



## **CHEETAH OUTREACH GENERAL INFORMATION FOR INTENDING VOLUNTEERS**

Dear Applicant,

Thank you so much for your interest in Cheetah Outreach. It is always a pleasure to hear from other people wishing to dedicate a part of their lives to the conservation of Africa's most endangered big cat. We are a non-profit organisation committed to the conservation of the African cheetah and we rely on public support for our education, public awareness and livestock guarding dog programmes.

Cheetah Outreach aims to promote the survival of the cheetah as a free-ranging species by working with our ambassador cheetahs to encourage people to gain a greater understanding of these majestic cats. Visits to our facility by school groups provide local South African children from all backgrounds the opportunity to learn about and be inspired by their natural heritage. We also offer cheetah encounters to visitors at the facility, which is an important source of fund-raising for us. We rely heavily on our volunteers to educate the public on the plight of the cheetah and on the delivery of our conservation programmes, particularly our Livestock Guarding Dog Project.

Our volunteer programme involves both local and international volunteers. We provide accommodation and transport to and from work for international volunteers (subject to availability).

The daily duties of volunteers include the greeting of visitors at our facility and informing them about our project and about the cheetah in general, food preparation, merchandise sales, duties at our entrance, cleaning (dishes, enclosures, shop floors, office and passages, vehicles, etc.) and taking care of our Anatolian Shepherd dogs. This will sometimes involve hard manual labour like fencing, carpentry, building gates, digging and various tasks needed for the general maintenance of our enclosures. We also require that all our volunteers are willing and able to drive on our local roads.

**Please note that one of the main responsibilities of volunteers is to tend to the guests and to work hands-on with the public. This requires a person who is outgoing, confident and enthusiastic, and highly proficient in English. About 80% of a volunteer's time will be spent dealing with the general public and guests.**

**Because of the nature of volunteer duties, we can ONLY accept applicants who are highly fluent in English.**

The amount of time that a volunteer is able to spend with our animals depends on the relationship that he or she builds with them. Obviously, this only comes with time and patience, and at the discretion of our handlers. All volunteers, regardless of length of time at Cheetah Outreach, must have a handler with them when visiting any of the cheetahs. The progress of each volunteer will vary and depend on individual ability as well as pre-existing skills and capabilities.

The following pages provide more information about what is expected of our volunteers.

Please note that our volunteers are only accepted after successfully moving through our selection process. This process involves questionnaires and two references, as well as a recent photo of the person. As some previous applicants have booked flights and made travel plans to South Africa, before actually gaining a confirmed place as a volunteer with us, we would like to stress that simply filling out the questionnaires does not guarantee you a volunteer position. At any stage in this application process, we may decide that you are unsuitable for work with Cheetah Outreach, or that the period of time you are intending to volunteer is not suitable. You will be notified as to whether you have been accepted or denied a volunteer place. We ask for a commitment of at least 6 weeks. Preference is, however, given to those who stay longer as this will enable you to complete more training and lead to a more productive and satisfying volunteer experience.

All volunteers need to be at least 18 years old. A volunteer visa is required if you wish to stay for 90 days or longer.

**Once you have been accepted your agreed length of stay with us is binding (your acceptance means that others have been declined).**

**Volunteers should note that there is a two week probation period to ensure that all volunteers are proficient in English, are able to undertake the work assigned to them and are abiding by our Code of Ethics.**

# CHEETAH OUTREACH

## VOLUNTEER INFORMATION

### THE FACILITY

- Working hours are **5 days a week from 8:15am to 5.15pm with 1/2 hour for lunch**. These times may vary, depending on whether there is an early morning or evening presentation with the cheetahs. The facility is open 7 days a week, 365 days a year and volunteers are allocated two days off each week. Staff members will organize these days off and it may not always be possible to accommodate specific requests for time off. Lunch breaks are not guaranteed to be at any particular or regular time and are dependant on staff availability and how busy we are.
- The work will initially consist of general maintenance, assisting in the merchandising centre, attending to guests at our entrance, educating guests, preparing food for the dogs and cleaning up the feeding area, as well as hard manual labour around the holding enclosures.
- Volunteers are also asked to assist with our education programme where they will attend and give presentations to visiting local schools.
- After a period of time you will be introduced to some of the cheetahs and, depending on their reaction to you, you may assist a handler by taking guests into their enclosures for encounters. The length of time that it takes for the cheetahs to accept you, will vary from person to person. When visiting any of our cheetahs, a handler must always be present.
- Once you are able to go into enclosures with the cheetahs, you will then assist in changing water and cleaning the enclosures.
- All volunteers will be given the opportunity to assist in the care of the Anatolian Shepherd dogs at our facility.

### UNIFORM

- All volunteers need to conform to the Cheetah Outreach uniform of “safari” colours (i.e.: beige, khaki, light brown, green, etc). Volunteers will not be permitted to wear clothing in any other colour.
- A T-shirt will be provided as part of the uniform for work at the facility, but we require you to bring your own trousers/shorts (khaki or light brown in colour) and working shoes (e.g. hiking or sports shoes).
- A heavy raincoat and waterproof boots are also recommended for the cold and rainy winter months. Trousers and warm clothes should be of a “safari” colour (beige or green preferably). The weather in Cape Town varies considerably, even within the seasons, and more specific information can be provided once you are accepted.
- We also require volunteers to purchase a fleece jacket from us in the winter months. This will cost up to R250 – depending on our current supplier. The reason we request you purchase one from us is that it fits in with our uniform dress code. We also have a rain jacket available at approximately R250.
- Volunteers need to bring closed shoes; for safety reasons we do not allow sandals, only trainers or hiking shoes (or something similar).
- Please bring your own whistle. Every person is required to carry a whistle on him/her at all times in case of emergencies, and will not be allowed to work with the animals unless you do so.

## ACCOMMODATION

- Self-catering accommodation is provided at the volunteer home, which is situated close to the Cheetah Outreach facility. If the accommodation is fully booked when you wish to join the programme we may still be able to accept you provided that you can arrange your own accommodation and transport to and from our facility
- Our volunteer accommodation is small and basic. Bedrooms are dormitory style with bunk-beds and may provide little space and privacy.
- The accommodation is essentially self-catering. You will need to budget to provide your own food. There are several grocery stores close by.
- Please bring your own sleeping bag as bedding is limited.
- Please bring your own towels or purchase these on arrival from the local shops.
- A washing machine is available for everybody's use. Each person is responsible for his or her own laundry.
- All volunteers are expected to clean up after themselves and to leave communal areas (lounge, kitchen, bathroom, patio, etc.) in a clean and tidy state.
- Anyone who does not adhere to the rules of the house will be asked to find alternative accommodation at their own expense.
- Since you would be living in a group environment, you would be expected to be able to maintain a cordial relationship with your co-workers.
- **A R3,000 deposit is required by all volunteers staying at the house.** This deposit must be provided on the day of your arrival. On the assumption that you complete the full duration of your agreed stay, do not incur any costs and adhere to our code of ethics, R1,500 will be returned to you on your last day. The remaining **R1,500.00 is non-refundable** and will go towards the upkeep and maintenance of the volunteer accommodation and vehicle.

**PLEASE NOTE: If for any reason you decide to leave Cheetah Outreach before the decided upon date of stay, the full amount of this deposit will be forfeited.**

- **All volunteers will be subjected to a 2-week probationary period.** At the end of this period his or her position will be re-evaluated and Cheetah Outreach retains the right to terminate the agreement on grounds of incompatibility.
- All outstanding monies owed must be paid on or before the last working day at Cheetah Outreach. For this reason volunteer deposits will only be returned on the last day before moving out of the accommodation.
- No computer or internet time is available for the use of volunteers at the facility or at the volunteer accommodation. However, phone data in South Africa can be purchased on a rechargeable basis from cellular device stores as well as most grocery & convenient stores.

## TRANSPORT

- Transport to and from the facility is provided.

- An international **manual (manual gear shift)** driver's license is required. You must have had this license for at **least 6 months and have at least 6 months of driving experience**.
- The vehicle transports all the volunteers and is not assigned to just one individual.
- You will be required to pass a vehicle assessment before being allowed to drive.
- This vehicle is **not available** for the private use of any volunteer.
- The Cheetah Outreach vehicle must be kept clean and tidy at all times (inside and out). Volunteers are expected to clean the vehicle at least once a week.
- Public transport in South Africa is very limited and there are no bus services in the facility area. Safety when travelling alone is an important issue and we do not recommend the use of public transport. We advocate car hires and the use of taxi services such as Uber, both of which are used frequently by our volunteers.

## **INOCULATIONS**

- All volunteers must have an up-to-date tetanus inoculation as well as being fully vaccinated against Covid-19 before starting at Cheetah Outreach
- Any volunteer wanting to work with our meerkats must be inoculated against rabies. However, please note that it is not compulsory to work with these animals.
- We strongly recommend that all volunteers undergo a de-worming treatment at the end of their stay. We work in close proximity with our animals and the transfer of parasites is a real possibility.

## **PHOTOGRAPHS**

**Please note that photographs taken during a volunteer's stay at Cheetah Outreach may only be used for personal use. No photographs or media may be sold or published or used for any commercial purpose without the permission of the director, Annie Beckhelling. All volunteer training material and information is subject to copyright.**

**All volunteer training material is subject to copyright.**

### **Cheetah Outreach**

Tel : +27 (0)21 851 6850

e-mail : [volunteer@cheetah.co.za](mailto:volunteer@cheetah.co.za)

<http://www.cheetah.co.za>