



# Cheetah Outreach EDUCATION NEWS

Bringing Environmental Education into the Classrooms of Disadvantaged Communities

September 2009

## FACILITY VISITS

During 2008, as part of our literacy initiative, our Bus to Us programme transported 1249 learners in 20 school groups to the facility. A further 2012 learners from 41 advantaged public schools, private schools and community based projects also took part in our on-site and outreach education programmes. In total our education ambassadors enthralled just over 3 400 learners.

The schools taking part in our Foundation Phase Literacy project form the basis of our Bus to Us programme. Whilst at our facility learners engage in an interactive presentation on the cheetah's adaptations for speed and participate in a tour of the facility highlighting the reasons for the plight of the cheetah and the resulting initiatives undertaken to alleviate the cheetah's critically endangered status. They also engage in a curriculum related grade specific activity. Teachers are consulted on the choice of learning activity.



## OTHER NEWS .....

This year Cheetah Outreach joined the Education Committee of PAAZAB (The African Association of Zoological Gardens and Aquaria). Both our education officers, Dawn Glover and Mary Possa, attended the Annual PAAZAB conference in Uganda earlier this year. Important networking relationships were made and many exciting ideas shared for increasing awareness amongst our youth as well as the general public. We look forward to joining forces with other Environmental Education initiatives around the country to further expand our education undertakings.

## WELCOME TO MARY

In May this year Cheetah Outreach welcomed Mary Maphori Possa to our education team. Mary, a qualified teacher with 20 years of experience in Western Cape Primary Schools, joined Cheetah Outreach to assist in the expansion of our education programme. She is no stranger to us. In 2006 she was selected by Cheetah Outreach, in partnership with the Smithsonian Conservation Research Centre, to attend a two month fellowship on environmental education in Washington, USA. She also brings with her a wealth of experience in designing learning resources, presenting at workshops as well as an incredible passion for education. Mary speaks four local languages which, together with her knowledge of the school curriculum, makes her a valuable asset to Cheetah Outreach.



## FOUNDATION PHASE LITERACY RESOURCE

For those of you who are new to this project, this intervention seeks to improve learner literacy, numeracy and life skills, and empower teachers in the selection, development and use of learning support materials, while raising awareness about our natural heritage and the conservation thereof. The first year of the Literacy Project, and the final assessment thereof by Susan Meyer, has been completed. She is an independent researcher whose professional work includes multi-disciplinary conceptual, theoretical and empirical research on quality in education. Her assessment evaluated the integration of the resource into current literacy and education trends. This was done through interviews with teachers and in-classroom observations.

Overall her evaluation was positive. She found the resource strongly aligned with current learning trends. She also found it to be teacher friendly.

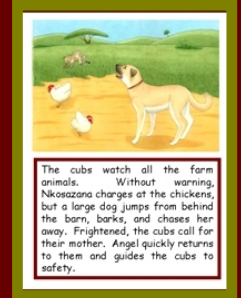
**"To read is to empower  
To empower is to write  
To write is to influence  
To influence is to change  
To change is to live."**  
~ Jane Evershed ~

However, teachers do not seem to be using the resource to its full potential, concentrating on the literacy lessons and not integrating the resource into the numeracy and life skills leaning areas. As this problem needs to be addressed, discussions have been held between schools participating in the project and other consultants to formulate a year plan. Current expansion plans have been put on hold temporarily until all possibilities for solutions to this problem have been assessed by the teacher development team.

As one of the goals of this project is to develop the resource into a definitive curriculum guide for educators as well as to extend its literacy development potential, the ability of the educators to interact with the resource on a deeper level becomes imperative. Consequently more time may be needed to attain this outcome.

**"Many teachers in South Africa have an under-developed understanding of teaching literacy, reading and writing. Many teachers simply don't know how to teach reading. Too often, teachers know only one method of teaching reading, which may not suit the learning style of all learners. Teachers don't know how to stimulate reading inside, and outside, the classroom."**

**National Reading Strategy Document**



## THANK YOU TO OUR EDUCATION SPONSORS!

We would like to extend an enormous thank you to our education sponsors, Imperial Bank, Polaris Capital and African Travel. Without their support we would never have been able to achieve what we have to date, or to plan future expansions to our education programme.

At Cheetah Outreach we believe that our children, as future custodians of our magnificent biodiversity are key to the preservation thereof.



## **FAREWELL TO KAYA (2002 – 2009)**

It was with immense sadness that we announced the death of Kaya in August this year.

He came to us in 2002 as a small cub from De Wildt Breeding Centre and, along with his two brothers, Joseph and Byron, was raised at Cheetah Outreach as an ambassador for his species. He had stepped into the shoes of the retired, but still adored, Shadow, and was to be our education ambassador cat. Over the years, Kaya met and touched the hearts of thousands of people - including many learners.

He is sorely missed.

