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Dear Friends,

As Allen and I first saw it in 2005, the Hoedspruit Endangered Species Centre was a creative and appealing breeding, care and research facility and refuge for endangered and sick or injured animals. While that first impression of a welcoming home has been reinforced by varied enhancements, HESC fulfilled a complementary mission during the past year – release of rhinos and a cheetah to the natural habitat of the wild. For the poached and rehabilitated rhinos, it was a once-unimaginable return; for the cheetah born in captivity, it was an introduction to a wondrous new world.

Miraculously restored to health and fitness from their brutal 2013 poaching, Lion's Den and Dingle Dell, mature rhinos savagely dehorned by poachers and left to suffer painful deaths, happily left the shelter of HESC to begin life anew in the bush. Fit, but dehorned to deter further poaching attacks, they are living testimony to the breakthrough medical and caregiving innovations and accomplishments enabled by U.S. Friends of HESC funding and the persistence of dedicated HESC staff and the medical and conservation professionals offering constant and supportive resources.



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*U.S. Friends of Hoedspruit Endangered Species Centre, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit charitable organization dedicated to the conservation of wildlife. Charitable contributions to U.S. Friends of Hoedspruit Endangered Species Centre, Inc. are deductible for U.S. Income Tax purposes, to the extent allowed by law.*

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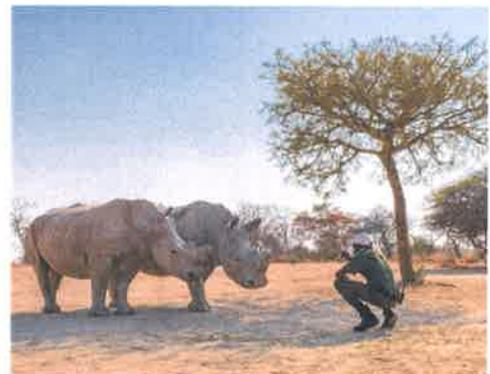
With so much necessary attention going to deterrence of poaching and trophy acquisition, it is important to remember that HESC started as a cheetah breeding project. Back then, promoting

genetic diversity and researching causes of premature deaths were the primary focus. Wonderful as it is to see cheetahs interacting in beautiful habitats created by HESC, as from the moated Cheetah Island or Lovers' Lane, we know that captivity is not the lifetime answer for all. So, it is thrilling to participate in the release of a cheetah, born and raised at HESC, into the wild. At first controlled and monitored, the cheetah was introduced gradually to strange freedoms, exploring and exercising its innate abilities to hunt and protect itself, and hopefully contributing to another generation of wild cheetahs.



In an entirely different aspect of HESC initiatives sponsored by U.S. Friends of HESC, Simon Mnisi, our very first intern, was rewarded by an appointment to a position in Kruger National Park where he will gain expanded knowledge and skills. In 2010, Simon described his acceptance into the newly created internship program as "the opportunity of a lifetime."

From the outset, Simon embraced early opportunities to learn and gain skills, assisting the animal curators and translating to schoolchildren on walking tours. Eager to develop personally and contribute more meaningfully, Simon dedicated himself to discovering his talents and abilities, advancing in animal care and participating as a team member of the anti-poaching unit. As we wish Simon well, we know that his rewarding achievements, and the successes to come, make him a role model for our community and school outreach to win young advocates of conservation and to provide similar internship and career opportunities for deserving students.





So, several positive facets of moving on have been realized at HESC during the past year. It is gratifying to be a meaningful participant in addressing the natural and manmade challenges to wildlife conservation and the many-faceted successes of HESC.

With sincere thanks for your interest,

*Heidi*

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