

## **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 Great Cat. We are a non-profit organisation committed to the conservation of the African Cheetah and rely on public support for our education and public-awareness programmes.

Cheetah Outreach aims to promote the survival of the cheetah as a free-ranging species by working with our five ambassador cheetahs to encourage people to gain a greater understanding of these magnificent animals. Our school visits 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 tourists at the facility, which is also an important source of fund-raising. Other ventures such as photography shoots, 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. **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, cleaning (dishes, enclosures, shop floors, 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 that is outgoing, confident and enthusiastic.**

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 cheetahs, and obviously this only comes with time and patience, and at the discretion of the handlers.

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 two questionnaires and then two references are requested. 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.**

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### **VOLUNTEER INFORMATION**

#### **THE FACILITY**

- Working hours are 5 **days a week from 10am to 5pm in winter and from 10am to 6pm in summer with 1/2 hour for lunch.** These times vary, depending on whether there are early morning or evening presentations 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 at any particular or regular time and is dependant on staff availability and how busy we are.
- The work would initially consist of **general maintenance, assisting in the merchandising centre, talking to guests, preparing food for the cheetahs and cleaning up the feeding area, as well as hard manual labour around the holding enclosures.**
- After a period of time you would be introduced to the cheetahs and depending on their reaction to you, you would assist a handler in taking guests into their enclosure. The length of time that it takes for the cheetahs to accept you, will vary from person to person. The average minimum time before acceptance by the cats is at least two weeks (although in some cases volunteers require a handler to be present when visiting the cats for the entire length of their stay). When visiting any of our cats a handler must always be present.
- Once you are able to go into enclosures with the cheetahs, you would then assist in cleaning water bowls and the enclosures themselves.
- **Assisting in the care** of our Anatolian Guarding dogs on Spier as well as at the volunteer house, and Sukie, our border collie.

- **Two t-shirts are 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 (sandals as well as comfortable walking shoes, e.g. hiking or sports shoes). A heavy raincoat and waterproof boots are also recommended for the cold and rainy winter months. 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.
- **Facility Management:** The permanent staff members consist of three females and two males.

## ACCOMMODATION

- **Accommodation is provided** at the volunteer home, which is situated on a wine estate about 10km from the cheetah facility. Accommodation is dependent on the number of volunteers resident at the time and is dormitory style. Bedrooms are shared and may provide little space and privacy. This house is fully equipped with an alarm system and electric fencing protects the property.  
**Please note that the volunteer house is isolated and not inside a town area, since privacy is needed when cheetah cubs are raised at the house.**
- Food is provided and **all volunteers** assist in the preparation of evening meals as well as the cleaning up afterwards. The preparation of breakfast is up to the individual. Lunch and drinks during the day will need to be brought from the volunteer house in the morning. Food and drinks are available for purchase from the Farm Stall on the estate but prices are quite high.
- **Only basic meals are catered for** and the volunteer would buy any luxuries (e.g. Sweets, chocolates, alcohol, etc).
- Sheets and pillows are provided but we request you **bring a sleeping bag** along.
- Please **bring your own towels**.
- **Please bring your own whistle. Every person is required to carry a whistle on him/her at all times in case of emergencies.**
- A washing machine is available for everybody's use. Each person is responsible for his or her own laundry. Blankets used at the facility for the animals will also be sent to the volunteer house for washing.
- **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.
- At certain times the volunteers will be expected to share the volunteer house with young cheetah cubs. During these times the cubs will be accompanied by one of the staff members. Volunteers will be expected to assist where possible with cleaning, supervision etc.
- **A R3 000 deposit is required by all volunteers staying at the house.** This deposit must be provided at day of arrival. R2250.00 of this deposit will be refunded at the end of your stay; the remaining R750.00 is non-refundable and will be held back for any outstanding accounts such as phone bill, traffic tickets etc.

**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 6-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 (eg. Telephone account) must be paid on or before last working day at Cheetah Outreach.
- **Please note that no international calls to be made from the volunteer home, except for emergencies.** Phone cards can be purchased on arrival at Cape Town International airport. There is a card phone on the Spier Wine Estate.
- There is a reference library available to volunteers, but no computer or Internet time is available for the use of volunteers at the facility. There are numerous internet cafes in the Stellenbosch area though, due to this being a university town.

## **TRANSPORT**

- Transport, a small truck with a canopy, to and from the facility is provided.
- An international **manual** driver's license is required. You must have this license for at **least 6 months and have at least 6 months driving experience.** You will be required to drive the dogs to and from the facility.
- This vehicle transports all the volunteers.

- 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.
- Whenever possible any volunteers not working on a late night presentation would be taken home before the job. Should the time not allow it, that person would then wait on the Spier Estate until the presentation is finished and everybody can go home together.
- Depending on the jobs scheduled for the day, volunteers who have the day off could be dropped off in Stellenbosch (15 minutes drive from the facility) and picked up again in the evening. Stellenbosch is a university town and it is easy to walk around. There are some nice restaurants and bars, as well as museums, shopping centres, nightclubs, libraries and gym facilities in Stellenbosch.
- There is also a train station 10 minutes walk from the cheetah facility, which would take you into either Cape Town or Stellenbosch. 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. We, however, do not recommend the use of public transport.
- 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.**