Newsletter may 2012

Record number of participants at the Walkathon

During the 7th edition of the walk for the Aruban Donkey Sanctuary, a record number of participants showed up. It was a truly memorable and sunny event with more than 300 athletes. On Saturday afternoon the group assembled at the Ayo Rock Formation for the 6.5 kilometer long fun event. 5 o'clock was the starting time for the impressive bunch of people, two donkeys and quite a lot of police. Safety first, was the motto of the walk, and sufficient `blue' on motorbikes, an ambulance and a police car at the end guaranteed that. For the first time a local sponsor was added: Fantastic Garden had a small gift for all participants and at the end of the walk there was a raffle with gift certificates. As always, there was fresh fruit as well, courtesy of Super Food.

Although most participants walked in a brisk tempo, there was also a group of runners. Gino Hodge came in first in 21 minutes flat. Shariska Winterdal was the first woman to cross the finish line 5 minutes later. Of course there is always someone coming in last, and that was the small, but lovely group of the two donkeys and their caretakers, who finished after one and a half hour during a sensational sunset. They all smiled, as the walkathon had been a joyful event once again.

A mysterious guest

Sometimes mysterious things are happening at the Sanctuary: you come in one morning and find a strange donkey inside. After calling the other volunteers and searching the log, it appears that nobody knows anything about this uninvited guest. So there is only one conclusion: this donkey has jumped the fence to get inside. He is a gorgeous donkey, and a beauty to boot, with nothing wrong with him. Unfortunately we have a `non-breeding policy' going on, so he had to be castrated. A pity, because he could have made lots of great kids... In the meantime he has been baptized Bandit.

Approaching: a new sanctuary

Early this year we started the second phase of building a fence at Bringamosa. The idea is that the entire sanctuary will move to this location. This second phase has been successfully completed and now we need to wait for materials to start the third and final phase. As soon as that has been done we can start moving the donkeys and therefore we have already built shaded areas and water troughs.

At this time there are 26 donkeys at Bringamosa; 11 donkeys will come from Seroe Alejandro. As soon as they have acclimatized, the ones from Santa Lucia will be moved. That is a necessity, as the Sanctuary is overly full with 67 donkeys on a 15.000-square meter area.

Daily maintenance

And yes, if you have donkeys living in several areas, these areas need maintenance.

Thus we put a new coat of paint on the buildings in Sta. Lucia and we have started cutting back the greenery at Bringamosa. There is a lot more to be cut, because the rubber liana is dangerous to donkeys and not advisable for areas with trees and plants, as they will be overgrown before you know it. So we are not done yet and will continue to cut back the greenery. We also are invaded by flies and fruit flies. The best remedy is chickens, so we put a request on Facebook and got one cock and two chicks. The result is predictable: now there are 21 little chicks running around and we hope that the chick-eating boa's have moved to other places.

Maartje as a victim

Now and then there are fights at the Sanctuary. The donkeys need to show who is boss and sometimes there are victims. Before Christmas donkey Maartje was one of those: a broken front leg and a large cut in her neck were the result. Indeed, mercy is not a virtue of donkeys and it seemed that the others had really taken it out on her. Her wound needed a lot of care and because of her weak immune system she got mange. Every day she needed a good shower with a costly shampoo; we shaved her, because it would have become too expensive otherwise. Fortunately, Maartje is now okay – we took good care of her and she responded positively. She is doing great!

New volunteers

Since a few months two clients of Centro Man na Obra (a day care for the mentally handicapped) are working on Wednesday morning as volunteers at the Aruban Donkey Sanctuary. With great joy, Jo-Ann Kock and D'Angelo Baptiste help the other volunteers. Their tasks mainly consist of keeping the area and the water tanks clean. And all that under the inspiring leadership of Desiree Eldering, the Chief of the Donkey Sanctuary. We, the editors went to take a look and we heard already from afar that they had a whale of a time. Laughing joyfully, the two clearly enjoyed their work and being with the donkeys. A great initiative that has given an added bit of happiness to these two clients of Centro Man na Obra.

Easter and eggs

Of course we organized an activity during Easter at the Sanctuary. Children could look for eggs among the donkeys. We had hidden 500 eggs, among them 3 golden eggs. It was a great day with a good amount of great kids.
Donkeys are curious animals, however: they know when something is hidden in their surroundings that does not belong there. So now we hope that the other hidden eggs will surface in the near future...

Love

Last week Diassa was castrated. We won't deny you the photo of Diassa together with his best friend Truffles. She does not leave his side and helps him recuperate and cope with his castration.

And more...

This is a request for coconuts. The donkeys love them and use them as toys. Should you have any, please bring them to the Sanctuary.