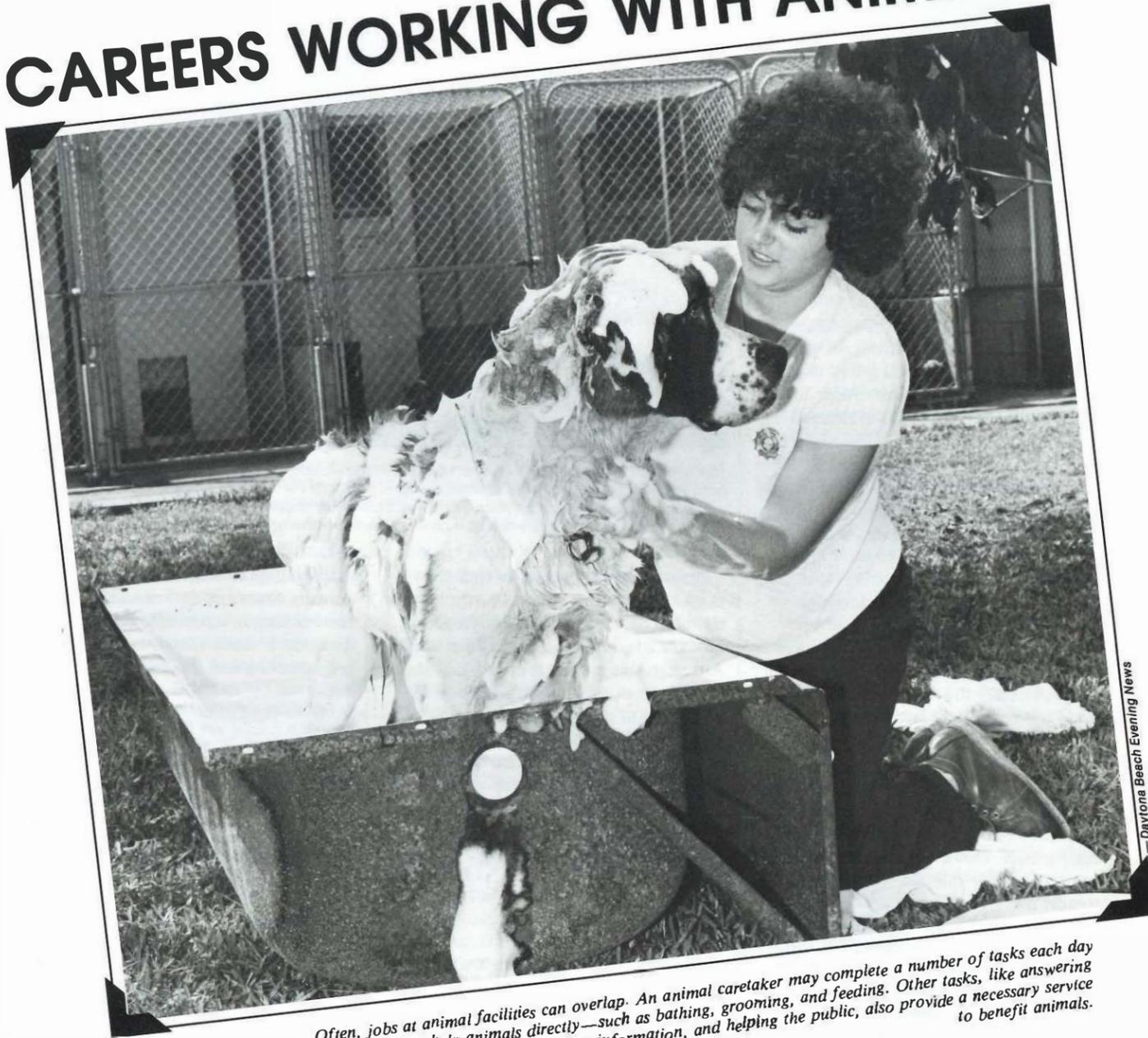




CAREERS WORKING WITH ANIMALS



Daytona Beach Evening News

Often, jobs at animal facilities can overlap. An animal caretaker may complete a number of tasks each day that help animals directly—such as bathing, grooming, and feeding. Other tasks, like answering telephone calls, recording information, and helping the public, also provide a necessary service to benefit animals.

The content of the March issue of Kind News, NAAHE's children's publication, relates to the theme of this article. If you receive Kind News, we suggest you use it as hands-on material to support the activities covered here. If you do not receive Kind News and would like more information about it, write to Kind News, Box 362, East Haddam, CT 06423.

by Willow Soltow

“What do you want to be when you grow up?” This is a question adults have probably been asking young people since civilization began. Of course, when we ask it, we seldom expect youngsters to know for

sure what job they would like to pursue as adults. But we cannot begin too early to help them learn about the many career possibilities that will one day be available to them.

For many of us, employment provides more than income. Pursuing a specific career is often a means by which we take action on the issues that are meaningful to



While most people in animal-related careers care deeply about animals, they often work in environments in which animal suffering is encountered on a routine basis. The ability to cope with this is an important factor to consider in choosing a career in animal care.

A field trip to an animal care facility or nature center can provide youngsters with firsthand information about some of the different animal-related jobs that exist in their community.

us. It can be the basis for an entire life-style.

Animals and animal-related problems have an impact on nearly every community. Many different community helpers are involved in animal care occupations. Educating students about the careers that help animals and that help to solve animal problems can be an important addition to almost any social studies curriculum.

As humane educators, we encourage students to be receptive to ideas and values that benefit animals. We help youngsters develop respect for all that lives. We can, through a unit on animal-related careers, also help young people to learn that the future may hold career opportunities for them that are directly related to these values and beliefs.

Although the careers that your students will investigate in this unit may not necessarily guarantee wealth, prestige, or fame, they offer personal rewards that are meaningful to the people who pursue them.

The World of Work

Begin your unit on animal-related careers and community services by having students identify some of the reasons people choose the work they do. Have

students take a poll of at least five of their adult friends, neighbors, teachers, and relatives. Have them ask each person what kind of work he or she does, what makes his or her job rewarding, and how the job benefits others in the community. After students have taken the poll, have them, as a class, compare and tabulate the answers they received. Then have them discuss: What are some of the rewards (e.g., income, prestige, fulfillment of a personal goal or commitment) to consider in choosing a career? Point out that different people have different needs. What one person may find fulfilling might not meet another's needs. How does this benefit the community overall?

Animal-Related Careers

Next, have students identify some careers that involve animals. List these careers on the chalkboard. Many children think of animal-related careers as being limited to jobs at animal hospitals or zoos. Point out that many occupations involving animals can be found at other facilities in the community. Some of these facilities include humane societies, animal shelters, wildlife sanctuaries, nature centers, private kennels, and more. There are jobs in education, animal care, management, public relations, animal

obedience or training, animal control, and many other fields relating to animals.

Encourage students to think of as many animal careers as possible and list each one. Then have students discuss: Which of the listed careers help animals? Which help people? Which do both?

Finally, challenge students to think of traditionally non-animal-oriented careers that may have a special focus on animals. For instance, a lawyer who prosecutes people who harm animals or who does litigation for an animal rights organization. Other examples include a clerical worker at a shelter or animal hospital, a classroom teacher who focuses on humane education, a writer or artist who tries to make people more aware of the plight of animals through his or her work.

If your class receives Kind News, you can use the articles in the March 1985 issue to provide background information for your students on various animal-related careers. Some of the careers covered in this issue of Kind News include: humane educator, animal caretaker, investigator, veterinarian, lawyer for animal welfare, wildlife rehabilitator, and volunteer worker for animals.

Although volunteering does not strictly constitute a career, you may want to remind students that volunteering, like

pursuing a career, can be a meaningful and constructive lifetime pursuit—one that benefits the individual worker as well as the community in which he or she lives. Volunteering can also have an added benefit in preparing an individual for a well-informed career choice.

If your class does not receive *Kind News*, you may want to invite people from your area who hold these or similar jobs to speak to your class. In addition to speakers on the subject of animal-related careers, you may want to assign readings from a number of the career books referenced at the end of this article.

To learn better what kinds of career opportunities are available in your community, it might be necessary to schedule a visit to one or more facilities that provide animal care. You might have the class visit a local animal hospital, animal shelter, nature center, kennel, or zoo. (For further suggestions on getting the most out of a class visit to the local humane society or animal shelter, please see our article from the June 1982 issue of *HUMANE EDUCATION*, "A Visit to the Animal Shelter," or send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to NAAHE, Box 362, East Haddam, CT 06423 for a copy of the article.)

A visit to the local shelter will give students a chance to see firsthand the many jobs performed there. Depending upon the size of your local animal shelter, there may be several of the following career possibilities: animal caretaker or kennel attendant; humane officer or investigator; veterinarian; veterinary technician; warden or animal control officer; humane educator; public relations specialist; shelter manager; clerical worker; and other administrative personnel.

Jobs in animal care can overlap among different facilities. For instance, an animal hospital may employ workers in a number of the above career areas: animal caretaker, veterinarian, veterinary technician, and clerical worker, for example. A zoo may have career opportunities for an animal caretaker, veterinarian, veterinary technician, public relations specialist, clerical worker and other administrative staff.

On their visit to local animal care facilities, have students take notes on the different jobs that they see being performed by employees. Back in the classroom, have them discuss: What jobs did they see performed? Which might require on-the-job training? Which might require more

formal education? Which jobs might be found to overlap with career positions at other kinds of animal care facilities?

By now your students have had the opportunity to review many animal-oriented careers through reading *Kind News*, listening to classroom speakers, reading books and/or making visits to local facilities. Reinforce what students have learned about these careers by having them complete the "What's My Line?" work sheet that follows this article.

Making Choices

Making well-informed choices about the kind of career to follow is part of career awareness. Although factual information about careers is important, learning to exercise critical-thinking and

the activity, have groups share their findings regarding each career.

The following questions will help you to assist groups that have trouble getting started: What duties are involved in your career? Would you have irregular working hours? What kind of income would go with this career? Could satisfaction with this job compensate for lower pay? What might be some of the nonfinancial benefits of this career? What kind of education would be required in order to qualify for it? Might this present difficulties for some people? Why? Does the job involve direct contact with animals? with a lot of people? Would the job continue to be challenging over the years? Why? If not, would the reward of helping animals compensate for this?



Students may be surprised to learn that some veterinarians treat large animals as well as small ones. These animal doctors often must visit their patients, rather than having their patients brought to the veterinary hospital.

decision-making skills with regard to potential job possibilities encourages responsible career choices.

Have the class make a list of what students feel are the five most rewarding or interesting animal-related careers that they have learned about during their studies. Then divide the class into five groups, one to represent each career. Pass out a copy of the "Making Choices" copy master that follows this article to each of the groups. Have the students within each group conduct a brainstorming session on the positive and negative aspects associated with their career. Let each group select one student to record the group's answers on the copy master sheet. At the end of

Would this career involve feeding animals? cleaning their cages? Would a person who pursued this career risk being bitten by a frightened animal? How might it feel to save an injured animal or to return a wild animal to its habitat? Would you be able to euthanize sick or homeless animals if that was part of your job?

Explain that while people in animal-related careers care deeply about animals, they often find themselves in jobs in which animal suffering is encountered on a routine basis. How might it affect someone in an animal-related career to be near suffering animals? Have students consider: If you identified too closely with an animal that was suffering, is it possible

that you might do the animal more harm than good? Why? If so, would this mean that you should abandon the idea of an animal-related career? Point out to students that there are plenty of careers involving education, fund raising, clerical or administrative duties in which individuals can effectively help animals, yet not have daily, direct contact with them.

Animals and People Who Help Them

After the class shares information on the positive and negative aspects of animal careers, have students complete the following writing exercise to give them a broader basis for understanding the implications of working with animals.

Write these animal descriptions on the chalkboard: a lost dog; a stray, homeless cat; an injured raccoon; a pet horse that is ill; a pet dog that has not been spayed; a captured frog brought to school in a jar.

Have students match each animal description with the name of an animal career professional who could help it. For example, students might match a lost dog with a warden or animal control officer, an injured raccoon with a veterinarian, or a captured frog with a humane educator who would see that the frog was returned to its natural habitat.

Next to the name of each animal, write the name of the animal career professional whom students select. After all of the matches have been listed on the chalkboard, have each student choose one animal-career-person match and write about the animal's experience of being helped by this person. Encourage youngsters to use their imagination in identifying with and writing about their animal. What new sights and smells might the animal experience as a result of its handling by the person? How might new, strange, and frightening surroundings affect the animal? What fears might it have? What people, in addition to the matched career person, might the animal also be likely to encounter? Have students share their finished animal stories with the rest of the class.

The Big Search

You can use the following role-play activity to give students a feeling for what it might be like to apply for a real job helping animals. Point out that choosing a career is only half the battle—applying for and getting a job requires much

patience and hard work.

First, have students organize into pairs. Assign an animal-related career to each pair. Have one student in each pair take the role of interviewer, and the other that of job applicant. Have each interviewer list questions to ask the applicant in order to see if he or she is qualified for the job. Have the interviewers consider: What duties are involved in this job? What kind of educational background might an applicant need to have? What sort of attitude toward animals would be required?

Meanwhile, have applicants make lists of their own, outlining their imaginary qualifications for the job. Have them make up the kind of educational background and job history that they feel will best represent an applicant for that job. At this point, you may want to review students' questions and qualifications before allowing them to conduct their role-play interviews.

Following the interviews, have students share their feelings about the role-play experience. In each case, did the applicant "qualify" for the job? Why or why not? Did each applicant feel that the questions asked of him or her were fair? Point out that in a real job interview, the interviewer is not "the bad guy." In most cases, he or she is simply trying to find someone who will be happy and effective at the job that is being offered. Have students discuss: Why is it especially important to be honest with an interviewer about personal interests and qualifications? What might happen if you accepted a job for which you were not qualified or in which you lacked sincere interest?

Humane Education and Career Awareness

Encouraging students to develop appreciation and respect for all animals is one principal objective of humane education programming. Equally important is the need to provide students with an outlet for expressing their humane values. When we teach youngsters about career possibilities in animal care, we offer them insights into how they may one day act upon their feelings of commitment to and respect for all that lives. ♥



Resources

Books

Animal Doctors. Patricia Curtis. New York: Delacorte Press, 1973.

Careers at a Zoo. Mark Lerner. Minneapolis: Lerner Publications, 1980.

Careers for Dog Lovers. Lynn Hall. Chicago: Follett Publishing Company, 1978.

Careers in Animal Care. Christopher Benson. Minneapolis: Lerner Publications, 1974.

Careers in the Animal Kingdom. Walter Oleksy. New York: Julian Messner, 1980.

Careers Working With Animals. Guy Hodge. Washington, D.C.: The Humane Society of the United States and Acropolis Books, 1979.

Exploring Careers in Animal Care. Charlotte Lobb. New York: Richards Rosen Press, 1981.

Maybe You Belong in a Zoo. Karen O'Connor. New York: Dodd, Mead, & Company, 1982.

Ms. Veterinarian. Mary Price Lee. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976.

People & Animals: A Humane Education Curriculum Guide. Kathleen Savesky and Vanessa Malcarne, editors. Washington, D.C.: The Humane Society of the United States, 1981.

Work With Us in a Humane Society. Mary Dykstra. Milwaukee: ISSI Information Systems and Services, 1982.

Zoo Careers. William Bridges. New York: William Morrow, 1971.

Films

In addition to the films listed below, please see our *Humane Education Film Reviews* also in this issue.

Animals Can Bite. 16mm film, twelve minutes, color and sound. Pyramid Films, P.O. Box 1048, Santa Monica, CA 90406.

The Covenant. 16mm film, twenty minutes, color and sound. The American Veterinary Medical Association, 930 North Meacham Road, Schaumburg, IL 60196.

The Veterinarian Serves the Community. 16mm film, eleven minutes, color and sound. FilmFair Communications, 10900 Ventura Boulevard, P.O. Box 1728, Studio City, CA 91604.

Working With Animals. 16mm film, eleven minutes, color and sound. Films Incorporated, 1144 Wilmette Avenue, Wilmette, IL 60091.