16 November 2021

**Local small business flourishes amidst the Covid-19 Pandemic**

This coming Saturday, 20 November 2021, Brokenvase Games – a gaming company specialising in all things related to Pokémon Cards, will be throwing a party to celebrate their one-year milestone.

Even though Brokenvase Games was started at a time when companies all around were struggling to deal with the various pressures brought about by Covid-19, they managed to not only stay afloat, but even thrive and expand operations.

Two factors attributed to the company’s success during this difficult period:

**#1 – Going Analog**

The first is its business model, which focuses on physical interaction. In a time, when everyone was heading online, founder Mervin Chiang, recognised a need for platforms where people could disconnect from the digital realm and connect back in a physical manner. This business idea was inspired by his own experience of trying to bond and communicate with his elder son, Keon, who he had been playing Pokémon Cards with since 2019.

So, whilst the idea to start a physical gaming café began before Covid-19, it suddenly became very relevant as people began to crave for physical interactions amidst the social distancing restrictions brought about by the pandemic.

But, it’s not just a novelty for the pandemic. Through observing kids at play, Mervin noticed that there were many positive developmental attributes that trading card games such as Pokémon Cards offered.

Shares Mervin: “Not only does it help children with functional learning in English, math and logical thinking, but it also encourages them to learn social and emotional development skills such as sportsmanship, emotional regulation and better communication.”

**#2 – Embracing Adversity**

The second contributing success factor is a resilient attitude that was born out of crisis and adversity. Not only was the business started amidst a worldwide pandemic, it was at a time when Mervin, a former former senior executive at a software implementation firm, was struggling with depression, and diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

Rather than try to hide and suppress this side of himself, however, Mervin decided to embrace it and turn Brokenvase Games into a place where people suffering from emotional dysregulation, such as himself could feel comfortable. He wanted Brokenvase Games to be an inclusive place where not only the neurodiverse would feel at ease, but where neurotypical customers could also learn compassion, tolerance and patience. [Check out what Brokenvase Games is doing to reach out to the neurodiverse community - <https://brokenvase.games/blogs/news/connecting-people-includes-the-neorodiverse> ]

For Mervin, and his wife, Kat, who co-owns the business, *Community* and *Connection* come before profits. The company’s slogan of “Connecting People” reflects that attitude. Hence, in a world, where it’s become the norm to assume that nothing is free, Brokenvase Games has gone against the grain to offer free decks for people to come and learn to play the game. They also do not charge for playing in-store.

**Celebrating with the Biggest Pokémon Party in the Southern Hemisphere**

In commemoration of their first anniversary, Brokenvase Games will be holding what they are calling “the biggest Pokémon party in the southern hemisphere”. From 9 am to 6 pm on 20 November 2021, they will be organising fun activities such as game stalls, sausage sizzles, tournaments and lucky draw prizes out of their newly-expanded outlet at Sumner.

Full details of the 1st anniversary party can be found at <https://pokemonparty.co>, as well as at Brokenvase’s Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/brokenvasegames/>.

***Mervin Chiang, Pokémon Professor, and Founder of Brokenvase Games says****, “I’m really thrilled that we are able to celebrate one year of operations. Much more than the business success, I’m really glad that we are able to use this venture in a meaningful way to connect people. I think we all need a little kindness, especially right now during this pandemic.”*

***Kat Lek, Co-Founder of Brokenvase Games says***, "I am trully humbled by the amazing community we've built. We have so many supportive and great customers. Some have become our friends now within this 1 year."

***Chris Davies, customer and parent says***, "As a dad with a child into Pokemon cards, being able to speak to trainers and players, learn what cards work for my son, and be able to buy the individual cards. It makes this a much more enjoyable and affordable experience. Friendly, approachable staff. Great atmosphere."

***Khai Chong, customer and parent says***, "We are truly blessed to have this friendly place where the kids can hang out to enjoy a screen-free activity that they love. The staff is always ready to help get newcomers into the game for free and prices for the events and cards are reasonable."

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**About Brokenvase Games**

Started by a serial entrepreneur who loved the competitiveness of Trading Card Games, Brokenvase Games started out as an online Pokémon Card trading and retail business. Now it is the world's first IRL (In Real Life) Pokémon Card Battle Gym and Pokémon Cafe.

The founders at Brokenvase Games believe in connecting people through playing a fun and competitive card game. They believe in encouraging parents to put down their phones and take away the iPads and Switches, sit down with their children and have fun together. It's about community and fun. It's about a better human experience and connection. Brokenvase Games is also a one-stop-shop for all things Pokémon Trading Card Game - collecting and playing.