



STINAPA INFORMATION

THE FIRST FEMALE PARK RANGER

That's the proud title Denice Boelen-Keller has earned. With a warm and friendly smile she awaits my questions at the STINAPA headquarters at Barcadera. Denice is the proud mother of two. A twelve year old boy and a sweet little girl of four. She was born on Bonaire as was her mother. Her father is Aruban and her husband is a Dutch classic furniture maker. They are very religious and together with they do a lot of social work. "After spending my youth here on Bonaire, I moved to St. Martin in 1997. After that, I ended up in Curacao and was in training for the Coast Guard for about 6 months. Unfortunately I did not finish the training because it was very tough, but I'm happy I did it, because it was very useful for my present job. I learned a lot and was appointed in the Coast Guard already as an extraordinary police officer. That saved me time and training." She has been back on Dushi Boneiru for 4 years and since 2005 employed at STINAPA. As of December 2007 she is a "Park Ranger for the Bonaire National Marine Park". Have you seen a lot of changes on the island?: "Yes, not only below the water's surface, but especially above, and fortunately mostly positive changes. There is a lot to be grateful for STINAPA's work. That's why we distinguish ourselves so positively from the other surrounding islands. Of course there are also negative changes, but fortunately those are in the minority." Was it difficult to become a Park Ranger?: "You bet! First I was an Assistant Park Ranger, and I needed to follow several courses successfully before I could become a Ranger. Like natural science, tourism, but also on how to deal with visitors. I also needed to pass my boat captain's exam (I already had my diver's certification), and still we go through training sessions. Like right now where we are following a training as part of the Tourist Awareness Program at TCB (Tourism Corporation Bonaire). But it's definitely worth it!" Do you apply what you learn in your private life?: "Oh, definitely! My husband and I just got a piece of land on which he wants to build his workshop, and we take the existing natural vegetation into consideration. By building a septic tank we minimize the amount of chemicals going into the soil. And what would YOU do if could make the decisions on Bonaire for one day?: "I think that starting some sort of a 'Boot Camp' would be very useful here. Children with less opportunity would be able to learn something about nature there. Of course they would learn there what discipline means, but in a natural setting. They would get the chance to go to school and learn a trade like carpenter or mason"

Written and translated by Marcel Nahr.

For more information or comments: STINAPA, telephone 717 - 8444, info@stinapa.org

NOS TA BIBA DI NATURALESA



Traha huntu na un desaroyo duradero pa Boneiru