



Cheetah Outreach EDUCATION NEWS

Bringing Environmental Education into the Classrooms of Disadvantaged Communities

February 2009

CHEETAH AWARENESS THROUGH LITERACY, NUMERACY & LIFE SKILLS

The first year of the Literacy project is now complete. Teachers in our pilot schools have started to utilize this resource in classrooms and are gaining a better understanding of where and how it can be integrated into their existing curriculum year plan. A professional education evaluator, recommended by the Western Cape Education Department, has been contracted by Cheetah Outreach to evaluate the Literacy project.

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 relevance of this initiative is not to be underestimated. Having identified critical deficits in Literacy and Numeracy Skills in Foundation Phase learners, in March 2008 the Department of Education launched a flagship programme, the Foundations for Learning Campaign. This is a four-year campaign to create a national focus to improve reading, writing and numeracy abilities of all South African children. This means that Literacy and Numeracy Skills in the Foundation Phase are very much in the spotlight.

Coupled to this is the fact that the White Paper on Education and Training made clear the need for integrating environmental learning at all levels and phases of the education and training system. Environmental Education is not a stand-alone subject but a thread that runs through all learning areas.

Cheetah Outreach is working closely with the Western Cape Education Department to assist teachers in developing their skills in translating the new curriculum into classroom practice and to empower these educators to become mediators of learners, as well as interpreters and designers of learning materials and programmes relating to cheetah awareness, literacy, numeracy and life skills in the Foundation Phase. Cheetah Outreach is a pioneer in this regard.






THE HUNT



DIE JAG

UKUZINGELA





The cubs watch all the farm animals. Without warning, Nkosazana charges at the chickens, but a large dog jumps from behind the barn, barks, and chases her away. Frightened, the cubs call for their mother. Angel quickly returns to them and guides the cubs to safety.

OUR 2008 FELLOW

We would like to take this opportunity of introducing our 2008 Fellow to you. He is Errol Basson and he is a teacher at St Konrad's Primary School, Dysseisdorp. He completed a two month Environmental Education Course at the Smithsonian Institution's National Zoological Park Conservation Research Centre (NZIP-CRC) in Virginia, U.S.A. This Fellowship is offered annually by Cheetah Outreach in partnership with the NZP-CRC and the Western Cape Education Department and targets teachers from disadvantaged communities.

Whilst at NZP-CRC and Fort Worth, the fellows receive intensive training in environmental and wildlife conservation science while sharing education tools and lesson plans with American teachers and students. Thus these fellowships offer a unique opportunity to blend cultures and share information that lead to new initiatives in preserving biodiversity and the development of educational resources.

On their return these fellows have the opportunity to participate in the building of Cheetah Outreach's Environmental Education resources, as well as to assist in the delivery of capacity building workshops for local teachers.



SCHOOL VISITS



In keeping with our decision to concentrate on visits to the facility, Cheetah Outreach undertook few external school visits during 2008. Apart from those schools taking part in the literacy programme, other schools were sponsored by our Bus to Us programme to visit the facility. A further 2,012 learners from 41 advantaged public schools and private schools as well as community based projects also participated in our on-site and outreach education programmes during 2008.

During the last quarter of 2008, we had requests from the Department of Agriculture to conduct environmental education presentations at their Landbou camps. These camps accommodate disadvantaged learners from rural areas. The groups were enormously interactive and diverse. We hope to build a long-term partnership with the various Landbou camp organizers to either present at their camp sites or to host learners at Cheetah Outreach for a day of fun-filled presentations.

All in all our education ambassadors enthralled just over 3 400 learners during 2008.

**Only when the last tree has died
and the last river been poisoned and the last fish been caught
will we realise we cannot eat money.**
- Cree Indian Proverb

WELCOME TO OUR NEW AMBASSADOR ANIMALS

With so much emphasis placed on our Anatolian Shepherd Guard Dog Programme as a solution to the survival of the free-ranging South African cheetah, we have decided to house these new predators to enlighten people to some of the difficulties that our farmers face from predators. All these animals are captive born and hand reared.



Caracal and Jackal

Aptly named Malaika (which means Angel in Swahili), she is eight months old and very gentle. She shares an enclosure with our male and female black backed jackals, Moya (wind in Xhosa) and Ntombi (girl in Xhosa). They get on famously well.



Meerkat

Meet Sebastian our meerkat who comes to us from Moholoholo Rehab Centre in Limpopo. He is the most inquisitive and social animal at Cheetah Outreach. He is taken on a walk every day to satisfy his insatiable curiosity - as well as his social needs!



“Environmental education, involving an interdisciplinary, integrated and active approach to learning, must be a vital element of all levels and programmes of the education and training system, in order to create environmentally literate and active citizens and to ensure that all South African citizens, present and future, enjoy a decent quality of life through the sustainable use of resources.”

- White Paper on Education and Training



A SAD FAREWELL TO DESMOND



Desmond with Dawn and Helene

We were very sad to hear that Desmond Neer passed away in January in Guguletu this year. As a retired teacher, he assisted our education programme from 2004 to 2007. We will miss his input, wisdom, humour and very special presence.

Cheetah Outreach would like to extend our sincere condolences to his wife and family.

"Let every individual and institution now think and act as a responsible trustee of Earth, seeking choices in ecology, economics and ethics that will provide a sustainable future, eliminate pollution, poverty and violence, awaken the wonder of life and foster peaceful progress in the human adventure."

**~ John McConnell,
Founder of International Earth Day**

TEACHER VISITS TO THE CHEETAH OUTREACH EDUCATION FACILITY

During the first and second quarter of last year, we invited teachers participating in our Literacy Project to spend a Saturday at our Education Facility to be introduced to the learning opportunities we offer on site. They were given interactive multi-media talks on various aspects of cheetah morphology, history, conservation status, etc., as well as a tour of the facility and the chance to interact with our ambassador cheetahs. We also introduced them to our resource library and discussed curriculum integration possibilities through negotiated lesson plans at our facility. Dates were then booked by the schools for the learner visits offered as part of the literacy project.



Lynedoch and Lehlohonolo Primary School Educators meeting our cubs.

NEW SPONSORS

Thank you to Imperial Bank and The Polaris Foundation for their generous donations to our Education Programme.

We cannot pursue progress in a wasteland. The achievement of enviable human capital and sustainable national wealth must take place within the context of a protected natural capital."

~ Dr Khotso Mokhele, President of the National Research Foundation