



Cheetah Outreach EDUCATION NEWS

Bringing Environmental Education into the Classrooms of Disadvantaged Communities

APRIL 2006

Since our last edition of Education news we have been extraordinarily busy and have a barrage of activities to update you with.

BREAKING NEWS!!!!

Thursday, October 5th was a milestone in Cheetah Outreach's history. Not only did we celebrate our 10th anniversary, but we opened the Earth Foundation Environmental Classroom, as well as the Seagate Adult Learning Centre. Being able to offer environmental education of this calibre on site has moved us into a new league in the realms of environmental education.

The opening address was delivered by Valli Moosa, President of IUCN, The World Conservation Union. What a privilege to have such an important event for us graced by such an important person in the global conservation sphere! Thank you also to Peter Borchert of Africa Geographic magazine who introduced Valli so eloquently.

The Earth Foundation Environmental Education Classroom is funded by donations from the Earth Foundation in Houston, USA. This classroom houses an extensive library of Environmental Education media, as well as audiovisual and other interactive displays targeted at school learners.

The Seagate Adult Learning Centre exists largely thanks to funds from Seagate makers of the fastest computer hard drives. This classroom also houses interactive and audiovisual media and displays. We aim to educate people about the place of predators in a healthy ecosystem. Obviously we will focus on the Cheetah. We also aim to teach people about the importance of non-lethal predator control. 80% of extinctions occur in the rural environment, and non-lethal predator control is essential to alleviate the loss of biodiversity. Enter Cheetah Outreach's Anatolian guard-dog programme!



Left: Our new Education Facility

Right: Matseliso Semmelink, on the right, assisted by Dawn Glover opens the Earth Foundation Environmental Classroom



AAWARE NEWS

Cheetah Outreach has had inquiries from Zimbabwe regarding the use of our AAWARE Resource, as well as the implementation of a cheetah ambassador programme.

The Cheetah Programme in Hoedspruit has also expressed interest in using the AAWARE Resource. We are proud to say that our AAWARE resource is becoming firmly established in the environmental education arena.



“BUS TO US” PROGRAMME

Now that we are blessed with the Earth Foundation Classroom, we are eager to start this programme. Cheetah Outreach will sponsor the cost of a bus to bring learners to our classroom to have an Environmental Education lesson. This will include a hands-on touch opportunity with a cheetah ambassador and a walk to experience the unique Western Cape fynbos on Spier. Fynbos is one of eight floral kingdoms in the world.



FELLOWSHIP 2006

We are pleased to announce that our Fellow for this year is Mary Possa. She recently returned from a two-month fellowship in Washington, USA, at the Smithsonian's National Zoological Park's Conservation Research Centre. This two-month fellowship at the Conservation Research Centre in Washington, USA, is offered in partnership by Cheetah Outreach, Smithsonian Institute and the Western Cape Education Department. It is designed to give teachers from disadvantaged communities advanced training in principles and methods in conservation biology, particularly wildlife research, as well as exposure to environmental and science education programs and opportunities in schools near Washington, DC and throughout Virginia. We received enthusiastic feedback from Mary while she was away and look forward to major contributions from her in the Environmental Education arena in her community.

Mary is a teacher at Lehlohonolo Primary School in Guguletu, Cape Town.



**Mary Possa
hard at work in
Washington**



READING EXCHANGE PROGRAMME



Cheetah Outreach is facilitating a literacy exchange programme between Primrose Park Primary School in Mannenberg and North Hi Mount Elementary School in Fort Worth, Texas, USA. Learners from Primrose Park Primary will have a cheetah ambassador visit and lesson, as well as access to Robert Haas' book, "African Critters." They will then correspond with their peers in North Hi Mount Elementary School about their impressions of the lesson.

North Hi Mount School has volunteered not only to answer the correspondence, but also to fundraise to adopt a cheetah! The American teacher involved in this programme is Ms Frances Oliver and the South African teacher involved in this programme is Carol Birch. We look forward to a fruitful and fun interactive learning experience. Thank you also to Haily Summerford in Fort Worth for co-ordinating matters on the American side.

SPECIES EXTINCTION FACTS

15,589 species are known to be threatened with extinction.

In the last 500 years, human activity has forced 844 species to extinction (or extinction in the wild).

One in every four mammals and one in every eight birds is facing a high risk of extinction in the near future.

One in three amphibians and almost half of all tortoises and freshwater turtles are threatened.

The total number of threatened animal species has increased from 5,205 to 7,266 since 1996.

Habitat loss and degradation affect 86% of all threatened birds, 86% of mammals, and 88% of threatened amphibians.

IUCN Species Extinction Facts



LITERACY WORKSHOPS

Our Foundation Phase AAWARE Literacy Resource is progressing in leaps and bounds. The June/ July school holidays saw Cheetah Outreach host literacy workshops in the Western and Southern Cape. We were ably assisted by several of our ex fellows, namely Carol Birch, Bongani Dlwathi, Grantham Jansen, as well as Haily Summerford from Fort Worth in Texas.

A literacy workshop was also held at de Wildt on September 15th, 2006.

The purpose of these workshops was to gather teacher feedback on the resource. The resource is based on a cheetah family and is written by teachers from the Western Cape Education Department.



AAWARE literacy Workshop held at De Wildt on September 15th, 2006

The monetary value of goods and services provided by natural ecosystems (including gas regulation, waste treatment, and nutrient recycling) is estimated to amount to some 33 trillion dollars per year nearly twice the global production resulting from human activities.

IUCN Species Extinction Media Brief

A big, big thank you to Mecer Computers for our wonderful new data projector. It arrived just in time to grace our new classroom.

“Every time we lose a species we break a life chain which has evolved over 3.5 billion years,” -

Jeffrey McNeely, IUCN Chief Scientist.

A TRIBUTE TO STEVE IRWIN

We are saddened by the untimely death of this exuberant environmentalist. No one in our time has done so much to further the cause of the animal kingdom through education and visibility. Irwin was a passionate conservationist and believed in promoting environmentalism by sharing his excitement about the natural world rather than preaching to people. Through his work with Animal Planet he achieved media celebrity status - a milestone for conservation. He was concerned with conservation of endangered animals and land clearing leading to loss of habitat. He founded the Steve Irwin Conservation Foundation, which was later renamed Wildlife Warriors Worldwide.

May you rest in peace, Steve, and thank you for all you have done to make conservation “cool”. - from all of us at Cheetah Outreach.