



## LOCAL SUSTAINABILITY ON PHI PHI

Phi Phi Island Village Beach Resort has kicked off a long-term initiative to boost sustainability education for local school children. The program is designed to engage local families in environmental care and provide information that will then trickle down to future generations. The first group of children, alongside teachers and parents, from Koh Phi Phi's Laem Tong School have made their visit to the resort's new Marine Discovery Centre and met with resident biologist Mr Kamolwat Napadoirungrueang to discuss environmental preservation. Colourful interactive displays were used to facilitate conversation about the delicate balance of aquatic ecosystems and the damaging impact of pollution and debris. The children were also encouraged to feed four different types of clownfish as part of the centre's dedication to reintroducing clownfish back into their natural habitats. The visit marks the first of many that the children from Laem Tong School will make. [phippiislandvillage.com](http://phippiislandvillage.com)



## CHILDREN LEARN TO PRESERVE WITH ETIHAD AIRWAYS

In partnership with wildlife charity, Born Free, Etihad Airways has updated its popular child packs. These new packs are for ages three–13 and contain activities for the airline's younger guests allowing them to gain a better understanding of animal welfare and how they can help protect natural habitats and wildlife conservation. Etihad Airways supports wildlife with their employee awareness-raising activities, supported by Born Free, which promote the importance of animal welfare and responsible tourism. After signing the 'Declaration of the United for Wildlife International Taskforce on the Transportation of Illegal Wildlife Products' at Buckingham Palace in 2016, the airline strives to preserve a strong commitment to wildlife conservation and plans to continue collaborations with Born Free. [etihad.com](http://etihad.com)

## BECOME A CORAL CRUSADER

In concentrated efforts to regenerate and restore Australia's cherished Great Barrier Reef, Reef Restoration Foundation has launched the Coral Crusaders program. The opportunity arises after great success with Australia's first ocean based coral nursery. The nursery, established by Reef Restoration Foundation, has completed the first cycle of harvesting, growing and planting coral at Fitzroy Island sparking high hopes for the future of the reef. The program seeks to hasten the recovery of valuable reefs that have been damaged by coral bleaching. The Coral Adoption program allows those who love the Reef to take an active role in its regeneration. As only experienced divers can assist in the process, the Foundation is taking donations to Care for a Coral, Build a Branch or Tend a Tree. Already, coral trees have been adopted by Oris Watches, Small World Journeys, JTB and Gemperal. The Reef Restoration Foundation aims to grow 25,000 new corals on the reef by 2021 with the help of the public. [reefrestorationfoundation.org](http://reefrestorationfoundation.org)



## MERCY ON A MISSION

Since 1978 global charity group Mercy Ships has operated and sailed hospital ships in developing nations to bring hope and healing to citizens of poor communities. The group mobilises people and resources worldwide, serving all people regardless of race, gender or religion. Free and world-class health services are delivered via Mercy Ships staff, crew and volunteers. The charity has worked in more than 70 countries providing services valued at more than \$1.53 billion, with more than 2.71 million direct beneficiaries. Each year, more than 1000 volunteers from over 40 nations serve with Mercy Ships. There are many ways to support Mercy Ships, with a need for both medical and non-medical volunteers in various positions including housekeeping, galley, deck crew, doctors and nurses. Short-term crew can volunteer from two weeks to two years depending on the position. Long-term crew make an initial commitment of two years. All Mercy Ships volunteers need to raise their own funds to cover crew fees, travel insurance and transportation to and from the field service location. Mercy Ships will undertake the arrangements for registration in the nation of service on behalf of all medical personnel, as well as visa arrangements for all volunteers. [mercyships.org.au](http://mercyships.org.au)

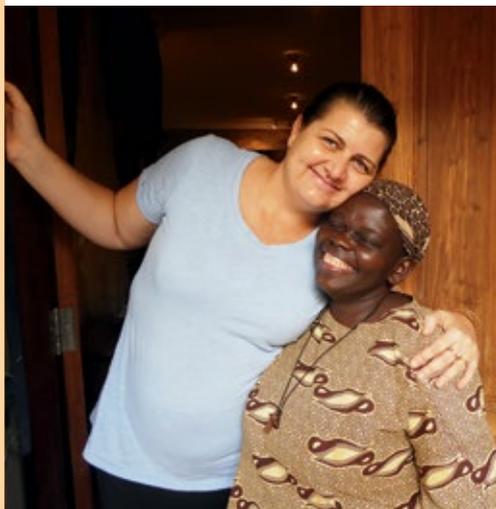


## TRACK WILDLIFE IN THE TRANSYLVANIAN ALPS

Join the passionate team at Biosphere Expeditions to track wildlife as part of important conservation work high in the Carpathian Mountains of the Transylvanian Alps in Romania. On the tour, research work is focused on bear, wolf, lynx, bison and beaver, as well as their interrelationships with prey species and the human community. On the the southern slopes of the Fagaras Mountains in a 210 sq km forest protection zone, bear, wolf and lynx are present in the area already and beaver and bison are being re-introduced. Tour participants will be looking for the animals themselves, as well as their tracks, and place and check camera traps in an effort to determine mammal numbers. They will be assisting to create a new national park, which will be among Europe's biggest, and a world-class wilderness reserve. Guests will come away with a better understanding of the challenges of close cohabitation between large carnivores and humans. The group will use an app installed on their mobile phone and GPS receivers to record data. [biosphere-expeditions.org](http://biosphere-expeditions.org)

# MAASAI WANDERINGS, DONNA DUGGAN

BY HELEN HAYES



*From left: Donna Duggan with Sister Marie Janette; The school in Esilalei.*

Donna Duggan is from Brisbane, but has been based in Arusha, Tanzania since 2005 after meeting and falling in love with a local man, Naseeb Mfinanga. Donna and Nas married, had two children, and together, established Maasai Wanderings – a tour operation and Nasikia Tented Camps – an under canvas accommodation portfolio and will open their first lodge on the Rift Valley Escarpment in February 2019.

Sadly, Donna lost her husband Nas in a plane crash in November 2017, but she has not lost her drive or inspiration, saying “I will continue to create and nurture our dreams to make sure all comes to fruition. When it comes to community projects, Nas was my greatest fan – he was really proud of our achievements.”

**How did Maasai Wanderings come about?**

I was volunteering as a nurse in Moshi, Tanzania in 2004, and Nas was my neighbour! After spending some weeks chatting and getting to know each other, a relationship blossomed. I saw a very clever man, a loyal man, a man that I knew would love me forever. He said that he saw the same but claims

that he knew it from the first moment we met. We set up Maasai Wanderings to preserve culture and wildlife, through a range of safaris and tours.

**You have established several community projects, what are they?**

We always wanted to make sure that we were committed and generous members of the community and used some profits towards making sure that many benefitted from tourism. We have built and extended schools in Maasai communities like Ilkurot, Ol Tukai, Le Manyatta and Esilalei – additional classrooms, porridge programs, teacher salaries, uniforms and more.

We have contributed towards several orphanage programs with consistent food and clothing donations. We work in partnership with Pack for a Purpose and make sure any donations reach the intended communities. We always participate in Arusha community programs and also pay school fees for a variety of students in the Arusha area.

**How many children do you assist through the projects?**

Almost 4000 through various means – from porridge to school fees to leadership seminars and so on.

**The Maasai have a different approach to school and not all children can go. Can you explain a bit about that?**

This is changing, but it is a slow process. With the Maasai still often living a polygamist lifestyle, they can have several children of the same age at the same time. With their belief that cattle come first, this means that the children must take turns in grazing the cattle (distance from home dependent on rainfall) which is the job of the young boys.

And with so many children in the *boma* to look after, the young girls are held back for babysitting and household chores. Once menstruation starts, the young girls are then targeted for early marriage – again it is improving but still a real issue. These are all hurdles for the youth in Maasai communities to gain an education.

**What do you love most about the Maasai and the work you do in the community?**

I can see both sides of the argument – education vs traditional way of life. They would not be who they are if they did not uphold their traditions through tribal wars, colonial times and so on

– but then to be able to retain their place in modern society and maintain tribal pride, they need to be educated to equip themselves for the challenges ahead when it comes to the developing world. I like the Maasai for their honesty (almost naïve at times), their pride, their ability to thrive in remote areas and the fact that they do not hunt the wildlife for food in the buffer zones that they occupy.

**You have several safari lodges, where are they and how can guests contribute to your projects?**

We have Tarangire Ndovu Camp in Tarangire National Park and at our four camps in Serengeti National Park – Nasikia Mobile Migration Camp, Naona Moru, Ehlane Plains and Kaskaz Mara, guests can support through Pack for a Purpose when they come to experience our camps and the magnificent national parks. At the new Mandhari Lodge in the Rift Valley Escarpment, which opens in February 2019, guests can visit one of our schools at Esilalei for classroom interaction/ assistance in porridge service.

**Can you see your projects having an impact?**

Yes indeed, even district education statistics prove it. For example, Matim primary school in Le Manyatta was ranked 87th in the district when we first started to implement an assistance program there. Now they are ranked 16th!

**How can our readers help?**

There is no better way to help than to be an educated traveller. When I visit travel shows around the world or potential clients, the first thing that I talk about is Tanzania as a country, and what it has to offer. Tanzania is so alive with incredible landscapes, vibrant cultures, stunning wildlife and of course genuinely welcoming people.

Once a traveller is aware of where they are visiting, what are the potentials and set their own expectations – then you can always find a myriad of ways to be creative in the help that you give. In the end, yes the simple stuff counts like exercise books and pencils – but the bigger picture is that it is important to support local communities in finding



**Above:** *The safari lodge at Kaskaz Mara.*

a way to support themselves and make their own choices about their future. The ‘teach a man to fish’ principle is really the way forward and the word ‘teach’ is key – when you educate, you create a ‘prevention is better than cure’ ideology.

**FURTHER INFORMATION:**  
[maasaiwanderings.com](http://maasaiwanderings.com) •