

SUMMARIES OF PRESENTATIONS

Because of the diversity of the backgrounds and expertise of participants, the conference program was designed to achieve two goals. First, program sessions sought to provide basic information on youth violence prevention, research on animal assisted interventions, and evaluation methods. Second, the program provided a forum to enable participants to share new research and chart new research directions in evaluation of animal assisted programs. (The full conference program is available in Appendix C.) Below are speaker biographies and summaries of conference presentations and sessions.

Welcome and Opening Remarks

Andrew Rowan, Ph.D., Executive Vice President for Operations, Humane Society of the United States

Andrew Rowan, Ph.D. is the Executive Vice President for Operations of The Humane Society of the United States and CEO of Humane Society International. Before joining The HSUS, Rowan was director of the Tufts University Center for Animals and Public Policy. He chaired the Department of Environmental Studies at Tufts University School of Veterinary Medicine. He was associate director for the Institute for the Study of Animal Problems at The HSUS, founding editor of the *International Journal for the Study of Animal Problems*, founding editor of *Anthrozoos*, and scientific administrator for the Fund for the Replacement for Animals in Medical Experiments. Rowan received a doctorate in biochemistry from Oxford University in 1975 after earning a master's degree in biochemistry from Oxford University in 1971 where he was a Rhodes Scholar. Dr. Rowan is the principal investigator for The HSUS's project with the Laura J. Niles Foundation on evaluation of animal assisted programs for youth at risk.

The major points from Dr. Rowan's presentation are as follows:

- In the field of animal assisted interventions, we do not presently have strong evaluation. The research deficits that Beck, Katchner and others first identified in the 1980s persist today.



- HSUS's survey of dog training programs for youth at risk documents program goals, anticipated program outcomes, and practices in the areas of staffing, management, and training, participant selection, program content and structure, dog selection and care, community partnerships, funding, and program evaluation. (See Appendix D.) The survey reveals that most programs at least initially relied upon models or materials from Dr. Bonnie Bergin, Dr. Lynn Loar, or Los Angeles SPCA's TLC program. Programs anticipate improved cognitive, physical, speech and language, and social and emotional competencies and increased knowledge of animals and animal welfare. Program budgets range from under \$10,000 to \$450,000, with most programs operating with budgets between \$20,000 and \$65,000. Together, the programs have worked with some 5000 youth. All programs are dissatisfied with current evaluation strategies.
- Animal assisted intervention programs for youth at risk raise ethical issues in terms of the use and treatment of animals. Programs must be made safe and beneficial for both animals and people.
- Animal assisted programs have PR "umph." If they are effective and have a positive impact on community, more shelters may be interested in implementing animal assisted programs. Animal assisted programs might be able to address dog fighting among youth.

Dr. Rowan's powerpoint presentation is in Appendix E.

