

### ▯ Science Fairs and Concert Gigs

Recent days have seen important messages shared with many, coming straight from the heart of The Belize Zoo. Environmental Educator, Jamal Andrewin, spent a day in March at the grand science fair event at Sacred Heart College in San Ignacio, Cayo. Besides showing an attractive display of his work involving the rare harpy eagle, Jamal also had a large, colourful poster showing the Central Belize Biological Corridor, and some of the animals who call this important area their home.

Developed by the Belize Forest Department and Panthera, this same poster, featuring our gorgeous puma, “Carlos”, is always on display by our puma exhibit. Jamal also gave a presentation to high school students, detailing some of the zoo’s important conservation work. His continued excitement about an idea he developed and is now taking to our top leaders in government, was also brought to all’s attention. The idea? Every 27th of April is World Tapir Day. Brought forward by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature { IUCN), and the Tapir Specialist Group, the objective of World Tapir Day is to see that this bit of recognition assists in heightening awareness about all four extant species of tapirs. Taking the idea to focus upon our Jewel, Jamal has proposed that on each 27th of April in Belize, we celebrate National Tapir Day. Our National Animal would be highly focused upon, and this kind of attention would work to see that the tapirs in Belize, always will enjoy protection and respect. National Tapir Day would definitely be a boost in ensuring that our mountain cows live on, for future generations.

While Jamal was sharing his conservation initiatives with students in San Ignacio, “Happy” the barn owl was having fun doing the same thing at the Institute for Creative Arts (formerly the Bliss) in Belize City. As part of the extended, “Festival of Arts”, “Happy” joined his pre-school friends from La Democracia, on stage, as they shared with the audience, a song they know and sing so well. The fun tune is called, “Happy The Barn Owl”.

These same children have watched “Happy” grow from a rather untidy-looking chick, into a beautiful young barn owl. The pre-schoolers also know that barn owls eat more mice and rats than any other animal on the planet. This message was strongly sung out to their audience at the Bliss.

“Happy” particularly enjoys the last line in his cheery tune. “Happy’s born in Belize, Protect his Species, PLEASE! ‘Cause he’s a B-A-R-N BARN OWL!!!! Bringing important conservation messages into public light, in a fun and entertaining manner, is great fun for The Belize Zoo staff, whether or not they have feathers!

