

THE ORIGIN OF THE RED RHINO NAME & IMAGE



Michelle Wofford
Original Artist of the
Red Rhino

Repeatedly over the years we've been asked: "How did you come to name the orphanage 'Red Rhino?'" and "Where did the image of the Red Rhino come from?"

So here is the story ... we decided to start a small safari business in Africa after our experience traveling there. One evening we were brainstorming in search of a name for the business. A bunch of names were thrown about that didn't work. Then Susan said, "What about calling it Red Rhino?" It immediately stuck. Perfect. Catchy. As teachers we liked the alliteration. So we started calling our little safari business "Red Rhino Tours." However, we still needed a logo and liked the idea of a cartoon figure. Jean Aguilar, an art teacher at Saint Mary's High School in Stockton, CA, recommended Michelle Wofford, an advanced art student at the time, as someone who might be able to help. A few days later, walking down the halls of Saint Mary's, Greg ran into Michelle and asked her if she would be interested in "designing a cartoon-like red rhino for us to use as our new logo." Michelle didn't hesitate and said: "Sure, just give me a few days." Within a week Michelle came up with this original drawing:



The original design of the Red Rhino

In 2005 we purchased five acres of land on which to build the children's home. Next we assembled a board of directors and established ourselves as a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit. Initially the board hesitated at our suggestion to use the name Red Rhino and a cartoon logo for the orphanage. Children in the home would come from terrible circumstances. AIDS was ravaging sub-Saharan Africa causing unimaginable suffering. Did we really want to associate a cartoon with something so serious? It didn't take long, however, for the board to agree that the image could be a great thing to associate with the dream of building our home for children.

We have used Michelle's original design for our main logos over time:



Over the years we have had a lot of fun with the image for our many events. Here are just a few examples:

- Mirko Kozina's Bay to Breakers t-shirt in support of RROP
- Red Rhino "crushing" the walk-a-thon
- "One Under the Stars" fundraiser design (see page 9) Designed by Danielle Zeiter when she worked at SASS! Public Relations, Inc. based in Stockton, CA.
- RROP Walk-a-Thon t-shirt design, by Danielle Zeiter
- Red Rhino ice sculpture by the Parrino Family, Diamond Ice.

The Red Rhino has been on a wonderful journey thanks to the incredible generosity and continued support of the Red Rhino Family. The Red Rhino is continuing in a direction to also include an outreach program, as you will read in David's article. Like the original Red Rhino image, our project continues to change and evolve as we stay true to our mission. With your continued support we envision a bright future for so many children as the Red Rhino marches on.



For the kids,
Greg and Susan
Traverso
Founders, Red Rhino
Orphanage Project