

Meerhof School 2017 Kruger Park Trip

Saving the best for last!

THE 2017 TRIP

With great excitement, the group set off with the Rotary Club of Pretoria East on Sunday August 20 on the 2017 trip to the Kruger National Park – THIS was the 69th consecutive year that the annual trip has taken place and for Rotarian Allen Joss, it was his 50th trip to the KNP with the young learners from the Meerhof School for the Physically Disabled.

This year's group was slightly larger than in recent years as everybody was keen to join in the adventure, knowing that in all probability this was going to be the last trip to the Kruger National Park. Each year it has become that much harder to raise the ever-increasing funds to cover the cost of the trip. As a result, everybody involved were very keen to make this trip such a memorable occasion and to thank and congratulate Rotarian Allen Joss for his massive contribution over the past 50 years to make this such a great project – one that the Rotary Club of Pretoria East and its members are hugely proud of.



The group of 'Ooms' as well as the staff from the school and Allen's loyal and dedicated group of helpers and co-workers were treated to an early breakfast by the school canteen staff and after a short briefing and prayer for a safe trip by the School principal, Mrs Burger, we set off on one of the most memorable trips to the Park.

This being 'the last trip', Allen invited a number of past members of staff and friends who had been involved in the trips in the past, to accompany us on this occasion. They were able to share with us some of the wonderful experiences and challenges going back many a year.



The slightly larger 2017 group of learners very soon got into the spirit of the adventure and were very enthusiastic spotters of game and bird species. For the majority of the learners this was their first trip to the Kruger National Park and their excitement was so infectious and added greatly to making this trip so special. The fact that a work roster allocating various tasks such as preparing the meals, dishwashing duties, setting tables etc. was circulated on day one did not bother them at all and to witness the enthusiasm and spirit of co-operation between them, always ready to assist each other, was very humbling indeed.



Activities included early morning briefings before breakfast; briefings by the game rangers; the educational side trips; a visit to the Rhino Conservation camp and enjoying the pool on a very hot Thursday afternoon.

To mark Rotarian Allen Joss's 50th trip and to thank him for his dedication over the years to make it possible for the deserving children from the school to have this life changing experience, a very special evening was arranged at the Cattle Baron Boma in Skukuza by the Meerhof School pupils to pay tribute to Allen and for each 'Oom' and his team to do a short concert based on a music theme given

to each group the day before – some of us are just not great performers but the enthusiastic and talented bunch of learners pulled us through!

To the two mainstays of the trip over the years, Rotarian Allen Joss and Christine Maré from the Meerhof School for the Disabled, we thank and Salute you for your contribution to uplifting the lives of so many children facing various personal challenges in their lives, an experience of a lifetime!



AN ERA DRAWS TO A CLOSE

The visits to the Kruger National Park started in 1949 and the RCPE took over the responsibility for hosting the Meerhof School's visit every year since its inception in 1961. Allen Joss has been an eager participant in these trips since 1967.

On Wednesday evening, 27th September, many club members and Anns journeyed out to Meerhof to join the school staff and pupils in a celebration mixed with sadness after the completion of the final Meerhof trip to the Kruger National Park.



Allen and Grant (6 trips) also enjoyed the moment



Nic drove many of the children to the KNP (13 trips)



President Robin with Mamma Paulinah (8 trips) and Oom Arseil (14 trips) with their certificates and Rita Burgers, the Principal of Meerhof

The school hosted the braai and set the scene to honour all the individuals who have played a part in the annual trip, from either going just a few times or as in Allen's case, 50 trips, 50 trips and each a success, what a legacy.



Jennifer Joss, the lady behind the scenes who was also involved in 50 trips, was handed an orchid by President Robin



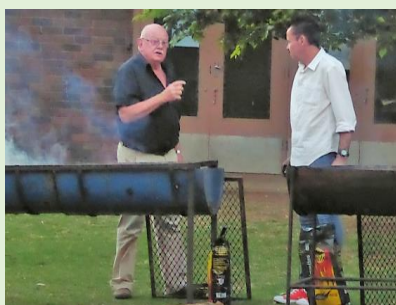
Well-behaved pupils waiting for their food



Cheryl and Judy enjoying the evening of fellowship



Clive (11 trips) and Jenny Els in deep discussion



Peter (10 trips) chats with a colleague at the braai



Friends of Meerhof School for the disabled gathering for a pleasant evening together

Each participant in a trip was handed a personalised certificate. Our thanks go out to Jenny Els for designing and producing these certificates. Allen was also handed a certificate of appreciation from the club by Grant as well as a memorial book on the KNP. This beautiful coffee-table book was sourced from the Parks Board by Jenny Buck.



Jan and Marba; as a new Rotarian, Jan missed out on the KNP trips



Allen (50 trips) and Christine (31 trips), two of the stalwarts in making this a great event in the lives of many children



Oom Aiden (6 trips) and family.

MEMORIES ARE MADE OF THIS

