

St. John's International School Gala Sets Auction in Benefit of Inkaterra's Conservation Projects

Inkaterra Asociación is honored to receive its largest private donation after an evening of fun and fellowship, whilst fundraising.

The Valentine's Gala organized on February 15th by the Parent Teacher Program at St. John's International School (Waterloo, Belgium), included live and silent auctions which favored Inkaterra Asociación (ITA) with a fund of €5700, destined to Machu Picchu's Environmental Education Program, and to the Spectacled Bear Rescue Center.



Held at the impressive Château du Lac, the auctions at the Valentine's Gala served the purpose of raising funds for the school and – for the first time– projects with a social and environmental impact. These ventures were proposed by students in the CAS program (Creativity, Action and Service is part of the Core Curriculum of the IB Diploma), who had an opportunity to take their learning outside the classroom, as also to prove their leadership. They recognized the best ways to use their own strengths and interests to serve those in need.

Such was the case of students Christina Nordgaard and Giulia Tori. In the summer of 2013, they decided to visit ITA's environmental projects in Machu Picchu. They spent two weeks working as volunteers with local children in the village of Machu Picchu, where they planned and managed activities and raised environmental awareness in classes for over 50 local children, ages between 5 and 13 (lessons were also tailored to suit children with different abilities).

During their stay, Christina and Giulia also learned the importance of conservation through the Spectacled Bear Rescue Center in the grounds of Inkaterra Machu Picchu Pueblo Hotel. The only bear species native to South America, it has a vulnerable conservation status according to the IUCN. To encourage scientific research and preservation of spectacled bears, ITA designed in 2001 a rescue program, since then five specimens have been hosted with special emphasis on their diet, skin care and non-stress living conditions. Breeding and reinsertion into wildlife are also part of this program. In 2008 a female bear successfully returned to freedom, after six years of care at ITA.



Captivated by the pristine Sanctuary of Machu Picchu and conscious of its needs, Christina and Giulia proved their commitment to

ITA after promising to look for a way of aiding its projects. The silent auction at Valentine's Gala, was a great, innovative solution.

Exposing their plan to potential sponsors throughout the world, such as GCH Earth (India) and El Castell de Ciutat (Spain), got an enthusiastic response. George Dominic from GCH Earth replied: "It is an inspiration for children all over the world, breaking down boundaries involving Jaume Tàpies [El Castell de Ciutat] and me in India and all those other sponsors and personal commitments for a project in Peru".

Auctioned goods were a 7-night holiday for two at CGH Earth Swaswara hotel in Goa, India; a 2-night stay for four at El Castell de Ciutat, located in the heart of the Spanish-Andorran Pyrenees; two Relais & Chateaux Gift Boxes: the Romantic Getaway and the Tasting Celebration; and in a rapture of creativity and good spirit... three hours of babysitting by the Nordgaard Sisters!

The donation will help upgrading infrastructure at the Spectacled Bear Rescue Center, and running workshops on Environment and Sustainability for around 200 local schoolchildren. This great achievement is an inspiration for Inkaterra and its conservation projects, as participation in future auctions for fundraising is intended.

