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How 3D printed frogs are becoming bearers of goodwill

Citizen reporter

It started with a young boy, a 3D printer and a birthday present. Now there's a plan to put a plastic frog on every desk in corporate South Africa.

The plan is the dream of Pinpoint One executive search cofounder Clive Viveiros. The plastic frog is the concept of 17-year-old James Balkwill, a South African-born British teen obsessed with 3D printing, who made Fred, a plastic frog.

He decided during his A level year to leave little Freds around the school for other pupils to find. Teachers would find them and keep them for themselves. Other pupils would ask for them. Eventually, James printed more than a thousand, in different colours.

Then he sent a Fred to an old South African family friend, art

director Stephanie Erasmus, in a birthday parcel James' family was sending out to Erasmus in South Africa in January. There was also a 3D printed octopus and a dragon hidden in the parcel, too.

Viveiros was there when the parcel was opened – and was intrigued by this story, which had started as a good-natured prank, but was now something much bigger.

"Clive was intrigued by the concept of how these frogs had become bearers of goodwill," Erasmus explained. "I went to the UK and stayed with James and his family and we were talking about trying to get the frogs into every country in the world."

"When I started reading up more about the frogs, you see how important they are. They're tiny, but their impact on the ecosystem is immense. They're always close to water, you get med-

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► If you would like to know more about the #LoveMeLoveMyFrog campaign – or be part of it – visit: www.pinpointone.co.za

icine from frogs, they can jump 20 times their height."

Erasmus came back with 60 of the 3D-printed frogs. Viveiros wanted 20 of them to hand out to his staff, family and friends.

"I was fascinated by the whole concept," said Viveiros, "about how people were starting to use it as a symbol of hope."

His staff adopted it as quickly as recipients in the UK had, proudly displaying them on their computer screens at work and putting them in their handbags or pockets when they left for the day.



FASCINATED. Pinpoint One executive search cofounder Clive Viveiros. Picture: Supplied

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