

## Millbrook School's Trevor Zoo to Host the Keep Safe Project's Benefit Gala for Endangered Species

*Leading environmentalists will speak at the event to raise public awareness about endangered cheetahs and lemurs.*

The KeepSafe Project will hold its second annual fundraiser at Millbrook School's Trevor Zoo on Saturday, October 18, 2014. The event will raise public awareness for the plight of cheetahs, lemurs, and other endangered species. This year's event is hosted by Karen Michel, of National Public Radio's "All Things Considered" program. A silent auction of "keep safe" boxes created by local artists will be held as part of the evening. In addition, a live auction is also planned with items to include a dinner prepared at the winner's home by Chef Thomas Kacherski, of Crew Restaurant in Poughkeepsie, and a five-night stay in the Bahamas. All of the proceeds will be donated to wildlife conservation organizations. During the evening, two foremost experts on animal conservation, Lee Nesler, CEO of Lemur Conservation Foundation, and Dr. Laurie Marker, CEO of Cheetah Conservation Fund, will update the public on the latest efforts to save these animals.

Lee Nesler, Executive Director & CEO of Lemur Conservation Foundation (LCF) in Myakka City, Florida, has participated in field studies around the world, including Siberia, Costa Rica, India, Mexico, and Africa. She is an acknowledged expert in animal behavior. Ms. Nesler recently returned from several weeks in Madagascar where she worked directly with LCF's conservation partners. Madagascar is one of the most significant biodiversity hotspots in the world, with 80 percent of its flora and fauna found nowhere else. Since 2009, the country's political crisis has precipitated an unprecedented decline among populations of lemurs and other species. Madagascar is lemurs' only endemic home. Deforestation of critical habitat from illegal logging, slash and burn agricultural practices, as well as the need for fuel along with mining, and hunting for the exotic pet trade and bush meat have destroyed lemur habitat and created a conservation emergency.



"Effective conservation means finding the way forward for villagers, habitats, and animals like lemurs to thrive side by side. Lemurs, the iconic animals of Madagascar, are ambassadors for a powerful conservation message. Their fragile hold on the future is a report on our collective stewardship of our planet. Together we can help them, and Madagascar, move forward confidently, with hope and inspiration." *Lee Nesler, LCF CEO and Executive Director*

Dr. Laurie Marker, founder and Executive Director of Cheetah Conservation Fund (CCF) and the world's foremost cheetah expert. Named a "Hero of the Planet" by Time Magazine, Dr. Marker will be discussing her on-site work at CCF, the leading cheetah conservation organization. The CCF is based in Namibia, which is home to the largest cheetah population in the world, estimated at fewer than 10,000 remaining. Dr. Marker has been featured in Smithsonian, National Geographic, Discover and The New York Times, as well as on numerous television shows, including "The Tonight Show," "Good Morning America" and "Today."

"Cheetahs are the most endangered of all big cats in Africa," says Dr. Marker. "If we don't make major changes in our conservation policies and take coordinated action today, in 20 years there will not be enough cheetahs existing in the wild to save them from extinction. We must act now. If we hesitate, it will be too late." Dr. Marker will be signing her new book, *A Future for Cheetahs*, a comprehensive look at cheetahs that explains the species' plight and impact of CCF conservation programs.

Karen Michel, the award-winning radio personality for National Public Radio (NPR), will host the KeepSafe Project event. Ms. Michel is frequently heard on the daily programs "Morning Edition" and "All Things Considered." She is the recipient of numerous awards, twice winning the prestigious Peabody award for her achievements in broadcast journalism, and a resident of Pleasant Valley, NY.

The KeepSafe Project is a joint effort with the Trevor Zoo at Millbrook School, a leading conservation organization, now in its 78th year of promoting a greater understanding of environmental issues. The zoo, which houses seven endangered species, offers tours throughout the year to the general public. In June, the zoo completed a new exhibit on climate change, titled "The Heat's On: Climate Changes Impacts and Actions." The centerpiece of the exhibit, which will be open during the October 18 event, is the iGlobe, a moving-image sphere that shows real-time images of Earth from space, and the impact of human activity on the global climate.

Visual artists and local businesses are collaborating for this year's KeepSafe Gala, working together to raise public awareness for the plight of cheetahs and other endangered species through the sale of original art. This collaboration showcases more than 50 "keep safe" boxes, fashioned out of recycled cigar boxes, using themes of wildlife conservation. The boxes are on display to the public until October 15, at selected retailers and galleries in Poughkeepsie, Rhinebeck, and Millbrook. The boxes will be auctioned off during the gala at Millbrook School, Millbrook, N.Y. on October 18, 2014. The gallery of boxes can be viewed in the online photo-gallery at [www.keepsafeproject.com](http://www.keepsafeproject.com).



The KeepSafe event will be held from 4:00 PM to 6:30 PM at Millbrook School, offering a reception, refreshments, and a presentation and discussion session with the key speakers. Doors open at 3 PM. Tickets are \$20.00 at the door, with free admission for attendees under 18 years old. Attendees are encouraged to arrive early to enjoy the Trevor Zoo's collection of more than 180 animals. Check <http://www.keepsafeproject.com> for more information about the artwork, gala activities, and discounted tickets.

Local artist Paola Bari is coordinating the effort. "Last year's event was energizing and fun, and this year's event will be even better," says Bari, speaking from her studio in Poughkeepsie. "This is a fantastic way to raise awareness for the predicament of cheetahs in Africa, as well as a number of local species that might become extinct. Efforts like the KeepSafe Project help to keep these programs funded and educate the public on what we can do to preserve these animals for future generations to appreciate." Last year's popular event attracted over 200 patrons, purchasing boxes through silent auction and raising money to support the CCF, the International Crane Foundation, and the Red Wolf Recovery Project.

**About the KeepSafe Project: [www.keepsafeproject.com](http://www.keepsafeproject.com)**

Local wildlife conservation activists have joined with the Trevor Zoo in Millbrook, New York, to form the KeepSafe Project, with the support of businesses in the Hudson Valley. This initiative is dedicated to raising public awareness of the need to conserve endangered species and their natural habitat as part of maintaining the overall health of our planet. Our slogan "The KeepSafe Project: Extinction is not an option" expresses the urgency of this effort. Follow us on Facebook: [www.facebook.com/keepsafeproject](http://www.facebook.com/keepsafeproject)

**About The Trevor Zoo: [www.trevorzoo.org](http://www.trevorzoo.org)**

The Trevor Zoo, located at Millbrook School near Millbrook, New York, is an Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) accredited zoo, and is the only zoo located at a high school in the United States. The zoo is dedicated to

environmental education and to the conservation of the world's wildlife. Because youth education and understanding are crucial to helping the endangered species win their race for survival, the Trevor Zoo has embraced the KeepSafe project, incorporating several aspects of the project into the students' curriculum.

**About the Lemur Conservancy Foundation (LCF): [www.lemurreserve.org](http://www.lemurreserve.org)**

Lemur Conservation Foundation (LCF) was established in 1996 by Penelope Bodry-Sanders. LCF is a leader in the conservation and preservation of the primates of Madagascar through programs dedicated to observation oriented research, education, and lemur propagation, with a commitment to infuse art into all of our mission programs. LCF is an American Association of Zoological Parks and Aquariums accredited private, 100-acre facility based in Myakka City, Florida. Our current lemur population of 47 animals thrives in naturalistic free ranging habitats ranging in size from 9 to 13 acres, and smaller enclosures for animals in need of a more specialized environment. LCF is a respected voice for science, conservation, education, art, and lemurs, the iconic image of the conservation challenges and environmental stewardship facing Madagascar and the world.

**About the Cheetah Conservancy Fund (CCF): [www.cheetah.org/](http://www.cheetah.org/)**

Founded in Namibia in 1990, the Cheetah Conservation Fund (CCF) is the global leader in research and conservation of cheetahs. CCF is dedicated to saving the cheetah in the wild. The CCF programs include its innovative Livestock Guarding Dog Program, which reduces human-animal conflict by providing local farmers with an alternative way to protect their livestock and livelihood rather than shooting cheetahs.

**About Paola Bari: [www.paolabari.com](http://www.paolabari.com)**

Italian-born Paola Bari is a local artist who draws inspiration from felines, especially the big cats. With her ties to the artist community in the Hudson Valley, Bari co-founded the KeepSafe Project in 2013 as a way for local artists and conservationists to join forces to help save endangered species and their habitats around the world.