Allen Joss Ford Gives Back for Five Decades and Counting

- Allen Joss Ford undertakes annual trips to the Kruger Park for handicapped children
- Children between the ages of 14 and 18 are nominated by local school
- Ranger Raptors and Tourneos transport 30 children and special equipment this year

The Kruger National Park is an inspiring part of the country that strongly defines the African landscape, its diversity, and its people. The two-million hectares of bushveld spanning the Limpopo and Mpumalanga provinces is home to some of the largest game reserves in Africa, with sightings of the big five as well as a variety of bird life always on offer.

It's sometimes easy to take such an excursion for granted, but these characteristics take on a more profound meaning when they're used as a backdrop for team building and mentorship for underprivileged and handicapped children.

For the last 52 years Allen Joss Ford, with the help of the dealership's team who give up their free time, have been putting together trips to the Kruger for children who have physical, mental, or other conditions that require 24-hour care and supervision.

Thanks to these efforts, the cry of a fish eagle or the yawn of hippo is joined by crackles of laughter and excitement from kids who previously struggled to find much hope or opportunity in their normal lives.

"I'm an entrepreneur who likes to give back," says Dale Joss, CEO of the Joss Group of Companies. "These trips started with my grandfather and then my father, and as I got older it became one of those projects that I felt very strongly about. The Kruger National Park is so unique because it teaches you about the circle of life, and sometimes the harshness of life.

"There are lots of charities out there, but I believe this initiative gives back something real, and not necessarily something that can be bought or donated. The Kruger is a special place with lessons that aren't in textbooks, and it's so rewarding to see it leave a life-changing impression beyond what the children have yet seen or imagined," says Joss.

Every year children from Meerhof School, near Hartbeespoort, are nominated to attend this unique adventure. Approximately 30 children, between the ages of 14 and 18, are then whisked off on a spectacular week-long trip to the Kruger National Park in a convoy of Fords, such as the Tourneo and Ranger Raptors used this year. These practical vehicles provide safe and comfortable transport for the kids and adults, and still have enough loading capacity for essential equipment, including wheelchairs.

For many of the children this is the first time that they've been away as a group, and this allows for new social skills and interactions to be developed. These skills will become increasingly important once these children leave school and move into stages of independence as young adults. During the week-long excursion the children have time to learn about different animals and conservation in their natural environment. The children, according to Joss, also build a newfound respect for the world that surrounds them and share these unique stories when they return home.

"This initiative echoes the #FordForSouthAfrica campaign," says Doreen Mashinini, General Manager for Marketing at Ford South Africa. "It includes the essence of what makes Ford, and the Ford family in South Africa, deeply involved and committed to this wonderful and vibrant country and community," continues Mashinini.

"It is the embodiment of #FordForSouthAfrica, and Dale and his team are making a tangible difference to these children's lives, giving them guidance and skills that many of us take for granted. By taking care and showing empathy towards the youth, the future of South Africa is in good hands," Mashinini concludes.

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