



Goodall shares love story

Famed for studying chimpanzees, she tells local audiences of her deep concern for environment

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Jane Goodall may be famous for her love of chimps, but her eyes have wandered at times during the 50 years since she first set foot in Africa.

"Animals are fascinating," the primatologist-turned-activist said yesterday in Kitchener. "If I had 29 million lives, I would be studying them all the time."

The study of chimpanzees was handed to her on a platter by anthropologist Louis Leakey.

But asked what animals she would have chosen for study besides chimpanzees, Goodall answered that she has spent time with baboons and learned about spotted hyenas, too.

"I would've liked to study whales but that would've been underwater," she said as the crowd at the Waterloo Regional Children's Museum started to laugh. "Wonder how that would've been?"

Goodall was speaking at the museum to a group of students, admirers and journalists before giving a lecture to hundreds of people at the Centre in the Square last night.

Her visit came during the last two weeks of a touring exhibit at the museum featuring her work and life among chimpanzees.

Chimps, naturally, were the focus of most of the questions. And the question on the tip of everyone's tongue, she answered without being asked.

"Everyone wants to know why I am not in the forests with the chimps any longer," said Goodall, who travels most of the year, spreading awareness about the plight of endangered chimpanzees and the planet.

Her deep concern for the environment began during her years with chimpanzees, whose existence in Africa is threatened by illegal hunting and habitat loss.

"Everything is connected," she said.

Goodall's first visit to Africa was at age 23, when she went to Kenya. In 1965, after getting a doctorate in ethnology from Cambridge University, she began her revolutionary chimpanzee studies at Lake Tanganyika.

She discovered chimps strip leaves from twigs and use them to dig termites from a nest.

Until then, only humans were believed to make tools. That study is still going on, even though Goodall sees her beloved chimps only a couple of times a year. It's important to travel and educate people, she said.

There were a million chimps at the turn of the century; now, there are barely 200,000 in the wild.

To a question from a young admirer, Goodall said everyone can make a difference to the environment -- and even help chimpanzees survive. "Question what you buy, where it came from."

And if children refuse to visit circuses until owners stop using chimps for entertainment, the animals will get a better life.

Endangered chimpanzees and the destruction of the planet made for serious discussion during Goodall's visit to Kitchener, but there were flashes of humour, too.

She told the schoolchildren about one of her own childhood teachers. "My dog, Rusty, who taught me that animals do have personalities."

At the Centre in the Square lecture, Goodall delivered a guttural hello to the audience -- the way chimpanzees at the Gombe Stream National Park in Tanzania would.

Goodall's young admirers were over the moon at having met her. Thirty members of Roots and Shoots, a program started by the Jane Goodall Institute to inspire youth through community service, came from Moorefield, Ont., to meet her. The students were from Maryborough Public School.

"I never thought I'll ever meet her," said Alisha Huberts, a Grade 6 student at Maryborough Public School. "She's done such amazing work. I



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had butterflies in my stomach before I met her. This is my big day."

The interactive exhibit at the museum -- Discovering Chimpanzees -- continues until May 25.

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