



Humane Education Can Change Lives

On the first day of school, the need for humane education is evident for many teachers and their students. One of our Board members, a former educator, remembers all too well students coming into her classroom because their parents and pet owners were just treatment off at the local county fair even after winning the ribbon.

These students were connected to their animals and clearly open to learning about caring for and about them for non-commercial reasons. The problem? Humane education, though mandated by NYSL law in elementary schools, is not taught unless an individual teacher finds a way to fit it into the curriculum. There are very simple and easy ways to incorporate lessons about animals and the environment into lesson plans, and many can be found on our website. As a matter of fact, one of NYSHA's goals has been to provide lessons of that we have not work fully in sync with the NY State Department of Education, although we will continue to try.

Humane education is an important concept that can teach children compassion, respect, and empathy for the Earth, the environment, for each other, and for all living beings. It can be a key factor in counteracting the highly negative influence that broadcasted children every day, whether it is violent TV or video games, bullying they encounter or experience themselves, or disturbing news coverage concerning local and global events. Children have a natural love of and curiosity about animals and teaching them that animals have needs, wants, and emotions just like they do is a powerful lesson that carries over into their treatment of each other and their future professional life.

There are many ways to introduce humane education, including using guest speakers, virtual video games, and books and brochures. NYSHA members have decades of experience visiting schools and introducing children to topics such as wildlife, farm-to-table environmental issues, marine life and ocean wolf being, care and closures, raising care of dogs and cats, global warming, non-farm production, and the effect of that on their health, all presented in a way that emphasizes respect and the value of all life. The COVID pandemic that began in 2020 has made visiting guest speakers more difficult but doesn't affect teacher involvement.

The most effective method for bringing humane education to the teachers to incorporate it as much as possible into their class curricula, since children spend many hours each day at school and the teacher is a role model and authority figure. There are many



Humane Education can take place in many settings.

opportunities set up to help in this task by providing humane education programs for all grades K - 12, and NYSHA has links to many of these on its website.

Humane education is easily incorporated into classroom topics, and examples from the animal and environmental world tend to pique children's interests. A popular example in math education involves pet adoption and the value of appreciation. How many children have many cats will be there in a given period of time, if one male and female pair of cats can have 7 litters per year with 4 kittens each, half of which are female who can have their own litters after 4 months. It will become apparent that there aren't homes for them all.

Besides schools, libraries and adult centers can also incorporate humane education into other school children's programs and visiting adult presentations. NYSHA is looking into how to provide content and to also working with other like animal organizations and local animal-related groups. Since NYSHA has animal education on its Board, anyone interested in this critical issue to protect animals can contact us for suggestions, ideas, or guidance.

Remember – humane education can take place anywhere. Let your local news media producer know why their coverage of the humane issue may be effective and incentive, explain to a neighbor why her neighbor can should be involved, get up a table evening sign along a road, invite children (and adults) to meet your second day, bring grandchildren to animal sanctuaries and wildlife refuges instead of a zoo. We can, and should, all be teachers in our daily lives to shape content and future attitudes toward the creatures whose world we share.