

CHEETAH OUTREACH GENERAL INFORMATION FOR INTENDING VOLUNTEERS

Dear Applicant,

Thank you so much for your interest in Cheetah Outreach. It is always a pleasure to hear from other people wishing to dedicate part of their lives to the conservation of Africa's most endangered big cat. We are a non-profit organisation committed to the conservation of the African cheetah and rely on public support for our education, public-awareness and livestock guarding dog programmes.

Cheetah Outreach aims to promote the survival of the cheetah as a free-ranging species by working with our ambassador cheetahs to encourage people to gain a greater understanding of these magnificent animals. Visits to our facility by school groups allow the children to gain personal experiences with one of our cheetahs, in the hope that the memory of stroking a cheetah will imbed our conservation message more deeply in the child's mind. We also offer cheetah encounters to visitors at the facility, which is an important source of fund-raising. Other ventures such as private functions, photo and film shoots, and documentary work all increase the global awareness of the cheetah's plight.

Our volunteer programme involves both local and international volunteers, and we provide accommodation, food and transport to and from work for international volunteers (subject to availability).

The daily duties of volunteers include greeting visitors at the facility and informing them about our project and about the cheetah in general, food preparation, merchandise sales, duties at our entrance, cleaning (dishes, enclosures, shop floors, office and passages, vehicles, etc.) and taking care of our Anatolian shepherd dogs. This will sometimes involve hard manual labour like fencing, carpentry, building gates, digging and all things needed for the general maintenance of our enclosures.

Please note that one of the main responsibilities of volunteers will be to tend to the guests and work hands-on with the public. This requires a person who is outgoing, confident and enthusiastic, and is proficient in English. This means that about 80% of the volunteers time will be spent dealing with the general public and guests.

The amount of time that a volunteer is able to spend with the cheetahs depends on the relationship that the volunteer builds with each of the cats, and obviously this only comes with time and patience, and at the discretion of the handlers. All volunteers, regardless of length of time at Cheetah Outreach, must have a handler with them when visiting any of the cheetahs.

The following pages provide more information about what is expected of our volunteers.

Please note that our volunteers are only accepted after successfully moving through our selection process. This process involves questionnaires and two references, as well as a recent photo of the person. As some previous applicants have booked flights and made travel plans to South Africa, before actually gaining a confirmed place as a volunteer with us, we would like to stress that simply filling out the questionnaires does not guarantee you a volunteer position. At any stage in this application process, we may decide that you are unsuitable for work with Cheetah Outreach, or that the period of time you are intending to volunteer is not suitable. You will be notified as to whether you have been accepted or denied a volunteer place.

Once you have been accepted your agreed length of stay with us is binding (your acceptance means that others have been declined).

Because of the nature of volunteer duties involved, we can ONLY accept applicants who are fluent in English.

CHEETAH OUTREACH

VOLUNTEER INFORMATION

THE FACILITY

- Working hours are **5 days a week from 9:00am to 5pm with 1/2 hour for lunch**. These times may vary, depending on whether there is an early morning or evening presentation with the cheetahs. The facility is open 7 days a week, 365 days a year and volunteers are allocated two days off each week. Staff members will organize these days off and it may not be possible to accommodate specific requests for time off. Lunch breaks are not guaranteed to be at any particular or regular time and are dependant on staff availability and how busy we are.
- The work will initially consist of general maintenance, assisting in the merchandising centre, attending to guests at our entrance, talking to guests, preparing food for the dogs and cleaning up the feeding area, as well as hard manual labour around the holding enclosures.
- After a period of time you will be introduced to some of the cheetahs and depending on their reaction to you, you will assist a handler by taking guests into their enclosures for encounters. The length of time that it takes for the cheetahs to accept you, will vary from person to person. When visiting any of our cheetahs, a handler must always be present.
- Once you are able to go into enclosures with the cheetahs, you will then assist in changing water and cleaning the enclosures.
- All volunteers will be given the opportunity to assist in the care of our Anatolian shepherd dogs at the facility.

UNIFORM

- All volunteers need to conform to the Cheetah Outreach uniform of “**safari**” colours (ie: beige, khaki, light brown, green etc). Volunteers will not be permitted to wear clothing in any other colour.
- A t-shirt will be provided as part of the uniform for work at the facility, but we require you to bring your own trousers/shorts (khaki or light brown in colour) and working shoes (e.g. hiking or sports shoes).
- A heavy raincoat and waterproof boots are also recommended for the cold and rainy winter months. Trousers and warm clothes should be of a “safari” colour (beige or green preferably). The weather in Cape Town varies considerably, even within the seasons, and more specific information can be provided once you are accepted for a period of time.
- We also require a volunteer to purchase a fleece jacket from us in the winter months. The fleece will cost approximately R150. The reason we request you purchase one

from us is that it fits in with our uniform dress code. We also have a rain jacket available at R240.

- It is important for volunteers to bring closed shoes; for safety reasons we do not allow sandals, only trainers or hiking shoes (or something similar).
- Please bring your own whistle. Every person is required to carry a whistle on him/her at all times in case of emergencies and will not be allowed to work with the animals unless you do so.

ACCOMMODATION

- Accommodation is provided at the volunteer home, which is situated about 3km from the cheetah facility. Provision of accommodation is dependent on the number of volunteers' resident at the time. If the accommodation is fully booked when you wish to join the programme then we can give you recommendations of where to stay but this will need to be arranged and funded by yourself.
- The accommodation is small and basic. Bedrooms are dormitory style with bunk-beds and may provide little space and privacy.
- Please bring your own sleeping bag, as bedding is limited.
- Please bring your own towels or purchase on arrival from the local shops.
- A washing machine is available for everybody's use. Each person is responsible for his or her own laundry.
- All volunteers are expected to clean up after themselves and to leave communal areas (lounge, kitchen, bathroom, patio, etc.) in a clean and tidy manner. When moving out, please make sure the room you used is in the condition you found it.
- Anyone who does not adhere to the rules of the house will be asked to find alternative accommodation at their own expense.
- Since you would be living in a group environment, you would be expected to be able to maintain a cordial relationship with your co-workers.
- **A R3 000 deposit is required by all volunteers staying at the house.** This deposit must be provided on the day of arrival. R1,500.00 of this deposit will be refunded at the end of your stay; the remaining **R1,500.00 is non-refundable** and will be held back for any outstanding accounts such as phone bill, traffic tickets etc, and the rest will go towards the upkeep and maintenance of the volunteer accommodation and vehicle.

PLEASE NOTE: If for any reason you decide to leave Cheetah Outreach before the decided upon date of stay, this deposit will be forfeited.

- **All volunteers will be subjected to a 2-week probationary period.** At the end of this period his or her position will be re-evaluated and Cheetah Outreach retains the right to terminate the agreement on grounds of incompatibility.
- All outstanding monies owed must be paid on or before last working day at Cheetah Outreach. For this reason volunteer deposits will only be returned on the last day before moving out of the accommodation.
- There is a reference library available to volunteers, but no computer or Internet time is available for the use of volunteers at the facility or at the house. There are numerous internet cafes in the nearby Somerset West area though.

TRANSPORT

- Transport to and from the facility is provided. There are also bicycles available to cycle to / from work.
- An international **manual (manual gear shift)** driver's license is required. You must have this license for at **least 6 months and have at least 6 months driving experience.**
- The vehicle transports all the volunteers and is not assigned to just one individual.
- You will be required to pass a vehicle assessment before you will be allowed to drive. This assessment will be conducted by either the Volunteer Co-ordinator or a member of staff.
- This vehicle **is not available** for volunteers' use on their day off since it is also used for the transportation of the cheetahs and would therefore be required at the facility during the day.
- The Cheetah Outreach vehicle must be clean and tidy at all times (inside and out) as it is always visible to the public. Volunteers are expected to clean the vehicle at least once a week.
- Public transport in South Africa is very limited and there are no bus services in the facility area. Safety when travelling alone is an important issue and we do not recommend the use of public transport.

INNOCULATIONS

- All volunteers must have an up-to-date Tetanus inoculation before they can start at Cheetah Outreach
- Any volunteer wanting to work with our Meerkats must be inoculated against rabies. However, please note that it is not compulsory to work with these animals.

- We strongly recommend that all volunteers undergo a de-worming treatment at the end of their stay. We do work in close proximity to the cheetahs and the transfer of parasites is a real possibility.

PHOTOGRAPHS

Please note that photographs taken during a volunteer's stay at Cheetah Outreach may only be used for personal use. No photographs may be sold or published or used for any commercial purpose without the permission of the Director, Annie Beckhelling.