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\$30,000 RAISED TO FIGHT POACHING IN VICTORIA FALLS

The war on poaching in the Victoria Falls region has been given a \$30,000 boost by an annual fundraising golf tournament, coordinated, hosted and sponsored by Zimbabwean hospitality group Africa Albida Tourism.

The total amount raised at the Victoria Falls Anti-Poaching Unit (VFAPU) Golf Day at Borrowdale Brooke Golf Club on September 21 was \$25, 809, and an anonymous donor gave \$1,500, before Africa Albida Tourism (AAT) added \$2691 to make it up to \$30,000.

A field of 160 players, making up 40 teams, teed off for the charitable cause at the 18th annual VFAPU Golf Day, playing a 4 Ball Better Ball Stableford format, before a prize-giving function and auction.

The tournament was won by Ashleigh Pringle and Michelle Wilson, who finished on 52 points, while Angus Light and Richard Howes came second on 50 points, followed by Frank Zimani and Mike McMullen on 49 points.

The lucky winners each took home an accommodation voucher for two-nights' in a two-bedroom Victoria Falls Safari Suite, with breakfast included.

The Starbelles took home the Best Dressed Ladies' Team, while Toyota Zimbabwe won Best Dressed Men's Team, and Best 4 ball winners were the Pringle Pack. The Zimbabwe Special Olympics Team, sponsored by The Bronte Hotel, participated in the event for the fifth year.

The auction fetched a total of \$2,350, with two BA Comair return tickets Harare– Cape Town being snapped up for \$1000, and two Sean Herbert wildlife images going for \$850 and \$500, respectively.

Among the sponsors were FSG (Fertiliser, Seed and Grain) whose sponsorship included a VFAPU scout's salary for a year, Shades Ahead who sponsored a scout's salary for a month, as well as Dendairy, African Sun, The Stable Winery, Safeguard and Flo2Go.

AAT chief executive Ross Kennedy said: "As AAT we are so proud to be a leading donor and fund raiser for VFAPU!

"The Golf Day showed what an amazing society and nation we live in, with so many generous and caring companies and individuals who support VFAPU year in and out," Mr Kennedy said.

“We had 40 teams, with more on the waiting list, when a full field is 36 teams, and the support, donations and prizes were just so warming to see,” he added.

“We salute each and every golfer, sponsor and supporter and we recognize the effort and commitment to the wonderful cause.

“Thank you, and we look forward to even greater support in 2019. Book early please!”

VFAPU head of operations Charles Brightman applauded the fantastic effort and thanked everyone involved, saying the funds raised would go a long way towards covering the unit’s operational costs.

Without the support, VFAPU would have been unable to prevent the potential poaching of dozens of elephants, recently, when the scouts discovered 39 cyanide-laced oranges in the Zambezi National Park, left to kill elephants for their ivory, Mr Brightman said.

VFAPU’s 17 scouts, who tackle all forms of poaching in the Victoria Falls region, have arrested 720 hardened poachers since the unit was established in 1999 by Mr Brightman, a professional guide and conservationist, and Victoria Falls Safari Lodge, AAT’s flagship property.

The unit, which works closely with the Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority and the Zimbabwe Republic Police, has also removed more than 22 000 wire snares from its operational area, and rescued 200 mammals injured by snares.

For more information visit www.vfapu.com or to donate contact Mr Brightman on csb@zol.co.zw

IMAGE CAPTION: VFAPU Golf Day winners Michelle Wilson and Ashleigh Pringle with Africa Albida Tourism staff Tyla Crabbe, Nommy Vuma and Keara O’Toole.

Photo Credit: Eugene Matarise, Tee Time Golf Magazine

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