

HUMANE EDUCATION QUARTERLY

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ASSOCIATION of
PROFESSIONAL
HUMANE
EDUCATORS
Empathy through Education



FROM THE PRESIDENT'S PEN

Inge Koopman-Leyva

Dear Friends,

We are so excited to see you back in person at our 2023 conference, Minnesota Motivates: Excellence in Humane Education from Wednesday, April 19 - Friday, April 21, 2023! In October, the APHE Board of Directors was able to meet for our first ever hybrid Board Meeting out of San Diego Humane Society. Special thanks to SDHS for hosting us and welcoming our Board as family. While hybrid meetings pose some challenges, we were able to make the best of our circumstances and forge ahead with the planning of the 2023 national in-person conference and continue our initiatives to advance APHE.

For many of the Board, it was our first time meeting face-to-face after years of only being able to work with each other from behind a computer screen. For me, this meeting reinforced how important the person-to-person connections are not only professionally, but also personally. We are thrilled to move forward with our 2023 in-person conference and have the ability to reconnect physically and to be inspired, uplifted and surrounded by like-minded individuals in our fields.

The upcoming conference is sure to be an exciting time to reconvene and learn from other creative educators and experts in the field. While planning efforts are well underway, we are thrilled to be hosting the 2023 nation in-person conference at the Lumber Exchange Event Center and offering accommodations at a group rate at the AC Hotel Minneapolis Downtown by Marriott.

Keep an eye out for our incredible speaker selection details and announcement of our 2023 keynote speaker to follow. We will also have some fun activities and opportunities to share with conference attendees to help bond, unite and have fun while networking, learning from and sharing with each other.

We cannot wait to see you in person in Minneapolis, Minnesota for the longest awaited APHE conference ever!

With Admiration,

Inge

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MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Stacey Zeitlin

How did you get involved in Humane Education?

In the spring of 2002, my husband and I moved to San Diego. At the time I was an elementary school teacher and was looking for something to do that summer to keep busy, earn some extra cash and stay out of trouble! I saw a job listing in the San Diego newspaper for a camp counselor at a local animal shelter - yes, companies used to post jobs in real paper newspapers and people read them and then could apply. I had never known about Humane Education before but saw the posting to work with children and animals and thought they had created the role just for me!

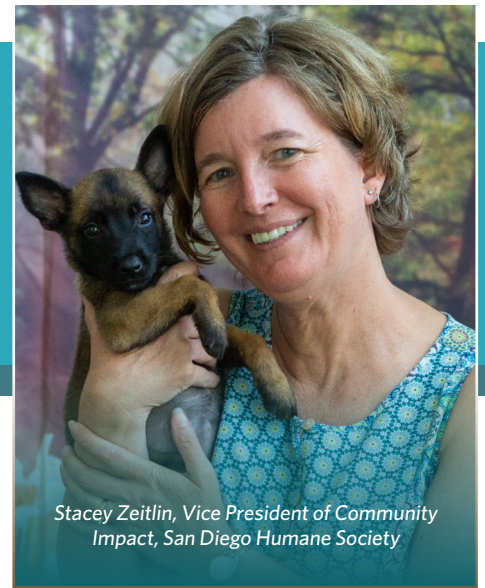
That summer, mornings were filled with fun animal interactions, activities, crafts, games and books with pre-k students and then afternoons were spent assisting with administrative duties connected to the camp working closely with their year-round staff. As the summer drew to a close, the organization was not hiring for their Humane Education department, but they knew that San Diego Humane Society (SDHS) was hiring a part-time educator so they made the recommendation, I applied for the position and I haven't looked back!

On September 30, I celebrated my 20-year work anniversary and was so honored that members of the APHE board of directors who were having a mid-year meeting at SDHS could join in the celebration!

How did you become involved with APHE?

I attended my first APHE conference in 2003 in Indianapolis and was inspired by meeting so many people doing all kinds of Humane Education programs across the country! The conference is extremely valuable in providing learning and networking opportunities, and I am so glad for all of our members that it will be back in person this year. If you haven't been to one, you must go!

I joined the board of directors soon after in 2004 and held various roles such as recording secretary, membership secretary, president and conference chair over my 12 years serving. I was honored at the 2018 conference in Orlando to be awarded a Life Membership, and I currently serve as an advisor providing input and historical information when needed. I learned so much professionally and made so many incredible connections while serving on the board that I highly



Stacey Zeitlin, Vice President of Community Impact, San Diego Humane Society

encourage you all to consider running for board positions when they become available. It can be hard work, but well worth the effort knowing that that work is supporting Humane Educators and their efforts across the globe.

What has changed over the years and what do you see for future direction?

When I started, our Humane Education programs, while fun and impactful for animals and children, were not really connected to the goals of the organization or the needs of the community. While our programs are still engaging, over the years we've worked to connect them more to the strategic initiatives of the organization leading to much more impactful interactions. This has included more collaboration with community members to learn about their needs, such as aligning school outreach lessons with standards and learning objectives, creating a Pet Essentials class that our Humane Officers can refer community members to when they issue citations and hosting pet food distributions and vaccine clinics at schools where we regularly attend, strengthening our connection with local families.

Continuing to evaluate program offerings and ensure they support the overall organization's mission and community's needs is critical. With more organizations focusing on supporting people and animals in the community before or instead of in the shelter itself, Humane Educators are in a unique position to effect change and make an impact since Humane Education programs actively build the relationships that can connect organizations with the people and animals they serve.



Stacey and APHE board members celebrated Stacey's milestone anniversary during the recent board meeting hosted at the San Diego Humane Society.

BOOK REVIEW

Sonya's Chickens, by Phoebe Wall

Reviewed by Don Seller, B.Ed.,
Education Program Manager, Alberta SPCA



Sonya's Chickens tells the story of a young girl dealing with the loss of one of her chickens.

One morning, Sonya wakes to discover a missing chicken, which she learns from her father, was taken by a fox. While consoling Sonya, her father informs her of the reason that foxes take chickens, which leads to Sonya discovering some important truths about the interconnectedness of nature. Readers may be able to empathize with Sonya and how she feels after experiencing the loss of a pet. Readers are also encouraged to see the story from the perspective of the fox, which can help build understanding and empathy.

Through descriptive text and beautiful illustrations, the reader follows Sonya as she completes her daily caretaking tasks. Students not as familiar with chickens, or other farm animals, will gain knowledge on what is involved in caring for these animals and that all domesticated animals, including ones on a farm, depend on people to meet their needs. This story also includes concepts related

to our connection with food. Many students are disconnected from where their food originates and books like this can help students to think more about where their food comes from.

After reading *Sonya's Chickens*, encourage readers to complete some activities that further explore the concepts and theme of the story. Engaging in reflection, discussion and analysis helps readers to create their own meaning from the book.

Exploring Perspectives – There is more than one side to every story. In *Sonya's Chickens*, the reader experiences the events that take place from Sonya's perspective. Have students rewrite the story from a different perspective, making sure to describe what their character is thinking and how they are feeling about the events that take place.

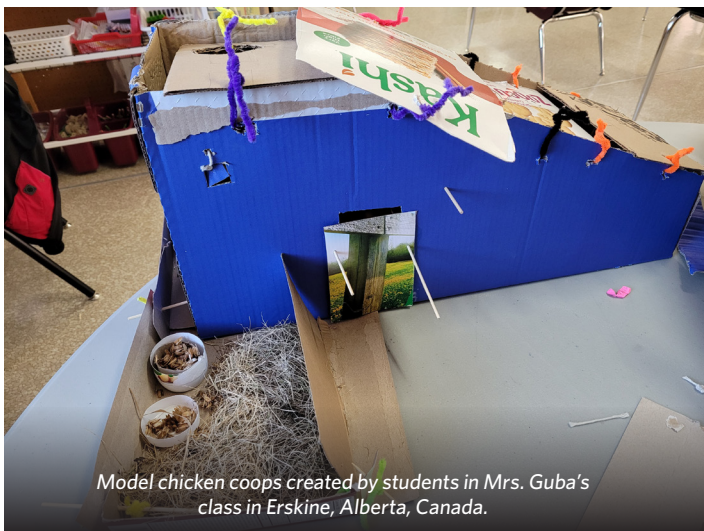
Showing Compassion – Empathy involves sharing, understanding and caring about the emotions of others and being compassionate is when we are moved to take action to help. Have students design a

card for Sonya or someone else who may need some support. Students can include content such as a poem or kind words to help this person to feel better.

A Safe Place – An important part of taking care of an animal is ensuring that they have a safe place to live. In pairs or small groups, have students create a model of a safe enclosure for chickens by using this [Coop Considerations Checklist](#).

Five Minute Reflection – Have students reflect on their experience with *Sonya's Chickens* by asking students to take five minutes to complete one or more of the following reflection prompts: *I was surprised by...*, *I related to...*, *I learned that...*, *I am more aware of...*, *I changed my mind about...*

Thank you to Farell Albert-Puurveen and Kendal Sasvary for their contribution in creating these activities.



Model chicken coops created by students in Mrs. Guba's class in Erskine, Alberta, Canada.



After reading *Sonya's Chickens*, students were inspired to design and build coops that meet chicken's needs.

STATE OF THE FIELD

Humane Heroes: *The hybridization of summer camp and volunteering*

By **Michaela Fisher**, Mohawk Hudson Humane Society



Michaela, Mohawk Hudson Humane Society, with a furry friend

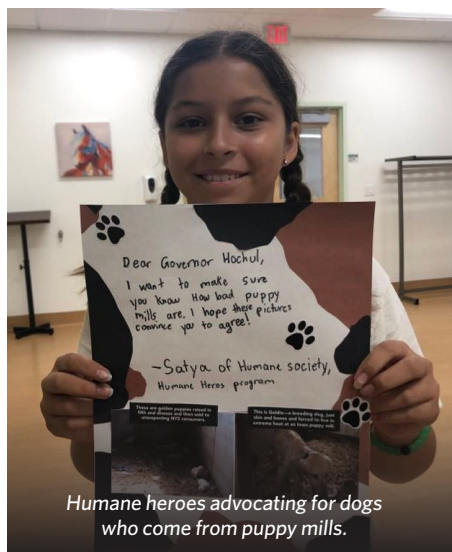
The Mohawk Hudson Humane Society (MHHS) is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization that has a mission of transforming the lives of animals and people through partnerships, protection and hope. I had the honor of starting to work with this wonderful shelter in the fall of 2021. As the first ever full-time educator, my mission, in part, was to create summer programming for children. Prior to the pandemic, the shelter had run a K-5 camp with a seasonal educator, but didn't provide anything for older children.

I'm going to say something that may be a bit unpopular: middle school students are my favorite group to work with. I know this age group gets a bit of flack, and it's not without warrant. Teens at this age can be temperamental, intense and sometimes disrespectful. And, I would argue, this is the time when they have the gumption to try new things, have unabashed passion for what they love and are ready to do something that matters.

So this summer, I created two vastly different summer programs. Paw Pals is for children in grades K-5 and features a very traditional summer camp. Participants come to the shelter Monday through Friday for one week, and each day focuses on a different topic. Kids make crafts, meet animals and learn about body language and humane care. The goal of the Paw Pals camp is essentially for the participants to have fun and start learning about how to be a "pal" to animals.

But when I thought about the program I wanted to create for teenagers, I knew

I could not make a traditional summer camp. I thought back to a previous job I had at the Lake Superior Zoo and their program "Zoo Crew." This program was not the typical summer camp either, and I remember how passionate the participants were in that program. I wanted to make something that would engage teens like that. My feelings were not entirely altruistic either; the shelter always needs help, and here was an opportunity! Rather than just trying to make a "fun" experience for these children, I asked myself, "How can these teens help the Humane Society?"



Humane heroes advocating for dogs who come from puppy mills.

And thus Humane Heroes was born. Humane Heroes is a program for children in grades 6-12. Participants have to apply and submit a letter of recommendation to

be considered for the program. For 2022, the program lasted the entirety of August, and unlike a traditional M-F, teens could sign up for shifts as they wished. Each shift was three and a half hours long, and we offered two shifts a day. The program allowed for up to 50 kids, and I hoped to get at least 30. Each shift allowed a maximum of 10 Humane Heroes.

A "typical" shift ideally consisted of some amount of work, some learning and some fun.

When we began to advertise this program, which I described as a "program that will provide hands-on experience with animal care, humane education and animal shelter operations," I was nervous that it wouldn't fill up. We had never offered summer programming for older kids, and this hybrid between summer camp and volunteering was very new territory.

Before July even arrived I had 50 teens signed up, with 10 more on the waitlist, so the interest was clearly there.

The accepted students went through a virtual, and then in-person orientation. The rest of August went by in a blur, in the best way. Teens helped clean cat rooms, provided enrichment to the dogs, washed dishes, did laundry, prepped dog meals and tidied the grounds. Humane Heroes also interacted with therapy dogs, ferrets, rabbits, kittens and even a snake. They learned about humane care of pets, as well as dog and cat body language. They were educated about specific topics such as climate change and pets, humane care of livestock and animal cruelty.



Humane Hero using clicker training with a shelter dog

Much of the curriculum I created was based off of resources provided by APHE, especially on the subject of animal cruelty. I chose not to shy away from such a heavy topic with the Humane Heroes, and I think this is an absolutely critical part of working with this age group. As educators we need to understand that children of this age are ready for the “hard conversations.” They want to know what is wrong in the world, and they want the agency to start to change things now, not when they are adults. That is why when they learned about animal cruelty, Humane Heroes

wrote letters to their governor to shut down the puppy mill pipeline.

This first summer of Humane Heroes was an unprecedented success. I filled the program and had so many students on the waitlist that I had to stop taking them. I sent out a survey to participants, and the biggest complaint? **Teens wanted more.** They wanted to work more, clean more kennels, wash more dishes, sort more bottles and cans. There was even talk about wanting to volunteer during the school year, something that at this time we do not offer to youth.

I’m very excited to bring the program back in summer of 2023, and hopefully with it spanning over two months instead of one. I know some people say that teenagers can be apathetic, lazy and boast nasty attitudes, but I have not found that with my program at MHHS. The teens that show up want to be here and are legitimately helpful to the shelter. And I attribute that to giving these Humane Heroes something meaningful to do and treating them like the young adults they are.



TEACHING TIPS

Sensory Handouts

Claudia Meza, Board Certified Behavior Analyst for the Humane Society of Southern Arizona has created resources on sensory considerations and autism that provide valuable information and advice to educators.

Sensory Considerations is a resource that explores different senses, and offers suggestions on creating learning environments for those with sensory issues. APHE members can visit Claudia

Meza's autism and sensory consideration resources in [our Resource Library](#).

Not an APHE Member yet? To access these materials and other humane education resources become a member! Find out about member benefits and how to join APHE by visiting our website: [aphe.org](#).



“Sensory issues are common in people with autism and are even included in the diagnostic criteria for autism spectrum disorder. Each autistic person is unique, and this includes their personal sensory sensitivities.”

-AutismSpeaks, 2022

Sensory Overview: Tips for Educators

Sensory	Do's	Don'ts
Sight/Lights	Do: Offer sunglasses and hats and use adjustable lights or light covers	Don'ts: Have bright lights (fluorescent)
Hearing/Sounds	Do: Offer earplugs or headphones and limit loud noises if possible	Don't: Place near loud dogs or potential loud noises such as alarms or phones
Smells	Do: Have a clean and scentless area, avoid pet products (food/shampoo) with strong scents	Don't: Have strong scents like candles, sprays and lotions
Touch/Texture	Do: Have various textures to offer (long hair, short hair, etc.), offer gloves, offer stuffed dogs for practice on appropriate petting and touching	Don't: Force or pressure to touch when they say "no," limit texture options, attempt unwarranted hugs or touching

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Editorial Notes

GOT PHOTOS?

We need photos of humane ed in action: educators teaching, animal interactions, crafts, education spaces, kids having fun!

Follow These Steps:

- 1 Make sure you have permission to share the photo.
- 2 Be selective! Only send photos with high resolution and clear images.
- 3 Email photos to heq@aphe.org

Your photos could be featured on the APHE website or in the E-news or HEQ!

President's Pen
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Humane Society of Southern Arizona

Member Spotlight
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Book Review
Don Seller
Alberta SPCA

State of the Field
Michaela Fisher
Mohawk Hudson Humane Society

Teaching Tips
Claudia Meza, Board Certified Behavior Analyst

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