

The Houston SPCA presents



# Paws for Thought



Humane Education Newsletter

2008/2009

## Who benefits from Humane Education?

EVERYONE!!

Most people who love their pets understand that animals have feelings and deserve kindness and respect. But what about our children? Is this understanding innate? Probably not. Sure, most kids are interested and like these furry, finned, or feathered friends, but do they really know what to do about animal cruelty, who to call if they see an injured animal, or why it is important to spay and neuter our pets?



This is where the Houston SPCA Humane Education program comes in. Humane education is a growing trend in schools everywhere. It has been proven that animal cruelty is linked with human violence, so we at the Houston SPCA make strong efforts to get our message to students, teachers, and parents. Humane education is a free service to the community that offers a three part series of lessons in Houston area public and private schools. Our programs are designed for **2nd through 12th Grade students**. Programs are also available for **Career Day** events. In the 2007/2008 school year we were able to reach almost 10,000 students, and held over 300 educational programs! This is because of the continued support of teachers and education professionals that care!

Our educational programs are not only about teaching responsible pet care, but also that every living creature matters. If children learn these valuable lessons while they are young, then when they grow up, they will be kinder and more compassionate adults and, in turn, better citizens to the community.

Look inside for class descriptions and to schedule a **FREE** Humane Education program at your school!!

There are many things teachers and education professionals can do to bring the humane message to the classroom. Useful websites for teachers and education professionals are: Animal Crusaders & Animal Free Press - [www.fund.org](http://www.fund.org), National Association for Humane and Environmental Education - [www.nahee.org](http://www.nahee.org), the National Wildlife Federation - [www.nwf.org/kids/](http://www.nwf.org/kids/), Kid's Planet - [www.kidsplanet.org](http://www.kidsplanet.org).

Other ways to bring humane education to your classroom are animal/ environmentally friendly snacks, projects, crafts, games, books, magazines, and videos. Start a recycling program or trash pick-up in your school or neighborhood. Donate money collected from turning in aluminum cans to an animal protection group. Start an animal kindness club...the possibilities are endless!



Our Mission: To promote commitment to and respect for all animals and to free them from suffering, abuse, and exploitation.

## How to set up a Humane Education program:

Please email your request to [education@hspca.org](mailto:education@hspca.org), call (713) 869-7722 X 143.. Please include dates and times in which you are interested, grade level and school name. Call early to assure we can accommodate your schedule. We request a TV/VCR for each lesson.

Free shelter tours are available by appointment Monday through Friday. The tour includes the viewing of adoptable pets and farm animals. A humane education lesson will be available for groups that are second grade and up.

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### HOUSTON SPCA LESSONS



#### GRADE 2 "Respecting Our Animal Friends"



**Session 1: CAN ANIMALS TALK?** - An overview of the Houston SPCA services and basic pet care. Also, an interactive look at how animals and people communicate. Helps children learn that animals are intelligent beings with feelings, personalities and emotions. Encourages audience participation.

**Session 2: TOO MANY PETS?** - The importance of regular veterinary care for pets. The overpopulation crisis is discussed and why all pets should be spayed or neutered. How spaying and neutering helps pets.

**Session 3: CHOOSING THE PERFECT PET** - Why a wild animal or an "exotic" pet may not be the best choice. Exotic animals and domestic pets have different needs and care requirements. How to decide which pet is best in different situations. Factors including time and space.

#### GRADE 3 "Animals That Share Our World"

**Session 1: GETTING TO KNOW OUR PETS** - An overview of the Houston SPCA services, basic pet care, and pet overpopulation. How much do we really know about our animal companions? Find out in a fun, fact-filled lesson.

**Session 2: EXTINCT IS FOREVER, PART I** - Focuses on the "web of life" and the relationship between humans, plants and animals. Discussing the three steps to extinction: Threatened, Endangered, and Extinct.

**Session 3: EXTINCT IS FOREVER, PART II** - How focusing on our actions and changing our behavior can help endangered species and urban wildlife.

#### GRADE 4 "You Can Make a Difference!"

**Session 1: HELPING PETS IN OUR COMMUNITY** - An in-depth look at programs and services offered by the Houston SPCA. Discuss pet overpopulation with spaying and neutering as the solution. How students can help their pets and other animals in their neighborhoods.

**Session 2: ANIMAL ISSUES** - A look at how animals are used in our society. Topics include food production, animal testing and animals used in the entertainment industry. Emphasizes that regard for an animal is often a factor of previous experience and culture.

**Session 3: PETS NEED GOOD MANNERS** - The right and wrong ways to train your pet. Learning how to communicate with our animals. Students will learn different methods used for training, including which methods are best - like positive reinforcement. Also, a pet is used to introduce basic commands such as "sit" and "down."

## GRADE 5 "Animal Attitudes"

**Session 1: HELPING PETS IN OUR COMMUNITY** - An in-depth look at programs and services offered by the Houston SPCA. Discuss pet overpopulation with spaying and neutering as the solution. How students can help their pets and other animals in their neighborhoods.

**Session 2: ANIMAL ATTITUDES** - A look at our attitudes towards animals and why. We will analyze how representations of animals influence our attitudes towards them and discuss how this pertains to animal cruelty.

**Session 3: PROTECTING ANIMALS & OUR EARTH**- Discussing endangered animals and how they are becoming extinct because of people. Topics discussed are encroachment, exotic pet trade, habitat destruction, hunting, trapping, pollution, and littering. Students will learn about everyday things they can do to help protect the animals and the earth.



## Junior & Senior High "Helping Animals in Our Community"



**Session 1: HELPING ANIMALS IN OUR COMMUNITY** - An in-depth look at programs and services offered by the Houston SPCA including Injured Animal Rescue, Cruelty Investigations, Disaster Relief, Wildlife, and Volunteering. The pet overpopulation crisis is also discussed as well as spaying and neutering as the solution. Students also learn about choices they can make and things to do to help the animals in their community.

**Session 2: ANIMAL DISEASES & PREVENTION** - Students will learn about different diseases and parasites that afflict our animals as well as methods of prevention. Fat Cats and Pudgy Pooches will also be discussed.

**Session 3: CONSERVATION OF OUR NATURAL RESOURCES & HELPING WILDLIFE**- Students will learn about the dos and don'ts of conservation. Topics include water pollution, air pollution, trees, habitats, chemicals, energy, plastic, and helping wild and domestic animals.

**Session 4: TRAINING YOUR PET AND/OR ANIMAL CAREERS** - Students will learn how to communicate with their pets. Students will learn different methods used for training, including which methods are best - like positive reinforcement. Also, a pet is used to introduce basic commands such as "sit" and "down." Students may also learn about different careers they can pursue to help them in their future career.

*\*Note: If selecting multiple lessons for this level, Session 1 must be included.*

## Career Day "Careers Working With Animals"

**One Session:** The possibility of turning a child's interest in animals into a career. Careers at an animal shelter working with or for animals. Animal related professions discussed include Animal Rescue Team, Cruelty Investigator, Behavior Specialist, Adoption Counselor, Fundraising, Veterinarian, Veterinary Technicians, and Wildlife careers. Students learn about each career, how it will benefit animals, and what the qualifications are for that type of position.

*\*Note: (This lesson can be modified to fit all grade levels, 2<sup>nd</sup> grade and up)*

### Information about our programs for Education Professionals:

Our programs are provided free as a service to the community. However, we are a non-profit organization and can provide a list of needed items if the class/school is interested in doing a community service project. These items are commonly used and needed at the shelter and would be easy to donate. A wish list can be found on our website at [www.houstonspca.org](http://www.houstonspca.org). Start your collection today!

Also, we bring Good Citizen Certified animal for the last session; however, unforeseen circumstances sometimes occur and an animal may not be available. For 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade levels, letters to parents can be provided in Spanish upon request. We can also provide some children's handouts in Spanish.



## Houston SPCA Services

- 24-Hour Injured Animal Rescue
  - Cruelty Investigations
    - Humane Education
  - Shelter for ALL Animals
    - Pet Adoptions
  - Spay/Neuter Clinic
- Disaster Relief Program
  - Pet Loss Support
  - Pet Safe Program
  - Volunteer Program
- Animal Behavior Training



Coming Soon:

### Teacher Inservices

Come join us and learn fun & exciting ways to incorporate Humane Education into your classroom!!

### PETcha didn't know...

The largest breed of dog is the Irish Wolfhound.

The smallest breed is the Chihuahua.

Dalmation puppies are born completely white.

A dog's sense of smell is more than 100,000 times stronger than a human's.

Cats can make over 100 vocal sounds, while dogs can only make 10.

In a lifetime, a typical housecat spends 10,950 hours purring.

An indoor cat spends 70% of it's time sleeping.

A rabbit's teeth never stop growing.

A 4lb rabbit will drink as much water as a 20lb dog.

Rabbits can be trained to use a litterbox.

