

CHILDREN IN THE WILDERNESS GOES TO PAFURI CAMP, KRUGER NATIONAL PARK

Mark Gillman's Teddy Bear Patrol 2005, in association with the South African Police, Children in the Wilderness, Wilderness Safaris and Mc Donald's SA, have just hosted a group of 30 underprivileged children from across South Africa. 5FM's "The Mark Gillman Show", broadcasted live from Pafuri Camp each morning.

11 to 16 year-old kids were selected by the South Africa Police Services, from various shelters in each of the metropolitan centres around South Africa. The children were flown into Johannesburg by Kulula.com and transported by coach up to Wilderness Safari's new Pafuri Camp. In Camp the children participated in a 5-day edutainment programme, combining subjects such as nutrition and HIV/Aids education with the thrills of wildlife viewing, birdwatching and a 5-star safari experience!

It was a wonderful experience to see these street children removed from their environment into a wonderful wilderness setting and see their growth each day. Arriving tired and apprehensive, they grew in confidence, interested in everything around them. Specialists were incorporated into the programme to teach the children life skills. The South African Police were also very involved in teaching the children skills such as how to survive in an urban jungle, tracking and child rights

The Teddy Bear Patrol was started on 5FM's Mark Gillman Show in 1995. The initiative came from a desire to further involve the 5FM audience in a much-overlooked section of public service; the work the South African Police fulfils with the kids of South Africa. Teddy Bear Patrol has always adopted different themes each year to keep the interest high; the goal has been to continually reach new kids and policemen annually. Previously the Teddy Bear Patrol has collected teddy bears, soccer balls and taken kids on the "Big Day Out". However this year, Children in the Wilderness were privileged to host the children on the first five night bush safari at Pafuri camp.