



POSTCARD



From: **Mackenzie, Texas,
USA**

Volunteered in:
**Melkhoutfontein,
Stilbaai, 6674,
South Africa**

When: **2022**

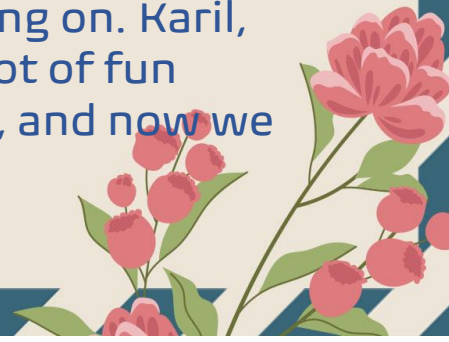


So what have you been doing in South Africa? This is a loaded question that I have been asked more and more recently, so here is a [blog](#) to depict what my last 2 months at Dreamcatcher have consisted of. So what is Dreamcatcher? A better question is what isn't Dreamcatcher. Their mission is "...to actively pursue mutually beneficial, responsible tourism, knowledge -and skills transfer and enterprise projects which benefit the local people in communities in Southern Africa." In super simple terms they're creating sustainable tourism and self enterprises that directly benefit the people on the ground and not the corporate guy in some office halfway across the world.

I started my journey in Johannesburg where I was with a wonderful local guide named Tefo. Over the course of 3 days we visited apartheid museums, Mandelas house, a cave (hence the hard hat), an Afrikaans monument (the last photo), and surrounding townships (where I got to eat one of my favorite meals I've had while I've been here).

After my quick stop in Joburg, where I got a feel for the country I was in and got to take a deeper dive into its history, I headed down to Melkhoutfontein. Situated about 4 miles away from the ocean and along South Africa's Garden Route this is the place I have called home the last 2 months. I live with my new parents (sorry mom and dad) Lorraine and Karil. We play a lot of dominos, eat a lot of really good food, sit out front and watch the world go by, and laugh a lot. When I am not at home you can most likely find me at Dreamcatcher's home office. This is where the magic happens. Anthea, Dreamcatcher's founder, spends her days planning prepping communicating and the whole 9 yards for various projects we're doing and to keep the organization's wheels moving.

She'll hop in to hang out with us, lead a yoga session, walk in the garden, or make you a mean cup of tea. The rest of the team does various projects that need working on. Karil, Crishene and I spent the first couple weeks in the garden. The 3 of us had a lot of fun tending to the compost, prepping soil, planting seeds, watering the children, and now we wait for little ones to grow big and strong.



We all also pitch in with crafting. Karil and Crishene work mainly with making wood crafts such as coat hangers, kitchen utensils, keychains, and more. A little bonus is that the wood we use is from an invader species called the Acacia Cyclops, so by using these trees we're actually helping the environment around us and getting to make money from its wood. Circular economy, yay! We've also gotten the chance to make mosaics on stepping stones and we're currently working on crochet and knit dolls.

One of Dreamcatcher's big new projects is one called Back to Front Yard Farming or B2FYF for short. It will consist of the creation of narrow vertical planters to go in front of the houses in the area and the education on how to grow your own food in them. With this project came the wonderful organization Rainbow Trust (check them out <http://rainbowtrust.net.za>) that is very similar to Dreamcatcher in its grassroots efforts. Since both of our teams will be starting B2FYF in their respective towns, we got to spend a week with the Rainbow Trust team in Melkhoutfontein to learn all the ins and outs of this project.

I also got the chance to spend about 2 weeks on a nature reserve called Wild Rescue (<https://wildrescue.co.za>). While I was here I helped with a wide variety of projects around the farm. We filled a truck bed with rocks to build a nursery floor, collected seeds from indigenous plants, planted baby plants to grow in the nursery, went Acacia Cyclops hunting, stopped some pesky little fires that still hadn't died from a big fire they had a few weeks ago, collected materials from the cottage that had burned, cut grass to feed the tortoises every morning, used floaties and a saw to cut down invasive species in their dam, searched for scorpions with a uv light at night, went to braais, and most importantly baked many sweets.



Charlize was tuned to everything animals and Karla to everything plants, so between them I learned a lot about everything around me. There was never a dull moment there and if you're ever in South Africa and looking to stay where you can be surrounded by nature I recommend Wild Rescue's accommodation.

One thing I've loved about working at Dreamcatcher is that they want you to see as much as you can during your stay. Because of this I've gotten to take trips to George, Riversdale, Hermanus, Cape Town and more. One of the first trips I took was one to Anthea's friend Willie's farm. Here he grows indigenous flowers to ship out all over the world to be sold in markets. We got to take a scenic truck ride and had a braai all together. Just recently I got to take a quick stop in Hermanus where the organization Rainbow Trust is based. My friends there took me on a day tour to see it all and we had a lot of photoshoots in the process.

From my [blog](#) you can see all the photos. So I hope these pictures and captions are sufficient enough to get a glimpse into what my life has looked like the past 2 months in the beautiful country of South Africa.

