

Pass It On®...

If You Don't Know Anything About Orangutans, You Don't Know Jack.

Meet Jack Dalton, Gloria Barron Prize winner and the nature conservationist who started by saving the orangutans at age 8.

Jack is an ebullient red-haired young boy with a passion for the outdoors and all living things. At 8 years old, he learned about the plight of the endangered orangutan — and met a baby orangutan at the Memphis Zoo — and felt a kinship. Maybe it was the similarities: red fur, red hair, bright eyes, wide smiles and boundless curiosity.

"I think I might be related to orangutans," Jack says with a smile.

Jack went to work reading everything he could about orangutans, their habitats and what threatens them. "I always say, education is the first step," says Jack. "If we don't know about an issue, how can we help it?"

All that research led Jack to write a children's book, "Kawan the Orangutan: Lost in the Rainforest." He sold 2,000 copies and used the proceeds to support conservation efforts by planting a tree for every book sold. Then he launched his YouTube channel, where he produces educational videos that are fun and feature conservation experts, book readings and everyday ways we can help our world.

Jack has quickly become the orangutan spokesperson. He not only presents to schools, museums and zoos around the world, but he also interviews experts in the field, from wildlife photographers to scientists to fellow conservationists. His work has been recognized by many organizations globally and made him a top 20 Finalist for TIME Kid of the Year.

Jack's work has broadened to include conservation efforts for a number of animals. It turns out that when you look after the habitat of orangutans, you also protect many other species under the same geographic umbrella.

We live in a world where all living things are connected, interdependent. Young people like Jack

feel that connection. They see the world as a whole, its health affecting the health of all people.

Jack also understands the joy of living. He loves to talk about the dedication of Orangutan parents, the playfulness of the young ones and the way they use their long arms to swing through the trees. He sees in their faces life as it should be: caring, compassionate and full of fun.

"I've discovered that if you want something to change, you need to do something about it," says Jack.

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