

MEDIA RELEASE: KNP COLLECTS BOUNTY FROM BALLOONS

Friday, 7 October 2005

A Boksburg school, the Mooiplaas Ranger Section and a bunch of balloons were linked together in the strangest of ways today (Friday, 7 October 2005).

Mooiplaas Section Ranger, Mr Johann Oelofse, addressed the pupils of Laerskool Van Dyk Primary on the dangers of littering, especially in the Kruger National Park (KNP).

"Litter not only looks ugly but can have disastrous effects on our natural surroundings," he explained to 800 eager faces.

The pupils and teachers of this Boksburg dual medium school received this lesson in conservation and the dangers of littering after 118 helium-filled balloons landed in the KNP as a result of a fund raising attempt by the school.

Mr Oelofse was alerted to the fact that the balloons had landed in the Mooiplaas section of the KNP on Saturday, 4 June 2005 and immediately went to the area where he saw the balloons lying in the Mopaniveld.

"I battled to load all the balloons into my vehicle, but eventually succeeded. On my return to Mooiplaas, I popped all the balloons and read each note that included the school's telephone number," Mr Oelofse explained.

On contacting the school, Mr Oelofse discovered that the balloons were part of a fund-raising effort and that there was a R1 000 prize for the person who picked up the balloon that travelled the furthest.

As Mooiplaas is more than 550 kilometres away from Boksburg, the KNP easily won the prize, which was also presented to the Johannesburg Region of the Honorary Rangers today.

"I must just stress that we as the KNP are not angry with you or your school, but respectfully request that you should rather choose more environmentally friendly projects to raise funds for your school," Mr Oelofse explained to the children.



KNP Section Ranger Johann Oelofse explains to the pupils from Laerskool Van Dyk Primary why litter is dangerous to places like the Kruger National Park.



Representatives from the Johannesburg Region of the Honorary Rangers receive a cheque from Laerskool Van Dyk Primary headmaster.



All smiles as three young girls from Laerskool Van Dyk Primary meet KNP Section Ranger Johann Oelofse.



All 118 balloons were crammed into KNP Section Ranger Johann Oelofse's bakkie.

Note to editors: Photographs available in hi-resolution.

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