

the response we have evoked from students, teachers, curriculum experts and others in our preliminary survey shows an astonishing eagerness for this kind of program. To me, this means that those most essential to the success of our program—the students at whom it is aimed and the teachers and administrators—need and want what we are trying to give them.

There could be no better guarantee of success for this program which reaches beyond the protection of animals to the higher and more important concept of developing a society that includes the betterment of people.

The National Humane Education Center and the Welfare of Animals

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Those of you who have been associated with the humane movement for some time have many times heard us use the term “humane education.” I am sure that our educators will argue that we misuse the term, but perhaps it conveys things to those of us actively engaged in animal welfare work that make its use correct.

I do not intend to burden you with any philosophical discussion of humane education as we have persons who are far more qualified to do so than I. I will, however, expose you to some ideas that I have had on the subject and perhaps I will provoke you into doing something about it.

What I want specifically to discuss with you is the HSUS National Humane Education Center and the needs that it will fulfill.

The role of all humane organizations is the prevention of cruelty and, in order to do this, we must be prepared to show a better way. We cannot stand back saying “no” or “you can’t do that” unless we are prepared to show why. We must understand that cruelty is not always a sadistic act and one whose perpetrator needs the attention of a psychiatrist. I am sure that there are many cruelty cases that should be handled in such a manner, but not very many of them get or deserve this distinction. Usually we move to correct the problem and try to see that it does not happen again; then we use the cruelty case to point out some of the evils and go on to the next one.

I must point out, also, that very little humane education is involved in formal education. This is not true because of a lack of interest, but there has been no great effort nationally to see that effective tools and useful information is offered. There is a great need for such education and students graduating from teachers’ colleges should have been indoctrinated in humane education, the reasons for it, and methods of teaching it. With such a background we will see more instruction given to pupils on the benefits of a knowledge of the reasons for kindness, compassion and consideration, not only for animals, but for humans.

There is another program of education being conducted by humane organizations all over the country which should be humane education. Some do a good job, some bad. Some do a great deal, and some very little. But in each contact by a humane society representative with a person who has ownership, control, or custody of an animal, there should be an exchange that results in an understanding regarding the rights and needs of animals and the responsibilities that should be borne by the person who is the owner, controller, or custodian of an animal.

When a person arrives at the animal shelter with a basket full of newborn kittens for which he wants a good home—even though all of his efforts have failed—you have a person ripe for some humane principles and information about surplus breeding.

An investigation by a humane agent—whether it be for an animal tied in the snow, rain or sun, or because of reported abuse to an animal—is an opportunity not just for direct correction but also for education.

When a person adopts an animal from an animal shelter, there are many things to be considered—whether he is prepared to accept the responsibilities of animal ownership and whether he can devote the time and the attention necessary to it. If not, the adoption should not be completed and even the refusal should be a means of education. Every representative of every humane society, from the manager to the clerical and kennel employees, should be prepared to carry out this part of the Society's education program. And, equally important, the Directors comprising the Board should also fully understand the program and the need for it in the community.

Where are all these people going to get the information that they need to do this program effectively? I believe that it should come from the National Humane Education Center in Waterford, Virginia. The humane movement is at least 50 years overdue in providing a training program for teachers and workers. Many of you have heard this need discussed in local and national meetings of the humane movement for many years.

When Fred Myers first discussed with me the possibility of the Waterford project, we both felt that at long last something concrete was going to be done—and the benefactors had our undying gratitude. The land and some cash were made available and steps were taken to get the construction and programming underway. Several problems arose later that delayed the scheduling, but the site is there and many improvements have been made and plans have been drawn. The next steps are to construct, staff, and operate the facility and I hope that this will proceed without any further delay. Additional funds are going to be needed to make this project an effective tool for the furtherance of the humane ideal. I am sure that all of you will assist in its development.

One phase of this program probably interests me more than any other: a national center where educational materials can be developed, studied, tried, and put into the field for use by teachers and others. Another, equally important, phase is that at long last there will be a training school for humane society managers, municipal pound operators, and others interested in humane work in the local community.

Even though I will again be accused of being too shelter oriented, I will say that, in my opinion, the work of the local society is the heart of the entire humane movement. Most of the organizations who are active today had to work out their problems on their own, with little help from a national organization—as much as it was needed and as much as such programs have been pushed by national humane officials.

The national organizations themselves were founded by persons who worked in local humane societies and saw the need for national leadership and a way to inaugurate programs on a larger and wider scale than was possible by the local organization. We are in great need of a continuing strong, active leadership on both the national and local level.

Our training program up to now has been limited to the ability of a Board of Directors to send a prospective employee to another society for training. In some instances this was inadequate, as the organization to which the person was sent was not doing a program that was similar to the one needed in a particular area. For instance, a man in training in a large city operation will get very little information about the problems of livestock, wildlife, etc., that are peculiar to a rural area. True, the basic office procedures are the same but the functions are not too parallel.

The Humane Society of Marin County is glad to receive trainees. We have several each year from organizations in various parts of the country. We also welcome workers, members of Boards of Directors, government officials, who are exploring programs, procedures, policies, and the equipment and the means to implement them.

One can learn a great deal by being exposed actively to a humane society program. It is, very definitely, the best way to learn and evaluate—to see that the humane movement is something with which they can become actively associated. I did this myself just 26 years ago this month.

In many instances Board of Directors have had to look to other local societies to supply a person who could run their operation. They have been at the mercy at times of the society, getting a person who was going to be fired. There have been all too many instances where Boards have offered a job to one of the key employees of another organization, creating a void with no one to fill it. So it got to be a vicious circle.

Many workers have found themselves in humane work because of

sheer desperation on the part of a Board of Directors who wanted a "body" to do some work because the Board members themselves did not have time to do it, or the knowledge. Some of these individuals have come to be real assets to the society and to the humane movement but others have been steadily accepting their salaries and have done nothing to further the ideal or the movement.

Those of you who are Directors know that this is true. You have known of the frustrations.

Where are these potential people coming from, and how do we go about getting them? The answer, I believe, is the National Humane Education Center.

A Board of Directors should be able to send a person to be trained and know that the person who is turned out by such training is adequate. No amount of training, however, is going to change the fact that in many instances there is a clash of personalities. The teachers at the Center, however, will be able to see if that one ingredient, "heart, humaneness, or compassion"—call it what you will—is there. If it is not, then the wrong person is taking the course. Knowledge alone is not going to get the job done. The person who is turned out of the Center as a humane worker should be an ambassador of good will and a teacher of humaneness. I believe that each person now involved in the humane movement, either as a professional worker or as a volunteer, should be interested in furthering the cause. We should attract new people and encourage these new people in the belief that this is a wonderful field of endeavor. We have so much in our favor. We can offer interesting and rewarding work. We can offer incentive and pride in accomplishment.

We should be striving to meet adequate wage standards and realize that the results of our humane activities depend a great deal on the persons who are actively engaged as paid workers. We need to upgrade our personnel and to attract more and more young people into this field. All of you who operate shelters have inquiries as to whether this is a field for young people, and you should answer in the affirmative. The movement is growing and the need for professional workers is greater now than ever before due to the fact that so many animal control and animal welfare programs have priority in local government. This is due to necessity but whether the local pound is run humanely or not depends a great deal upon us who are setting the pattern and training the people. Animals deserve a better fate than they are getting. Each new city and each new community is going to need some animal control and programs of animal welfare. The persons who are going to conduct these programs are, for the most part, not now working in the animal welfare field.

The need for humane workers is not limited to the operation of an animal shelter. We want very badly for the caretakers of laboratory animals to be humane and qualified to handle animals properly.

We want veterinarians to be able to hire qualified and humane workers in their hospitals. Animal control officers working for municipal governments should have a knowledge and understanding of animals. The qualification tests that are given under civil service can determine the extent of the individual's knowledge, but they certainly cannot judge the humaneness of the individual and whether the animals that come under his control will be brutalized.

What are you doing in your community with the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts who are working on merit badge programs involving first aid, care and keeping—dog care, cat care, horse care?

Are the animal interest groups in your community coming to you with their meetings? Are you furthering animal welfare through the local cat shows and dog shows? Have you considered giving instruction in horse care that would be available for all?

Do your teachers come to you for field trips or questions on various animal problems?

Are you available when the human, in distress because of some misfortune such as fire, accident, or death, needs care for his animals?

Our organization in San Rafael makes it a deliberate part of its program to be the guiding force and motivation for good animal control and animal welfare. I sincerely believe that every organization should.

Through these groups you will get your support, morally and financially. Through these contacts you will strengthen your Board of Directors. You have more members, volunteer workers, and personnel.

You will be running a humane education program that is within your reach and which does not need much explanation for everyone to understand it.

You can do such programs and can benefit by outlines, programs, and materials from the National Humane Education Center.

I hope that I have outlined for you some of the needs for the new training center. I have not spent much time telling you that in the operation of the Center, it will immediately be serving the needs of a vast community in Loudoun County not only as an animal shelter but as a localized humane education center whereby local citizens, teachers, and officials may use and develop the facilities to better their own community. But, at the same time, their experiences and knowledge will be helpful to any and all similar communities in America. Let's get the program of this type of humane education on the way. It is long overdue.