



*Yondela Nqadala, this year's intern with Renu-Karoo/Wolwekraal Nature Reserve, writes exclusively for the Prince Albert Friend as part of her learning experience.*

## Learners visit Wolwekraal Nature Reserve

*Yondela Nqadala (Wolwekraal Conservation and Research Organisation)*

**W**olwekraal Nature Reserve, just outside Prince Albert, offers spectacular Karoo scenery and fascinating endemic succulent plants. Unfortunately for the reserve, there is a huge mountain of rubbish just over the fence, the municipal sewage works are alongside, and trespassers often leave ugly waste inside the reserve. All of these factors make it difficult to manage and maintain the reserve in pristine condition. Yet, from every bad situation something can still be learned.

In late September, I was a little anxious on hearing that two groups of grade four learners from Prince Albert Primary School were coming to visit the reserve to learn about nature. I imagined young children, full of energy, wanting to run around. But I was happily surprised to meet a group of youngsters who are really concerned about the future. They answered all my questions with enthusiasm, and we all enjoyed the outdoors. At the end of their walks we held a quiz and Maraai Isaacs (of Renu-karoo) gave away 20 plants to those who remembered what they had learned in the field. Renu-karoo also sponsored biscuits and fruit juice for the thirsty adventurers.

On the 28th another group of learners came to visit. This time it was 15 young men from the new Prince Albert Skills School, along with their teacher Rodine Barends. And they were followed by another group of 'explorers' this time from the Prince Albert Home School Learning Centre.

Education outside the classroom brings life to the curriculum.



*A group of grade four learners from Prince Albert Primary School enjoy an outdoor learning experience. Photo: Prof Sue Milton-Dean.*

With the Prince Albert Primary grade fours, I could introduce items from their curriculum into their experience: pointing out the living and non-living things in their environment, ways we can reduce waste at home and at school, as well as recycling. This seemed to be a good motivator as they realized that the things they learn in class are things that they can see and apply in their everyday lives.

On Wolwekraal Nature Reserve the path is designed to be safe for children and adults, affording a great learning experience for everyone. Before each walk there is a short briefing session, and all students were advised to bring along a bottle of water, a sunhat, and comfortable shoes and to wear protective clothes.

Outdoor education is the oldest form of learning. It means learning from real-world experiences, rather than from inside a little box called a classroom. ■

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