

BOTSWANA

trip

A HUGE THANK YOU TO
CELESTIELLE TRAVEL AND
GREAT PLAINS CONSERVATION

FOR MAKING THIS
EXPERIENCE POSSIBLE.

CELESTIELLE

GREAT PLAINS

CONSERVATION AND TOURISM

For the 2nd year in a row Celestielle Travel and the Great Plains Conservation collaborated to offer TRF another once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for four new young people to go on a safari in Botswana! From March of 2023, TRF and the new crew had been preparing for the massive journey from New Zealand to Botswana & South Africa! These students were chosen by our Programme Coordinators for their service, leadership, commitment and potential as young agents of change in each respective High School. Students and their whanau were extremely excited, thankful and keen to make the most of this amazing opportunity.

One of the main initiatives involved in this kaupapa was called "Pack for Purpose" whereby our students were tasked with filling five 23 kg suitcases with donations to take with them for local schools in Botswana. All resources were purchased through fundraising efforts of our students, who did a great job gathering a wide range of educational and sporting equipment. These fundraising events provided plenty of opportunities for our students and their whanau to break the ice, deepen relationships and get in behind the local kaupapa.

Additionally, this year's group of kids also traveled to Kerikeri for a weekend away to learn waiata, haka and other cultural dances that we shared with the many people involved in this trip, to show our gratitude in our way. These smaller events and opportunities made a huge difference in terms of how the students interacted with one another and the overall vibe of the trip.

The trip itself was magical! From the many beautiful and humble people we met, to the insane animal interactions. It was such an eye opening and at times, breathtaking experience! One of the students highlights was the visit to a local primary school in Botswana, which really touched their hearts and brought a lot of things into perspective. Seeing what little those kids had, yet how joyful and thankful they were for the opportunity to even be at a school learning, truly made a huge impact and made the students realise just how privileged they are for the blessed life they have in New Zealand.

Another highlight of the trip was obviously the animals. It is another world over there and our students felt as though they were living out a dream. Seeing everything from herds of elephants to prides of lions, leopards, leopard tortoises to tiny dung beetles, our students were so lucky to interact with such a variety of animals in their natural environment.

We take our hats off to Great Plains Conservation, for the amazing mahi they have been doing to protect the wildlife and their environment and we support them wholeheartedly!





The last highlight of this trip was the people! Everyone on the ground from Great Plains Conservation, all the staff at the camps, the crew from Semowi, our guides Big Matt and Stitch and the amazing Bianca and her A-Team from Celestielle Travel who worked tirelessly behind the scenes to put this all together. The care, respect and hospitality we felt during the entire trip was truly humbling.

While on safari we often felt uneasy being served and waited upon by elders and felt as though we should be the ones doing the dishes and carrying bags. The laughs, stories and culture shared during this trip was priceless and we won't forget any of it! Overall, the trip was truly once in a lifetime for our kids and our final thanks is to Dereck and Beverly Joubert from Great Plains Conservation and John and Doug from Celestielle Travel as well as all their amazing team of staff, for all the work they did in putting this experience together! You're all amazing people and we can't thank you enough.

