

# Where the Wild Things Are

## Children's Book Creators Team Up for Conservation Work with Wild Tomorrow



SHARON VERBETEN



CBCC authors on their trip to South Africa get up close and personal with rhinos. Photos courtesy of Hayley and John Rocco.

**P**lenty of children's book authors write about wild things. This past fall, a group of children's book authors and illustrators put their words into work—taking a collective trek to South Africa, with a purpose.

The newly formed Children's Book Creators for Conservation (CBCC) spent two weeks on a volunteer trip in South Africa with Wild Tomorrow, a nonprofit focused on reconnecting and restoring habitat for threatened wildlife in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.

The CBCC was created by Caldecott Honor-winning author/illustrator John Rocco and his wife, children's book author Hayley Rocco. It aims to bring passionate and conservation-minded children's book creators together to collaborate in hands-on conservation work while inspiring conservation-minded books for young readers for the greater good of the planet. In addition to the Roccas, the group included Candace Fleming, Meg Fleming, Brian Floca, Jessica Lanan, G. Neri, Sherri Duskey Rinker, Eric Rohmann, and Corban Wilkin.

The authors on the trip were scheduled to participate in ringing birds for research, searching alongside rangers for poachers' snares, volunteering at the local orphanage and creche (preschool), removing alien and invasive plant species from

reclaimed land, and rhino conservation work such as dehorning/trimming and assisting at the local rhino orphanage.

The CBCC hopes to raise \$20,000 towards the conservation efforts being made with Wild Tomorrow.

"We are extremely excited that CBCC's esteemed group of children's book creators will spend time working hands-on helping conservation efforts at Wild Tomorrow's Greater Ukuwela Nature Reserve and at our partner reserves in South Africa. Often, we hear it said that animals can't speak and need our voice. Wildlife and their wild spaces need our creative talents too, to move hearts and minds to take action to save our planet," said Wild Tomorrow's founder and executive director, John Steward. &

*For more information, visit [www.wildtomorrow.org/cbccdonate](http://www.wildtomorrow.org/cbccdonate).*



**Sharon Verbeten** is Youth Services Manager at the Manitowoc (WI) Public Library; this is her twenty-first year as editor of Children and Libraries.