

Hurrah For Hoodwink The Owl In OW Town!

Teacher, and friend of Belizean wildlife, Rebecca Hernandez, brings very special education to the students of the Orange Walk Pre and Primary School. She, along with the school's dynamic principal, Ruth Ku, are big believers in the joy and importance of reading.

To the delight of Zoo Director Sharon Matola, the school has taken as one of their foremost reading resources, the children's book series, HOODWINK THE OWL. The idea for the series began way back when the zoo was born, in the early 1980's.



Visiting schools to talk about the then-just-starting-up Belize Zoo, Sharon repeatedly noted that not one classroom had any reading materials about Belizean wildlife. How sad!!!! Nothing about the national animal, the tapir! What about our jaguar? The list was a long one, and Sharon saw the need for a fun children's book which would be the key to introducing the children of Belize to their superb animals...And that's how it happened that HOODWINK THE OWL became a part of the education and reading process in many schools throughout the country.

What an honour! Sharon was invited to the OW Pre and Primary Schools as a special guest. She was welcomed by Mayor Philip de la Fuentes, who also said touching words about the children, their love for our animals and how helpful HOODWINK has been for them. Three different children read from the HOODWINK books, yes, it made Sharon cry, but the tears were happy ones. She could see how much those words meant to them, and what a positive affect the stories have had. "I remember being so angry about hawksbill sea turtle shell being sold as jewelry on the cayes." And she wrote the second HOODWINK book specifically directed to the serious need for increased sea turtle protection in Belize. (This book was dedicated to the Government of Belize for making sound changes in the Wildlife laws aimed at stronger protection on behalf of all species of sea turtles). So many of the children kept repeating that they wanted to visit the zoo and teacher Rebecca Hernandez agreed that an upcoming visit would surely have to happen. More good news for Sharon's book fans....A story about the well known Jaguar Junior Buddy is just about to go to press and will be in the Orange Walk Presbyterian and Pre-school for the upcoming school year!

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