

## Conservation Without Borders: TBZ and SUNY Cortland

As TBZ approaches its 30th year, it continues to grow as a superb wildlife conservation facility. The Zoo itself being greatly improved, and its relationships and connections are being expanded and strengthened locally and internationally.

And, what better proof of this than the Zoo's recent involvement with SUNY Cortland's Field Biology course in New York? The Zoo has a very special bond with the wonderful people and institutions of upstate New York, from the continuous animal adoptions by Tully Junior High's International Club, to the great working relationship with Cornell University's Vet School, to the fervent and undying support of SUNY Cortland, which even has a Margay adopted in honour of the great university. The Margay, called "Cortland," is a star! How so? The smaller cat pictured on the wonderful wildlife corridor billboard at Mile 40 on the Western Highway is the one and only Cortland!

Professor Tom Pasquarello has been the great link between TBZ and SUNY Cortland. He decided many moons ago that the Zoo had a great deal to offer SUNY's students, through involvement in their annual summer field course.

Plans were set in motion, and in no time at all, TBZ's Environmental Educator, Jamal Andrewin-Bohn was off to SUNY's Outdoor Education Center in the vast forest reserve of the Adirondacks. There, he took part in their Field Biology Course, under the talented direction of SUNY Cortland Professors Steve Broyles and Larry Klotz, who were well versed in both temperate and tropical biology. As Mr. Jamal joined his SUNY peers in studying everything from Forest and Mountain Ecology, to Limnology, the professors wasted no time in asking him to compare and draw parallels to the ecosystems in Belize. This gave all the students a valuable insight into the workings of the Tropics.

After the first exciting week of the course, Mr. Jamal was invited to give a guest lecture on Conservation efforts in Belize, showcasing the fantastic work the Zoo and its partners have done on behalf of our country's invaluable natural resources. Talks on environmental education and the Central Wildlife Corridor impressed students and professors alike. The super cool documentary about Harpy Eagles in Belize, "Hope for Climate Change" was shared, giving a Tropical perspective to the issue of global climate change. The story of the rescue and survival of "Lucky Boy" the black jaguar struck a strong chord with the audience, and was met with thunderous applause. Mr. Jamal was bombarded with questions about internships and research opportunities in Belize through the Zoo by eager students, promising even more collaboration between TBZ and SUNY Cortland. Additional presentations and fundraising opportunities are already on the horizon, as the Zoo gears up for another visit to New York, sharing its latest projects with even bigger audiences!

TBZ greatly values this extraordinary learning experience, and the knowledge gained most definitely benefits the important education objectives and programs of "the best little zoo in the world."

