

Season's Greetings from the Wild Cat Education & Conservation Fund

2020 has been a very "not normal" year for WCE&CF, as it has been for the rest of the world.

We held our 18th annual fundraiser "Celebration of the Small Wild Cats of Southeast Asia", at the Pomeroy Center in San Francisco on March 7th. Due to the pandemic, San Francisco closed public gatherings a couple of days later, so we were amazingly lucky to have the event when we did. Our wonderful supporters made the evening a huge success with their generous donations!

Due to restrictions on large gatherings, we were unable to hold our seventeenth annual open house/fundraiser at the compound in July. Instead we held 10 "mini" open houses on consecutive Saturdays in August, September and October. Each event was limited to six guests to comply with social distancing protocols. Barbara also prepared individual box lunches rather than her usual buffet. We received positive feedback about the small group sizes. The guests were able to meet all the WCE&CF ambassador cats, even the shy ones who usually hide at our bigger open house events. The small groups meant that Rob and Barbara had time to visit with each individual guest, which is difficult to do when there are 80 guests in attendance. The weather ranged from 100 degrees to cool to light rain on the various dates. This made for interesting set-ups and tours, but everything went smoothly. Our traditional "Cheetah Challenge" pool squares were sold across all 10 "mini" open houses, as were raffle tickets, and the winners were notified after the last event.

For the first time in over 27 years we have discontinued all outreach presentations due to the coronavirus restrictions. We miss interacting with the students at the school assemblies and with the guests at the various conservation events we participate in. We will re-evaluate our public presentations when the pandemic is controlled, and schools are once again operating normally.

In August we were able to reopen the WCE&CF compound for private tours. Several options are available (tour, cheetah run, luncheon). We have incorporated all the health safety protocols required by the Sonoma County Health Officer into our tours. We are using social distancing and each tour group is limited to family and friends. Please check out the "private tours" page at www.wildcatfund.org. **A private tour makes a great holiday gift.**

Baruti, an eight week old male cheetah joined our family in January and Taji, an eight week old sand cat arrived in September.

Supporting our Conservation Partners is one of our primary goals. In spite of our reduced income, the WCE&CF was able to make our full annual financial donations to the field conservation groups we support, including the Cheetah Conservation Fund, Cheetah Conservation Botswana, the Snow Leopard Conservancy, the Mountain Lion Foundation, the Small Wild Cat Conservation Foundation and Cheetah Outreach.

Looking forward, we are not sure if we will be able to hold our usual annual fundraiser at the Pomeroy Center on March 13th. If we cannot hold the in-person event, we will come up with a fun alternative. Also, if we cannot hold our usual July open house, we will again hold multiple "mini" open houses during the summer months. We will keep you posted as the new year progresses.

We strongly believe that without a big emphasis on education, conservation in the wild cannot be successful. This is the important part ambassador cats play in helping to ensure the future of these wonderful creatures. Without your support, we cannot reach all the people who need to hear what is happening to wildcat populations worldwide.

The support our donors have sent our way has been amazing and we cannot thank you enough. Because of this year's greatly reduced outreach income, we appreciate your donations even more. Please think of us this holiday season.

Making a tax-deductible contribution in someone's name is a perfect holiday gift.

Information on how to donate can be found at www.wildcatfund.org on the "donations" page.

We wish you a good, prosperous and "normal" 2021 – Barbara, Rob, the WCE&CF Board and the cats.