Learning for life!

Oh, the thinks you can think up if only you try.
Dr Seuss

One generation plants the trees, another sits in the shade.
Chinese Proverb

The mind is not a vessel to be filled, but a fire to be kindled.
Plutarch

The aim of education should be to teach us rather how to think than what to think.
Bill Berritie

Education is our passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to the people who prepare for it today.
Malcolm X

I have found that among its other benefits, giving liberates the soul of the giver.
Maya Angelou

Your imagination is your preview to life’s coming attractions.
Albert Einstein

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Welcome to the inaugural issue of Green Shoots International School’s yearbook!

We have tried, in this first issue, to bring together memories from the day we opened until the end of the 2013-14 school year: a tough job when so much has happened.

We are a new school with much growth and many challenges ahead of us. I give my sincere thanks to everyone who has been part of the birth of Green Shoots since the idea first formed in early 2011 and I look forward to continuing to work and interact with those who will remain with us in the 2014-15 school year. To those who are moving on, staff and students alike, I bid you a sad farewell and hope you will keep in touch.

Catherine McKinley
Opening our school

Before opening Green Shoots to its students, it was important to first earn the good graces of Hoi An's local spirits (and our local staff) with a blessing ceremony. Our kitchen staff prepared a full range of tasty delicacies, while Mr Tung organised the blessing and burning of votive gifts.

Once the spirits had enjoyed their fill, our staff tucked into the leftovers!

A big ‘thank you’ to everyone who helped put the day together and get Green Shoots off to such an auspicious start.

We now organise a Lunar New Year blessing each year, to keep the good luck and happy vibes coming.

Renovating the primary and middle school campus

Our primary and middle school campus is located in a series of former dormitory buildings that required significant renovation before we could open them up to students. In keeping with our green ethos, we covered all roofs with banana leaf matting and installed fibre-glass insulation within the ceilings to reduce heat build-up inside the classrooms and limit the need for air-conditioning in Hoi An’s hottest months. We knocked through new windows to increase ventilation in cooler months when doors and windows might be left open.

Fresh paint, a beautiful mural painted by students, and new grass in our playing field all helped to spruce up the campus. In the field, we added bamboo goal posts and ties for the children to jump and balance on.

New corridors linking the different parts of the campus add to its higgledy-piggledy charm!
Renovating the primary and middle school campus

To open up the playing field and add water to our environment, we moved trees from the middle of the garden area to its periphery and replaced them with three fish ponds.

It was hot work cutting the tiles and cementing the ponds in mid-summer heat, but our amazing builders took it all in their stride.

The ecosystems within each pond were designed by our students, who undertook a scientific discovery project to develop self-sustaining ecosystems of earth and sand, water, aquatic plants, and fish that could withstand the summer heat and continue to thrive without the continual renewal of fresh water.

Twelve months on and the ponds are thriving. Well done scientists!

Our multipurpose room was once a series of three dormitory rooms. We knocked out the internal walls, insulated the ceiling and roof, and added in bath rooms.

We wanted this to be a bright room for group activities, so white tiles and paintwork, as well as a wall length mirror, were added for light and space.

A cluttered garden was cleared of weeds and immature palms, but all mature palms were kept for shade and as part of an adventure playground. We levelled the ground, added soil and sand, and planted fresh grass. An outside eating area, with bamboo tables and chairs made from upturned plant pots, completed the new garden.
There’s always lots to do at school.
So much to learn and so many fun ways to learn it!
The kids are busy at the kindergarten.

We dance, we paint, we work on puzzles, we sing, we count, we read...

New friends to make and new experiences to discover.

There's always something interesting to do at school, never a dull moment!
Mealtimes are a great time for learning how to share and sit quietly... but there are plenty of times for playing and exploring too!

To prepare them for their entry to primary school, our older kindergarten students focus more and more on classroom activities like reading, writing, maths, science, and computer skills.
LIFE AT THE PRIMARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOL

Research projects, individual and group presentations, science experiments, peer tutoring... we like to mix things up at the primary and middle school. But there’s still lots of time for reading, writing, and ‘rithmetic too!
There have been plenty of opportunities for students to show off their work to their teachers, parents and peers: open evenings encompassing science exhibitions and poetry readings, wall displays for poster art and projects, and in-class presentations all play their role at the primary and middle school campus. And it’s not all hard work. Morning snack time and lunch break are for letting off steam!
CELEBRATING EASTER

Fun for all the family at the kindergarten’s Easter Egg Hunt, kindly organized by the Parent Group.

SECRET SANTA

Another primary and middle school tradition is Secret Santa: with a maximum budget of just $10, the kids get creative buying gifts for their friends, then thinking up clues that are shared over a period of weeks and should eventually reveal each student’s Secret Santa.

HALLOWEEN

Something a little more morbid for our older students, though, who prefer to celebrate Halloween with a dress up day at school and lots of ghoulish funny faces!

PAINTING FOR THE DEAF

As part of our art programme, our older students visited a school for the deaf where they designed and painted decorations to cover classroom doors and a set of tables that had been donated to the charity running the school.
SUNDAY FUNDAY

We all have so much fun during the week that we decided to tag on an extra day of fun one weekend! At the Sunday Funday, we had a magician, balloon artists, face painting, games, drawing and even a visiting panda bear!

Trip to the park

When Hoi An’s newest playground opened, our kindergarten students paid it a visit. Lots of fun and games of course, but also a great opportunity to learn about the recycling and use of natural materials that had gone into its design.
Another fantastic day organised by the Parent Group took our kindergarten students to Ba Na Hills, a hill-top fun park near Da Nang.

Lots of games, lots of laughing, lots of sugary treats... and lots of tired children (and parents!) at the end of the day.

Miss Jackie’s class made a school trip to the organic garden at the Nam Hai resort, where the resort’s gardeners showed them how to plant and grow their own food. The trip was part of a study unit on growing things.
Day trip to Cham Island

An end-of-year trip to the Cham Island is becoming something of a tradition at the primary and middle school. To celebrate the end of term and escape from the summer heat, our students snorkelled through Cham’s coral reef searching for bright blue starfishes and jumped from great heights off the top of their fishing boat and into the clear blue sea.

Science Fair in Danang

A science fair sponsored by the Australian Embassy and travelling through Da Nang was too good an opportunity to miss. We jumped into the school bus and headed up to the Big City for a day of experimentation and curiosity.
CHRISTMAS BAZAAR
2012 & 2013

The annual Christmas Bazaar, organised by Hoi An Events and hosted by Green Shoots, raises funds for local children’s charities and along the way gives our students and members of the broader Hoi An community the chance to perform, shop for Christmas gifts from stalls run by locally based artisans, and enjoy a whole range of fun activities like face painting and bingo. We are lucky to have some very talented performers at our school and look forward to watching their skills and confidence develop over the years!
There is more outdoor fun at the Summer Fete, with silly races, a bouncy castle, lots of fairground games, and story time. Mums and dads join in... but they’re not allowed near the donut eating competition. That one is strictly for kids!
The Arts

Arts and crafts are an important part of school life, especially for our younger learners. It's all about getting creative, getting messy, and learning without even noticing!

Our older students use their art and craft classes to build upon other aspects of their curriculum; they have made musical instruments from recycled rubbish, masks as part of a Mardi Gras project, and clay objects d'art.
A major art project in the 2012-13 school year was the conceptualisation and creation of a large-scale wall mural in our primary and middle school campus.

The mural had an environmental theme, around which students had to think up design components that would represent ways we can save our environment and ways in which we damage it. The surfing sewer rat and fake tree assembly line were particularly creative additions!
PERFORMING ARTS

There have been many performance evenings at the primary and middle school, including a musical evening, a poetry slam, dance demonstrations, and a magic show, but our biggest show yet was a performance of the Lion King. It proved so popular the kids were asked to give a second showing for students from a visiting school.
Kindergarten Sports

Sport and exercise is an important part of every day at the kindergarten: we run, jump, balance, throw and catch balls, and practice yoga poses. In the summer months, we learn important swimming and water safety lessons.

Jumping, Balancing, Yoga, Swimming
SPORT PLAYS A SMALLER PART IN THE SCHOOL DAY FOR THE PRIMARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS, BUT THEY MAKE UP FOR THAT EACH LUNCHTIME AND BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL WITH EXTRA CURRICULAR SPORTS SUCH AS SOCCER AND BASKETBALL. OUR TWICE-WEEKLY PHYSICAL EDUCATION CLASSES HAVE COVERED A WHOLE RANGE OF SPORTS FROM SWIMMING AND CRICKET TO TOUCH RUGBY, KUNG FU, AND APSARA DANCING.

SOCCER IS PARTICULARLY POPULAR, AND A FEW MATCHES AGAINST LOCAL HOI AN TEAMS HAVE BEEN FIERCELY CONTESTED. IT’S ALL GOOD FUN THOUGH, WIN OR LOSE. SOON, AS OUR TEAMS GROW, WE LOOK FORWARD TO COMPETING AGAINST DIFFERENT SCHOOLS IN OTHER SPORTS AS WELL.
Summer School

When the summer arrives and if you’re still not ready for a break, then come and join in five weeks of summer fun at the kindergarten. Each week we have a special theme. In 2013 these were: water wonderland, circus time, princesses and dragons, robots, and bugs and butterflies. So many busy little bees...
SAYING GOOD-BYE

We bid a sad farewell to all of our students who have left Hoi An or moved on from Green Shoots to other schools. We miss you all!