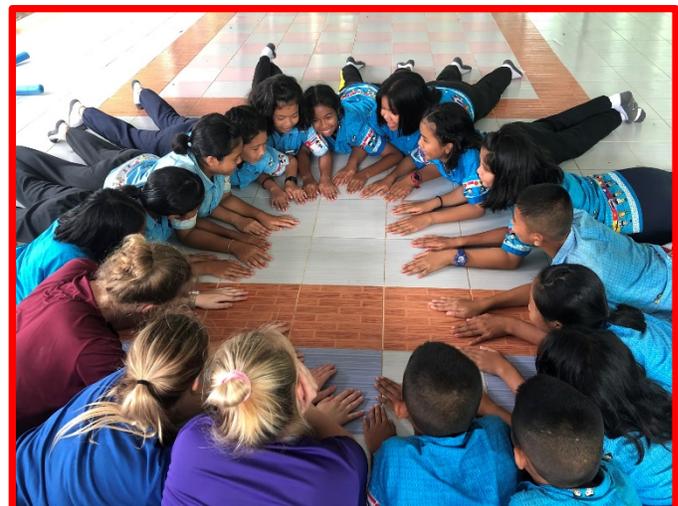


We completed our Playday project at this school; the day included a sports station, water station and an art, construction, and paint station. The play atmosphere that developed on that day is almost indescribable. What started as separate play stations with various groups of children playing, then turned into a school-wide water dance party. Even the teachers joined in on the fun by turning on the water hoses and spraying all the students til they were drenched. We ended the Playday with a special piñata that we had crafted up in our hotel room and made into a giant candy filled watermelon. The children had an absolute blast taking part in the festivities. Everyday at that school created special moments for the children and us as PAW participants alike.

- Shilah Anderton, Team Thailand 2019

Wattakhan Temple School was the school Rayong 2019 had the opportunity to laugh and play with every Monday during this summer. PAW has been playing at Wattakhan since 2015. We found ourselves often facilitating free play at this school because we had a variety of space to play with and smaller class sizes. Past PAW participants may remember the game flinch; a circle game where one individual is in the middle with a soccer ball and everyone else has their arms crossed, hands touched to their shoulders and the middle individual tries to make everyone flinch, thus resulting in an intense game situation where only the strong survive. Well... this school had the most intense love for the game of flinch.... And I bet these P5 students are still playing flinch every chance they get. Wattakhan school will always hold a place in my heart as they taught me to play my hardest and to never stop smiling.

- Samantha Goodwin, Team Thailand 2019

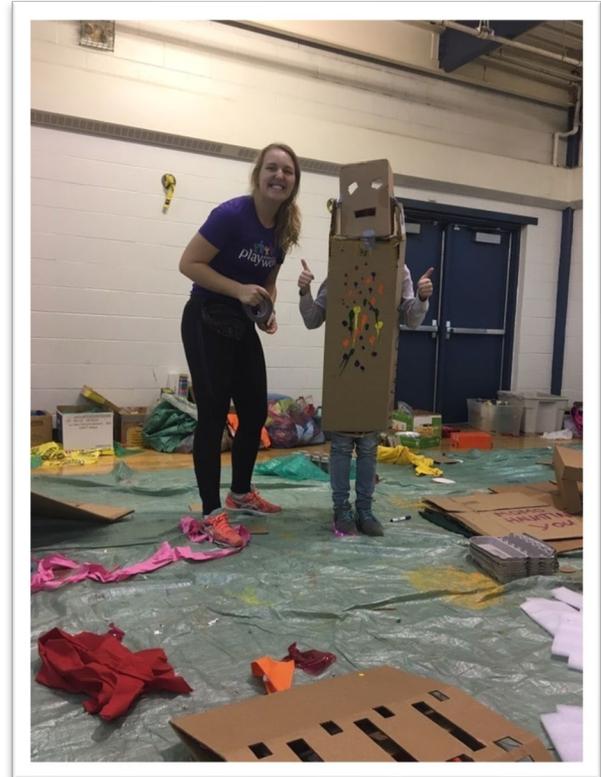


# National Child Day: Play Day!

November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2019



To celebrate, Play Around the World paired up with Child Friendly Edmonton on November 17<sup>th</sup> to put on a Play Day at the Jamie Platz YMCA. It was a huge success with lots of creative and active free play!



November 20<sup>th</sup> was National Child Day! On this day, we recognized our commitment to the rights of children established by the 1959 signing of the UN Declaration of the Rights of the Child. This year was also the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the UN convention on the Rights of the Child (adopted in 1989).

**Thank you to all  
the volunteers  
that came out to  
support the play  
day!**



# Royle Harris PAW Award Recipients

The Royle Harris Play Around the World Award is granted annually to students that have demonstrated effort in working effectively with individuals and groups in adapted physical activity settings, working collaboratively and effectively within a team initiative, showing compassion, respect for diversity, and dedication to the field of adapted physical activity and/or therapeutic recreation.

**Congratulations Samantha Goodwin (left) & Julia Zarkov (right) on being this year's recipients!**



Samantha went to Rayong, Thailand for her PAW placement and was in her 2nd year of a Bachelor of Kinesiology degree. Since returning home from Rayong Samantha has left her degree to pursue her true passion in nursing which she will be starting in September.

Samantha's favourite play quote:  
 "We don't stop playing because we grow old,  
 we grow old because we stop playing" –  
 Shaw

Julia went to Phnom Penh, Cambodia and is in her last semester of her Bachelor of Science in Kinesiology.

When asked for her favourite play quote she responded "Don't know any play quotes per se, but I noticed that if I ever ask a kid if they're ok with playing what we're doing, I better be ready with another game if their answer is no. So, if I were to put that in a quote, it would be something like 'Don't ask questions if you're not ready to receive the brutal answer?'". Good luck in your last semester!



# PAW 2019 Student-Led Final Projects

## Games Club by Mathew Blundell, Cambodia

Mathew created a games club which met once a week after school to play. While it began slow, with board games (chess) because these children had never seen or played board games of any type, it gradually caught on, was well attended, and the children began to take ownership of the club and activities. There was a social inclusion aspect to the club where children had opportunities to cooperate, learn about fair play and create their own games together.



## The Benefits of Outdoor Play and Games by Cassidy Stromberg, Peru

Cassidy focused on an outdoor play experience high up above Cusco at a site of ancient ruins with a large surrounding treed area. The 10 boys from Huchy Runa School rarely had the opportunity to run free in the great outdoors so this day was a highlight. In addition to the practical component of running several activities in the wide spaces and treed areas, Cassidy created a resource of suggestions, prefaced with the benefits of outdoor play and games (English and Spanish versions).



## Importance of Free Play in Schools by Chloe Turner, Thailand

Chloe completed an exploratory paper about the importance of play in schools in Rayong and particularly at the Wat Huang Hin School. The resource was developed and given to the school (translated into Thai) and a playday demonstrating the concepts was held towards the end of the summer placement.



## CURRENT PAW COMMITTEE MEMBERS

### Program Management Committee (PMC):

**Program Director** – Mary Ann Rintoul

**Finance Coordinator** – Alexandra Kirincic

**Fundraising Coordinator** – Tracy Simon

**Community Connections Coordinators** –

Anna Knight & Zianna Esmail

**Paly Days Coordinator** – Joel Johnston

**Leadership Coordinator** – Lauren Turner

**Members-At-Large** – Heather Crowe,

Samantha Goodwin, Kennedy Newton,

Kenadi Kuzyk, Jamie Cassie

### 2020 Leaders:

Brady Hughes – Cambodia

Morgan Weir – Peru

Shilah Anderton – Thailand

Joel Johnston – Northwest Territories

### Advisory Committee:

Royle Harris

Colleen Mooney

Katrin Maximchuk

Tannis Davidson

Henry Yip

Dean Kerry Mummery

Christine Ma

Mary Ann Rintoul

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**\*SAVE THE DATE\***

**King and I Dinner**

**March 1, 2020**

