



INSIDE...



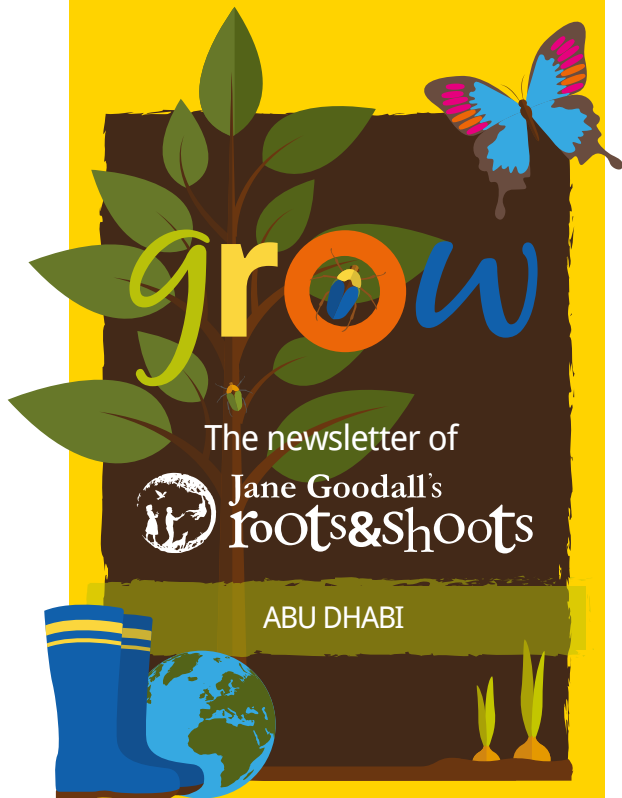
NYUAD's amazing initiatives – Page 2



Team Zayed shares their Antarctica Journey – Page 3



Dr Jane at the Animal Hero Awards – Page 6



The newsletter of



Jane Goodall's  
Roots & Shoots

ABU DHABI

## The passionate Sheikh Dr. Majid Al Qassimi enlightens students about the concept of sustainability



Dear Members,

As we approach the end of another busy but productive year, it's always wise to take a few moments of reflection out of our demanding schedules.

We lead such hectic lives these days that we often miss the things that are right in front of us. Technology, for all its advances, hasn't helped this process. More often than not, it has indeed added to our already heavy workload. Commitment to digital gadgets and what is now described as 'screen time' has become practically addictive; creating distance, especially with our younger generation, from the natural world.

That's why I get such great pleasure when I read all about your on-going dedication and commitment to our planet. I have the privilege of visiting our many member schools who have created amazing projects in and around the natural environment. See inside for more details on their efforts and hard work.

As for compassion, which is also a commodity in short supply in our society today, Christmas is the perfect opportunity for us to explore its real meaning. Let's take some time out during the holiday season to put it to work in our everyday lives.

Wishing you a very Merry one and all the best for the New Year.

Tara Golshan  
Executive Director, Education



Photo: Environment Agency – Abu Dhabi

*One student said: "This experience really inspired me, opened my mind and gave me a different perspective on the concept of sustainability."*

This year's Ambassador Programme was a complete success; thanks to our guest speaker sheikh Dr. Majid Al Qassimi who shared the significance of sustainability to our dedicated students.

Sheikh Dr. Majid is an influential character. He is one of the first four vets in the UAE. During his childhood Dr. Majid developed a passion and determination to study veterinary medicine and now he is not only the Chief vet officer in the UAE, but also the director of the animal development and health department of the food diversity sector in the Ministry of Climate Change and Environment.

Dr. Al Qassimi was delighted to be chosen as a speaker this year. He presented the topic "Sustainability on the Edge" addressing the daily habits that affect the ecosystem, providing solutions that broaden the students edge of knowledge and therefore shifting the mindset of students towards developing sustainable habits.

In his respected opinion, Jane Goodall's Roots & Shoots programme in the UAE is so important to be able to reach as many young people as possible. "I believe that education is the first step to ensuring sustainability. The younger we can have this conversation the more we can grow and develop sustainability here and across the World".

Dr. Majid is determined to educate the future generation on the importance of sustainability in our lives. In fact, his aim is to shift the habits of the young generation's concept about sustainability. Our favourite quote of his is "You're always making choices, and those choices have impacts!". At the end of the talk, Dr. Majid took part in a Q&A and managed to fulfil the curiosity of young minds.

Students left the ambassador programme influenced by Dr. Majids' lecture.

[bit.ly/RSaeSheikhDrMajid](http://bit.ly/RSaeSheikhDrMajid)

# Proud to partner with NYUAD and their amazing Community Outreach programmes

As a proud Roots & Shoots program partner, [New York University – Abu Dhabi \(NYUAD\) Community Outreach](#) is excited to share two exciting environmental outreach initiatives that are part of NYUAD's Service Kashtah program.

"Kashtah" is a word, which means "short trip" in Emirati dialect. Associate Director of Community Outreach

Suparna Mathur shared, *"We hope that Service Kashtah events can instill greater social responsibility and compassionate leadership by connecting NYUAD with the wider UAE community through the spirit of service, what we call #NYUADheart."*

For 2018, we are honouring the UAE's Year of Zayed with an environmental focus. [bit.ly/RSaeNYUAD](http://bit.ly/RSaeNYUAD)

## Give A Ghaf Tree Planting

Last month, the Give a Ghaf Service Kashtah brought together 60 student volunteers from around the UAE for a day of learning about sustainability in the desert environment. Through this educational day trip, students worked together to plant 250 of the UAE's national Ghaf Tree seeds at Dubai Al Barari Nursery to support the founding father's vision of transforming the desert into a green haven. The Goumbook's [Give a Ghaf](#) conservation program is important to the desert environment because Ghaf Trees serve as the basis of whole miniature ecosystems relying on their shade, seed pods, and leaves, and only require 5 litres of water per day where as palm trees guzzle up to 300.



Ghaf Tree planting

To date, NYUAD and its community partners have planted 2,500 Ghaf Trees!

A special thank you from NYUAD to our community volunteers from partner institutions: Home Education Network of Abu Dhabi, Sheikh Zayed Private Academy for Girls, Abu Dhabi Homeschoolers Association, and Zayed University. You can find an album of [photos from the event here](#).

*environment. The more we use plastic, no matter how it is disposed, the more nurdles will be made and spilled. My current obsession with nurdle hunting is in the hope that this message will reach more and more people, and that we will have some data to take to decision-makers. Ultimately, together we can help to bring about better practices with the industrial handling of these pesky plastic pellets."*

**Arabella Willing**  
Resident Marine Biologist  
at Park Hyatt Abu Dhabi

## Do you know what a nurdle is?



Photos: NYUAD

### The Great Nurdle Hunt

So what in the world is a Nurdle? Nurdles are small plastic pellets used in the manufacturing of plastic products. Due to spills and mishandling, they often end up in the ocean, causing harm to marine life. The Great Nurdle Hunt is a fun & educational event held in collaboration with Arabella Willing, Park Hyatt Saadiyat Head of Conservation, where volunteers compete in teams to collect nurdles from the Saadiyat beach in this unique variation of a beach clean up, while learning about the impact of plastic pollution on our environment.

Last April, volunteers from NYUAD collected over 5,000 nurdles in just one clean up!

We held another event on November 24th, if you want to join us save the date for the [next NYUAD Nurdle Hunt Service Kashtah on February 16th 2019](#).

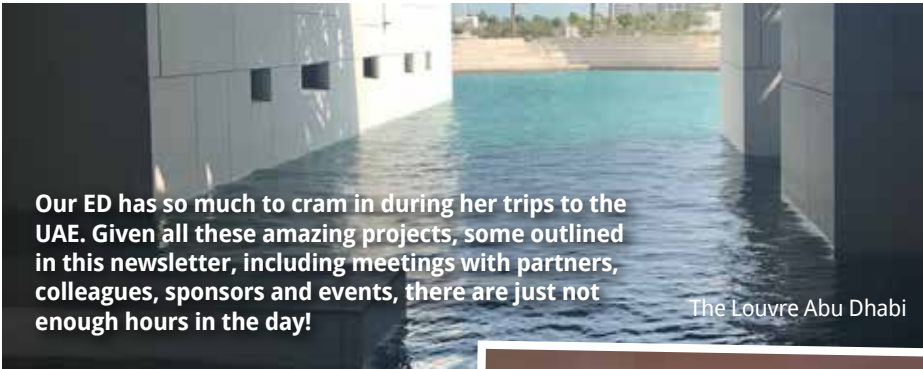
NYUAD environmental student leader Killian Dumont shared, "Working with Roots & Shoots has been such

an amazing opportunity to connect with young students in the UAE and to expand and explore my interest in environmental outreach and education. Every time we work with Roots & Shoots schools I am inspired by the excitement and energy that the students bring to the NYUAD campus and this energy pushes me to work even harder to develop and contribute to NYUAD's environmental programming."

[Read more about NYUAD students' commitment to the environment here](#) and join NYUAD Community Outreach on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) to stay up-to-date with the latest opportunities to give back to your local environment. *"Finding nurdles on the beach is an important reminder that we should all try to find alternatives to plastic when possible, and that we cannot rely on recycling. Almost everything that is made of plastic began its life as nurdles, and the fact that there is a continuous demand for new plastic means that nurdles are always entering the*



# Diary of our busy Executive Director!



Our ED has so much to cram in during her trips to the UAE. Given all these amazing projects, some outlined in this newsletter, including meetings with partners, colleagues, sponsors and events, there are just not enough hours in the day!

The Louvre Abu Dhabi



Tara with a student from Hunain School

Photos (top row): Hunain School

But, the visits to these amazing schools is her inspiration and motivation. The last trip was no different. Tara had the privilege of visiting the Bangladesh School as well as the Abu Dhabi Louvre with Hunain School. Here is a snapshot of them. [bit.ly/RSaeTarasDiary](http://bit.ly/RSaeTarasDiary).

*“The young ladies from Hunain School moved me with their passion and interest in the environmental challenges we are facing, and impressed me with their plans and projects, both in the present, and the future. With these students at the helm I feel reassured that our planet is in good hands for future generations to come.”*  
Tara Golshan.



The kindergarten students at Bangladesh School and Tara



Bangladesh R&S members and Tara

Photos (bottom row): Bangladesh School

*“It was such a joy and a pleasure to see first hand the amazing projects that the Bangladesh School have undertaken in very challenging climatic circumstances. The staff and students are so resourceful, dedicated and resilient. I am so proud of all of them. And thank them too for such a heartwarming and uplifting welcome!.”* Tara Golshan.

## Team Zayed shares their Antarctica Journey

After the Antarctica expedition earlier this year, Winston Cowie and Rashed Al Zaabi from Team Zayed, Environment Agency, decided to visit schools to share their magnificent experience in Antarctica with groups of students from grade (4-6). The theme was “Say no to single use of plastics”.

The aim was to inspire, educate, and engage students on the UAE’s Terrestrial and Marine Biodiversity, Antarctica, and society’s two largest environmental challenges: Climate Change & Single Use Plastic. Winston, as a marine specialist initiated the session by showing some of the rare marine biodiversity. Rashed followed by showing off some terrestrial biodiversity. Then, the level of excitement elevated as soon as Zayed’s team talked about their Adventure and challenges throughout the trip to Antarctica, inspiring the students to follow in their footsteps! Our ED, Tara, also got to witness their presentation first hand at Al Bateen School during her trip to Abu Dhabi.

[bit.ly/RSaeTeamZayed](http://bit.ly/RSaeTeamZayed)



1. Team Zayed at a school visit
2. Tara meeting students from Al Bateen School
3. Students mesmerised by Team Zayed’s talk
4. Tara, Team Zayed and Al Bateen School

Photos: Team Zayed



# Dunes International School, Abu Dhabi

Dunes International School is committed to impart the quality education through an environment that exudes trust and excellence. They encourage children to take up new challenges and be the best possible version of themselves in all aspects of life, to make a difference. In every student, they develop an active and creative mind by working alongside environmental and sustainability projects.

### Highlights of some recent school activities:

**Hydroponics** is a subset of hydro-culture, the method of growing plants using mineral nutrient solutions in water solvent. Dunes International school recognizes the bright future of hydroponics and provided hands-on experiential learning opportunities to the students in the school. Through this project students acquired an important life skill of growing food with limited resources. Such practices are helpful in deserts like the UAE.

**Vertical garden:** School gardens are a wonderful way to use the schoolyard as a classroom, reconnect students with the natural world and the true source of their food, and teach them valuable gardening and agriculture concepts and skills that integrate with several subjects. Dunes International School took an initiative to build a vertical garden with the students' involvement.

**Fixing up Bird Feeders:** Making a bird feeder is a wonderful opportunity to observe bird habitats and their needs in their natural environment. Students made coconut shell bird feeders to welcome the birds that are hungry, thirsty and nesting. Children fixed these coconut shells on the branches of trees in the school garden and also the trees outside school premises.

**News paper bag distribution:** In order to show their respect and love towards Mother Earth in a befitting manner, students from Kindergarten to Grade 11 learnt to think globally and act locally by participating in designing paper bags with the help of parents and distributing News Paper bags to restaurants and groceries.

**Bio-Gas operation:** Students from Grade 10 and 11 participated in Bio-Gas operation, installed at school, and prepared group projects on the topics "Bioremediation and Biodegradable alternatives" and "Innovative ways to beat Plastic Pollution."



Bird feeders



Vertical garden



Plastic free classroom

**Student Exclusive Ambassador for sustainability:** We are proud to announce that our student Abhigna Reddy Motla and Khushi Amit Sarvaiya graduated in the Student Exclusive Ambassador Program by bagging the first place for the best performance as a sustainability Ambassador. It was a proud moment. Out of a selected 15 schools across the UAE and 30 ambassadors, students of Dunes International School were selected for the program.

**Congratulations** to our student Sai Rohan Raju of grade 9 for making the efforts in artwork to boost the fight to save endangered animals. He has done his art exhibitions nationally and internationally to raise awareness of wildlife protection and received worldwide appreciation.

**Beat the Plastic:** Students of Dunes have taken the initiative to spread the awareness in classrooms and through the general public to reduce the usage of plastic to save our environment. The aim of the activity is to make the school plastic free. [bit.ly/RSaeDunes](http://bit.ly/RSaeDunes)



## Abu Dhabi Homeschoolers Association (ADHSA)

ADHSA is the Abu Dhabi Homeschoolers Association and counts 37 families as registered members, totalling 84 students of different ages. At ADHSA we take raising responsible and compassionate future citizens very seriously. Therefore, we strive to teach our students to value the natural environment that surrounds them and contribute to the wider community that they live in. To that end we organise field trips and educational activities throughout the year to highlight how human actions can lead to climate change, habitat destruction and biodiversity loss. We also teach our children skills and values that will enable them to grow up as compassionate leaders dedicated to humanitarian work, responsible living, sustainability and conservation.

We have undertaken numerous projects to raise awareness of sustainability challenges, drawn attention to conservation work and improve understanding of the complexity of the natural environment that surrounds us. These projects include a series of kayaking expeditions to explore and learn more about local mangrove forests. The 'School Without Walls' program culminated in ADHSA holding a poster competition, with winning images being printed on reusable shopping bags for their members. To promote sustainable living they held an organic soil workshop, teaching members how building and maintaining healthy soils is critical for a sustainable future. This was further supported by a visit to a local organic farm to educate the children about responsible farming.

Furthermore, ADHSA students paid

a visit to Al Wathba Wetlands reserve as part of their environmental studies. They explored the biodiversity of the Al Wathba Wetlands reserve on a guided tour, observed diverse vegetation, looked for the reserve's inhabitants and learned to recognize some of them. The participants learned about the diversity of UAE habitats and looked at sabhka salt flats, saline lakes and tall-reed marshes in detail. More importantly, they also learned about the threats facing these habitats and the need for conservation work to preserve bio-diversity.

Following the trip to Al Wathba, ADHSA held a beach clean up at the Emirates Marine Environmental Group. During the day they learned about the environmental pressures and challenges caused by human activities. In addition they found out more about the conservation projects run by EMEG. The students contributed to EMEG conservation efforts by helping to clean the beach and came away with lots of fond memories and a better understanding of conservation needs.

In their most recent project ADHSA members' explored different ways to reuse and recycle plastic after learning how much damage plastic refuse causes to the environment. Students collected and then reused plastic caps from plastic bottles by creating a bottle cap mural.

They hope that sharing these experiences will help today's children become well informed and responsible future global citizens, ready to tackle tomorrow's problems. And highlight the fact that all children, no matter what their circumstances, can become involved in these amazing projects.

[bit.ly/RSaeADHSA](http://bit.ly/RSaeADHSA)

# Asma Amreen, Bangladesh School

Asma Amreen won the first prize for short story writing at the Annual Environment Competition in 2011 when she was in Grade 5.



Asma and the team with Dr Jane at R&S Awards 2016 (left). Asma and Tara (right)



The competition was conducted by the Environment Agency of Abu Dhabi, under the theme: Many Species, One Planet, One Future. The topic that was provided by the Environment Agency was "How You Nearly Lost Me", with a focus on the endangered animals and birds of the UAE. Asma chose The Arabian Oryx as the focus of her story, and she named one of the protagonists of the story as 'Asma', to give a personal touch to its theme. The story was published by the Environment Agency and, its theme remains relevant, especially to raise awareness amongst young children about endangered species.

Asma Amreen has been an active member Environmental issues since she was in Kindergarten. She has attended the Roots & Shoots awards and presented a poem dedicated to Dr Jane Goodall at the awards ceremony honouring Jane's 80th birthday, [read the poem here](#).

If more creative voices like Asma's can be heard and felt, the World can be a better place for all of us, as well as for our fellow creatures who share our planet.

### The story in brief:

Asma's story is entitled "How You Nearly Lost Me: The Arabian Oryx." The story is about a little girl named Asma who talks to a young Arabian Oryx she meets during a desert trip. The oryx named Orita connects to the little girl and tells her the sad story of how humans have hunted their species and reduced them to just a few. The young oryx feels hurt that children do not even know what an Arabian Oryx is.

As the conversation evolves, Asma realizes that humans have to do something to stop the destruction of the Oryx. She invites the help of her parents and other adults to mobilize a rescue mission to rehabilitate the Arabian Oryx through a conservation programme. After several years she finds satisfaction in seeing her friend Orita as a young mother, and the rest of the Oryx species thriving in the desert. Special thanks is given to the UAE government, the Environmental Agency and other responsible people who have made it possible for the Arabian Oryx to survive extinction.

## Roots & Shoots UAE Awards 2019

It's exciting times! The Roots & Shoots UAE Awards 2019 are almost here! This year is all about #zayedNature #ZayedPath, and we cannot wait to meet you and view your displays and all your hard work, this time in the grand presence of Dr Jane Goodall herself!! For more information or to post your projects visit [www.rootsnshoots.ae](http://www.rootsnshoots.ae)



People Animals Environment



# Mad Hatters Nursery, UK – never too young to make a positive difference!

Mad Hatters nursery is fortunate enough to have a wonderful outdoor space, home to two beautiful, white rabbits called Marshmallow and Sweetie, and filled with lots of children's toys, swings and Wendy-houses. Looking after the rabbits and any other insects found in the play area is encouraged.

Throughout the year the little ones regularly check their digging patch and bug hotel for new guests. Pieces of bark, wood and stone are collected and added to the bug hotel so it's forever being extended to make room for more guests. Black Beetles, woodlice, spiders, centipedes, wasps, bees, ants and worms are often in residence.

A while back, a small child took one of the teacher's hands and led her to a puddle where they found a bee struggling to float in the water. 'Mrs Casey, we need to rescue him!' the child exclaimed. The teacher carefully let the bee climb onto the palm of her hand where its wings started to dry and it



Mad Hatters Digging Patch

began 'buzz, buzz, buzzing, buzzing,' as the child sang. With Mrs Casey's help, the little boy filled a saucer with sugar and water. Mrs Casey then held her hand down to the saucer and slowly, but surely, the bee began to crawl off her palm onto the saucer where it had a revitalising drink. 'I hope he feels better,' the little one said. 'Let's take him to the bug hotel so we can look after him!' the child gleamed. This is exactly what they did, and where the bee may well still be.



Photos: Mad Hatters Nursery

Mad Hatters Bug Hotel with boys rescuing bee



## Where is Dr Jane

# Being recognised at the Animal Hero Awards

The **Animal Hero Awards 2018** was an awards evening like no other! Attended by some of the biggest names in showbiz and animal conservation, many of them brought their pet as their plus one!

Hosted by the engaging and enigmatic Amanda Holden, the event was full of excitement, celebration and inspiration.

The evening honours the achievements of the four-legged and furry as well as inspirational people who have gone above and beyond personal action on behalf of animal welfare.

So many worthy winners in one room made for an exceptionally special night. Dr Jane moved the audience to tears when she accepted the Lifetime



Dr Jane on stage at the AHA

Achievement award presented by Born Free's Virginia McKenna. Her research into wild chimpanzees at Gombe, Western Tanzania, changed the way we think about animals forever.

She said: "I wanted to go to Africa. The



Dr Jane with Virginia McKenna and Peter Egan

Photo: The Mirror's Animal Hero Awards

Second World War was raging. People said I couldn't do it, but my mother told me to take every opportunity I could get and to never give up on my dreams."

And so she did, and has not stopped for over 55 years.

[www.animalheroawards.co.uk/lifetime-achievement-2018](http://www.animalheroawards.co.uk/lifetime-achievement-2018)

Thank you Daily Mirror, RSPCA and Webbox for organising and sponsoring the night!