

Word from the president

Welcome to the April edition of KEA's newsletter. This month we have celebrated both Women's day on the 8th of March, as well as Nauryz at the end of this month. We are anticipating warmer weather, more sunshine and above all seeing trees blossoming - new life after a long and cold winter!

We hope this KEA newsletter will also bring joy and new life to your hearts as you read about the opportunities we have had during the last few months to promote Occupational Therapy in Kazakhstan, as well as sharing our experiences regarding rehabilitation in Kazakhstan.

From KEA we wish you all a Happy Spring time!

On behalf of KEA,
Gerdine Lok - Interim-President

Saberzhan's story

Bouwine van Eeden Petersman - Occupational Therapist in Almaty

Saberzhan* is a very smart and friendly 9 year old boy with Spastic Cerebral Palsy on the right side of his body. Last year he had the opportunity to go to Korea to have a tendon release in his right leg. After the surgery he returned to Kazakhstan. Unfortunately there were no opportunities to do any rehabilitation, so his family didn't know what he was allowed to do with his leg and how to start using the leg again. Saberzhan was told that he couldn't go to school anymore and playing outside with his friends was very difficult because of the brace he had to wear.

We had the opportunity to visit Saberzhan and make a rehabilitation plan with his family. Through different exercises and games, Saberzhan started to use his leg again. Saberzhan worked really hard, because he loved to play football with his friends and brother. In the following months we were able to slowly increase the function of his leg. To go out of the apartment where Saberzhan was living, he needed to be able to climb stairs, so we started to practice that. After six months Saberzhan was able to play outside again, ride a bike and play football with his friends. His school also allowed him to come back after the Summer break.

In Kazakhstan there are many boys like Saberzhan with disabilities, but who have a great desire to go to school and play with their friends, like every other kid. This story also shows the struggle that many families have to find the right therapy to help them make their desire to be part of the community possible. We hope that this story will be an encouragement to include all children, so that we can see many children like Saberzhan playing outside with their friends!

*name changed



Disability

Linda Beadle - Occupational Therapist in Almaty

Disability is universal. And the response to disability and the belief of parents around what the goal of rehab for their children with disabilities should be, seems to be similar in different communities too.

Recently one of our OT's was back in her home country and visiting a community project with similar modes of practice as our disability project in Almaty. The common theme was that parents believe that if their children are able to walk then rehab goals are met. It often takes a lot of education from the therapist to help parents to see that walking isn't the only goal of our intervention. Often there are many developmental stages that a child needs to go through before they can walk and sometimes a child may never be able to walk independently, but they will achieve other developmental and functional milestones which should be celebrated.

Our OT was given a developmental chart from this project which is now up on our wall in Almaty. We hope that this will encourage parents to realize that there are many goals that their children can strive for and that can be celebrated when achieved, not just the child being able to walk.

Training opportunities

Gerdine Lok – Occupational Therapist in Shymkent

Our KEA Occupational Therapists in Almaty and Shymkent are often asked to give training in different cities and settings. We are very grateful for these opportunities and as much as our capacity allows we use these open doors to share about OT, as well as building a network of places who are interested in further future training in OT. At the moment there's no full course or training available, but this is definitely one of our dreams. Do contact us if you would like to know more about training possibilities at the moment or would like to partner with us in developing OT in the hospital, clinic, rehab center or whatever place you work! During the last few months we had different opportunities to give training in a new rehabilitation center for young children with Cerebral Palsy in Shymkent, as well as training staff in an orphanage on how to practically help and train the children in daily life skills like eating and dressing. We look forward to more of those opportunities and partnerships!



Edited by Bouwine van Eeden Petersman

This newsletter will be distributed every three months. Do you have any questions or recommendations? Or do you want to unsubscribe from the newsletter? Please contact info@ergotherapy.kz