



## Wildlife Education Foundation (WEF)

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### Media Release

26 August 2011

WEF event: "The Making of Enviro-Heroes"; venue: IODSA Conference facility, Sandton, Gauteng

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### The Wildlife Education Foundation encourages Enviro-Heroes to take flight and make a difference

The Wildlife Education Foundation (WEF) introduced in Sandton on Friday morning (26<sup>th</sup> August 2011) an exciting concept for environmental consciousness to a group of business people and members of the media. Champions of environmental education in South Africa, the WEF launched their Enviro-Hero project at the prestigious function, hosted by patron and wildlife enthusiast, Michelle Garforth-Venter, and graced by the presence of Romeo, a tamed young cheetah and his handler, Tigerman John Wagenaar of Ramela Ranch.

In a presentation about "the making of Enviro-Heroes", the Chairperson and founding member of the non-profit organisation, Dr Madelein J Grundlingh explained that the purpose of the Enviro-Hero project was to create an excitement around environmental and wildlife education and to encourage all South Africans to recognise the heroes within themselves and make a positive contribution as individuals or groups.

Dr Grundlingh stressed that each one of us has only one life, one magical journey on planet earth and to survive we all need a healthy planet. Presently, however, our planet desperately needs dedicated Enviro-Heroes to survive the human impact. She added that we are all born heroes, but Enviro-Heroes are made through education, enthusiasm and determination. In this regard, the aim of the Wildlife Education Foundation (WEF) is to produce Enviro-Heroes, people that will make a positive difference to our environment. As it is in our moments of decision that our destiny is shaped, her request to all has been to make the decision right now to be the hero in our own life story and also the Enviro-Hero in the story of our planet, with one goal: "sustainable development and the survival of life on earth for generations to come". She emphasized that there can be no conservation without education for sustainable development to positively guide and change human attitudes and actions.

Dr Grundlingh said that while this project will be introduced to schools to motivate and educate the youth, who are the future of our country, the WEF's aim is to drive the current generation of adults to action too. She challenged businesses to embrace the Enviro-Hero concept in order to create the ripple effect of practical change that would flow from the work environment to the home, on to the children and into the future.

"When environmental values that are taught at school correspond to those taught at home, there is more chance of responsible action from children and a greater chance for consistency in terms of environmental responsibility by the children as they become adults. This is why we also want to educate the adults to be conscious of their impact on the earth and how easy it is to adopt environmentally responsible behaviour in their lives and be Enviro-Heroes", said Dr Grundlingh.

The Wildlife Education Foundation introduced the guests to their honorary Enviro-Hero who is also a community hero in her home village of Metsi in Mpumalanga. Joyce Mabaso (50) is a school principal and community leader, who did not let difficulty factor into her goal to create a better future for herself and her community. Joyce began teaching at the age of 18 at Magudu Primary School, which she had attended as a child. She completed her tertiary education while teaching and achieved an Honours degree in Education from UNISA.

Joyce worked hard to grow, and improve the condition of the school by implementing various fundraising projects and also won the “Teacher of the Year” award from the Department of Education after having been nominated numerous times. This incredible educator also dedicates herself to environmental education in her community and has won numerous awards for her greening efforts. She is now committed to running a successful computer school in her community in order to assist in skills development. When asked what motivates her to do what she does in such difficult conditions, Joyce Mabaso said: “I believe that nothing is a problem. It’s only a problem if you don’t want to do it.”

Members of the WEF embraced Joyce as their honorary Enviro-Hero, saying that she was an inspiration to them and should be to every human being because if every person could believe that changing their relationship with the environment was not a problem, then the process of healing the damage already done will succeed phenomenally. In the words of Dr Grundlingh: “change can happen in a second, the second that the human mind decides to do it”.

While the launch of the Enviro-Hero project was the main focus for the Wildlife Education Foundation during this event, Dr Grundlingh mentioned that the WEF would be introducing another campaign, a prestigious national Green Awards, which would recognise in various categories, our “Enviro-Heroes” who go the extra mile to make the environment a priority in their lives. While details were not presented at the function, the WEF will have more information about the Awards and nomination forms on their website ([www.wild.org.za](http://www.wild.org.za)) within the next few weeks.

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