

# Owen & Mzee

## The True Story of a Remarkable Friendship

### A RIF GUIDE FOR COMMUNITY COORDINATORS

**Themes:** Friendship, Ecosystems, Africa

**Grade Level:** 3rd to 5th grade

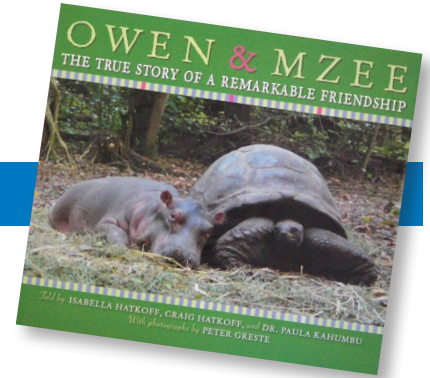
**Book Brief:** In 2004, the aftermath of the tsunami leaves a young hippo stranded at sea. This is the story of his rescue, his resiliency, and a unique friendship.

**Authors:**

Isabella Hatkoff,  
Craig Hatkoff,  
Dr. Paula Kahumbu

**Photographer:**

Peter Greste



### TIME TO READ!

**Before reading:** Ask the children what it means to be friends. Can anyone be friends? Explain that this story is about two animals who become best friends despite being completely different species.

### RELATED ACTIVITIES

#### MZEE MUNCHIES (AGES 6-12)

Ingredients: bread slices (or rice cakes), peanut butter or banana

Cut the bread into circles. Spread with topping. Put banana slices on top to represent the pattern on Mzee's shell. Enjoy!

#### PARK IT (AGES 8-12)

Owen and Mzee live in the Haller Wildlife Park in Africa. A wildlife park is a safe place for animals. With a friend, think about what you would include if you could design a wildlife park for the animals in your neighborhood. What kinds of animals live near you? What would they need to be safe and happy? Draw a design of your park. Be sure to name it!

#### TSUNAMI SIMULATION (AGES 8-12)

Materials: rubbing alcohol, water, blue food coloring, 2 liter plastic bottle with cap

Explain that tsunamis are large, dangerous waves caused by earthquakes on the ocean floor. Fill the bottle 1/3 full of water. Add blue food coloring. Fill the rest of the bottle with rubbing alcohol. Secure cap. Place the bottle on its side and tilt the mouth up and down. What do you notice? How could large waves in the ocean be devastating to humans and animals on land?

#### TECHNOLOGY LINK

Visit [www.owenandmzee.com](http://www.owenandmzee.com) to learn more about this odd couple!



### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

#### OTHER BOOKS ABOUT ANIMAL FRIENDSHIPS

*Unlikely Friendships: 47 Remarkable Stories from the Animal Kingdom*, Jennifer Holland (2011),  
*Friends: True Stories of Extraordinary Animal Friendships*, Catherine Thimmesh (2011),  
*Tara and Bella: The Elephant and Dog Who Became Best Friends*, Carol Buckley (2009).

#### TECHNOLOGY LINK FOR KIDS

[www.rif.org.kids](http://www.rif.org.kids)



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