

News Release

Wildlife Conservationist and Big Cat Expert Dr. Alan Rabinowitz Speaks for Animals and People Without a Voice Encouraging Students to Find Theirs

Dobbs Ferry, N.Y. May 27, 2015—Springhurst Elementary School 3rd, 4th and 5th grade students got a rare glimpse into the life's work of renown American zoologist and field biologist Dr. Alan Rabinowitz, who has made it his job and passion for the last 30-plus years to help save the world's most endangered cats including tigers, lions, jaguars and snow leopards, and preserve their habitats. Dr. Rabinowitz sought solace in the company of animals from an early age because of a severe stutter. He made a promise to himself and the animals that if he ever found his voice, he would use it to speak on their behalf.

Fifth graders Finn and Mac Alexander introduced Dr. Rabinowitz, a long-time family friend, to the audience. The students sat mesmerized throughout his presentation as he shared his childhood story and a wonderful video that illustrates his struggles in school <https://vimeo.com/52700014> , and explains how he became interested in this field. Dr. Rabinowitz has been called "The Indiana Jones of Wildlife Conservation" by *TIME Magazine* and is currently the CEO of Panthera <http://www.panthera.org>, a nonprofit organization devoted to saving the world's 37 wild cat species. Dr. Rabinowitz showed the students rarely seen photographs/slides of the cats he has studied over the years.

"In 5th grade, students do a research project on famous scientists so it is thrilling for them to be able to meet a 'real' scientist and hear about what his work entails," said Springhurst Principal Julia Drake. "Prior to his visit, our 3rd graders completed a persuasive unit on the pros and cons of zoos. The students researched the importance of wildlife conservation, protecting endangered animals, preserving natural environments, and other topics. The 4th grade also reviews the study of animals and their habitats, extending what they covered in 2nd grade. They learn about food chains and how dwindling animal populations impact the ecosystem. We are so fortunate to have this unique and wonderful opportunity to hear Dr. Rabinowitz talk about his experiences in the wild as well as his personal journey, which ties in with our important Building Bridges: Celebrating Differences program."

Dr. Rabinowitz spoke passionately about his work in Belize, which resulted in the world's first jaguar sanctuary. One of Dr. Rabinowitz's greatest achievements is the conceptualization and implementation of the Jaguar Corridor - a series of biological and genetic corridors for jaguars across their entire range from Mexico to Argentina. In addition to the more than 100 scientific and popular articles and eight books that he has written, last year he even authored a children's book entitled *A Boy and a Jaguar*.

According to the Panthera website, Dr. Rabinowitz has traveled the globe and dedicated his life to surveying the world's last wild places, with the goal of preserving wild habitats and securing homes, on a large scale, for some of the world's most endangered mammals. His focus on cats is based on

conserving top predators, which affect entire ecosystems. By saving cats, the impacts are far reaching and conserve vast landscapes upon which many species depend, including humans. To that end, he has served as the Executive Director of the Science and Exploration Division for the Wildlife Conservation Society for almost 30 years.

Dr. Rabinowitz graduated from the University of Tennessee in 1981 with an M.S. in Zoology and a Ph.D. in Wildlife Ecology. With those credentials it's hard to believe that this young boy from Brooklyn couldn't communicate with his peers or his teachers or even speak a full sentence until he was in college. With his parents support and through his own perseverance, Dr. Rabinowitz learned how to overcome his impediment. "Every living thing needs a voice," Dr. Rabinowitz told the children.

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