

Earth Heroes: Champions of Wild Animals

Bruce Malnor

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Anisa Claire Hovemann, Illustrator

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Recommended by the National Science Teachers Association and winner of a Gold Mom's Choice Award, the third and final book in Dawn Publications' Earth Heroes series, *Champions of Wild Animals*, is a collection of eight intriguing biographies that will educate, fascinate, and inspire readers.

Each biography features a "champion" of animals, someone whose work and contributions have significantly added to the knowledge and preservation of wild animals and contributed to the environmental movement. While some well-known figures are featured, such as Jane Goodall and Rachel Carson, the book also includes lesser-known scientists and early environmentalists such as Roger Tory Peterson and modern-day activists such as the Douglas-Hamilton family.

The biographies have a particular emphasis on how the subjects' childhoods helped them to develop interests and passions that later guided them into their groundbreaking work, often in spite of great obstacles. This focus will inspire readers, and help them realize that they too can make significant contributions to the world. This empowering message is reiterated in the last section of the book, which provides resources for children to learn more and get involved in both science and their local communities.

Authors Carol L. and Bruce Malnor, both educators, have added several features to the end of each section: a Fast Facts page, parallel timelines of the subject's life and significant historical and environmental events, and a "Ripples of Influence" list which includes those who influenced and those who have been influenced by the subject. These unique elements are an additional layer of interest, but perhaps more importantly, they re-emphasize the overarching theme of interconnectedness. Humans are connected to other humans and animals, and the impact of each creature affects the environment. The Malnors manage to include this theme in each of the biographies.

While there are many notable aspects of the book, the fusion of education and story is perhaps the most valuable. The biographies include scientific ideas such as ecology and biodiversity without becoming dry. The enthusiasm each individual had/has is captured and translated into engaging pieces. The book will appeal to 9-12 year olds, especially readers interested in science or animals.

With interesting stories of those courageous and tenacious enough to affect change, *Champions of Wild Animals* can teach children not just about the excellent work of these "champions" but also that by harnessing their unique abilities, they too can make valuable, significant contributions to the world around them.

ALICIA SONDHI (January 10, 2011)

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