

Happy's Happy School Visit



This is the time of year when Hummingbird Elementary school, located in Belize City, has “Reader Week”. Students become familiar with new literature, and the event never fails to embrace the concept that reading is a joy. This year, the new literature chosen for Hummingbird students was “Tambo The Tapir Tells His Tale.”

And what a tale! Starting out with the baby tapir’s tragic introduction to the world, the story blossoms into a learning resource about tapir natural history and important environmental issues in Belize. The ending? It is a happy one!

Hummingbird Elementary school officials requested that Happy the Owl accompany the Zoo’s education team, and so it became a double-learning get-together. TBZ’s newest Educator, Celeshia Guy, led the way and the children sat attentively learning about barn owls in Belize. Time to sing! Happy the owl ONLY comes out of his “Barn Owls Rock mobile home” if he hears his song. And he sure heard it from the excited and enthusiastic Hummingbird kids. They did a great job, learning the tune as quickly as a barn owl screeches when having a rat for dinner! The children were all receptive about learning barn owl facts. No. They are not “The Bird of Misery and Death”, unless you are a rat, of course. And they are silent fliers, hunting rodents at night. Barn owls do not “Hoot” like typical owls. They have a high-pitched screech. The “acoustically perfect” facial disk of these wondrous birds enhances their hearing immensely. Check this out: In northern regions where barn owls live, they can hear the heartbeat of a mouse when it is three feet under the snow!

Happy the Owl happily exited his mobile home, and, sitting on the gloved arm of his good friend, Zoo Director Sharon Matola, he met, up close, each student. Happy even did a flight demonstration, which brought excited approval from all.

The fun learning continued. Tambo The Tapir Tells His Tale was then brought on stage. A storybook full of photographs and fun facts about our National Animal was shared with all the

kids. They asked superb questions, too. And all were happy that April 27th is now considered National Tapir Day in Belize.

A High Five education morning, it was! A cool bird and a fun book! Such a nice way to start off the weekend for everyone.