

Humane Education Past, Present, and Future

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CHAPTER

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Introduction

From the earliest years of organized animal protection in North America, humane education—the attempt to inculcate the kindness-to-animals ethic through formal or informal instruction of children—has been cast as a fruitful response to the challenge of reducing the abuse and neglect of animals. Yet, almost 140 years after the movement’s formation, humane education remains largely the province of local societies for the prevention of cruelty and their educational divisions—if they have such divisions. Efforts to institutionalize the teaching of humane treatment of animals within the larger framework of the American educational establishment have had only limited success. Moreover, knowledge, understanding, and empirical measures of the impact of humane education remain limited. In many respects humane education is best seen as an arena of untapped potential rather than one of unfulfilled promise.

The Origins of the Kindness-to- Animals Ethic

Appreciation for the value of cultivating kindness to animals in children flowed directly from John Locke’s observations on the subject. Although others had made the point previously, in 1693 Locke offered the most prominent early statement of the

need to correct children’s cruelty. “This tendency should be watched in them, and, if they incline to any such cruelty, they should be taught the contrary usage,” Locke wrote. “For the custom of tormenting and killing other animals will, by degrees, harden their hearts even toward men; and they who delight in the suffering and destruction of inferior creatures, will not be apt to be very compassionate or benign to those of their own kind” (Locke 1989).

Over time Locke’s insight raised interest in the beneficial moral effect of childhood instruction favoring the kindly treatment of animals. Growing comprehension of the importance of childhood experience and its impact on youthful character sustained a robust transatlantic publishing industry devoted to the production of literature for children. In North America the first juvenile works infused with the humane didactic began to appear in the late 1790s and early 1800s. The earliest were reprints or excerpts of English titles, but the genre quickly gained important American enthusiasts, including Lydia Maria Child and Harriet Beecher Stowe (Pickering 1981; Unti 2002).

One explanation for the spread of the kindness-to-animals ethic lies in its consonance with the republican gender ideology of the post-revolutionary United States. Early American society assumed a set of paternalistic relationships both within and outside the family, emphasizing the impor-

tance of a virtuous citizenry devoted to republican principles of governance. This made education of the boy especially critical, since as a man he would assume authority over family, chattel, property, and social institutions. Responsibility for educating the child for his leadership role rested with women, who were assumed to be the repositories of gentle virtue, compassionate feeling, and devotion—buffers against the heartless struggle of the masculine public sphere. Humane education provided one means of insulating boys against the tyrannical tendencies that might undermine civic life were they to go unchecked. Animals were nicely suited for instruction that impressed upon the child their helplessness and dependence upon him and his considerable power over them (Kerber 1980; Grier 1999; Unti 2002).

The presence of the kindness-to-animals ethic in antebellum childhood experience had still broader implications for the process of class formation in North America. From the 1820s onward, sympathy with domestic animals, gradually encoded in education lessons for children, became an important means of inculcating such standards of bourgeois gentility as self-discipline, Christian sentiment, empathy, and moral sensitivity. Moreover, as a household companion, a domestic animal could serve as a convenient real life medium for the practice and expression of compassionate feelings. Merciful

regard for animals became one hallmark of a developing middle-class culture rooted in Protestant evangelical piety (Grier 1999).

In addition to their sociocultural utility for instilling and enacting the principles of kindness and compassion, the presence of animals in children's literature fulfilled other didactic functions in nineteenth-century domestic ideology. Narratives of animal life offered idealized conceptions of middle-class family relationships and served as morality tales for human domestic relations. By their example the animal heroes of these narratives served to reinforce cherished norms of conduct and behavior (Grier 1999).

Over time such functions helped to consolidate the place of animals in the emotional framework of middle-class domestic life. By the 1850s the kindness-to-animals ethic was a staple of juvenile literature as well as a fixture of many middle-class homes. A generation before the advent of organized animal protection in America, the humane didactic was an established instrument of childhood socialization (Grier 1999; Unti 2002).

The Era of Organized Animal Protection

After the anti-cruelty societies formed in the late 1860s, humane education became a vital objective of a burgeoning social movement specifically devoted to the welfare of animals. In the earliest stages of anti-cruelty work, humane education referred broadly to the instruction of both adults and children. As the limits of law enforcement-centered approaches became clear, animal protectionists embraced early instruction in kindness as a means of reducing adult crimes and prosecutions. Accordingly they shifted their emphasis to the education of children as a long-term response to the spread of

cruelty. Although many advocates adopted this approach, George T. Angell of the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (MSPCA) stood at its forefront. Under Angell's leadership, the MSPCA and its sister organization, the American Humane Education Society (AHES), provided both the inspiration and the resources for humane education, which became central to the coalescence of a national animal protection movement during the last quarter of the nineteenth century (Angell n.d.).

Like the kindness-to-animals ethic itself, enthusiasm for humane education of children within organized systems of education predated the anti-cruelty societies, coinciding with the emergence of the common school movement. The massive influx of immigrants in the 1830s and 1840s led some educators to envision the school as a central instrument of assimilation, guiding immigrant children away from the "backward" cultures of their parents. Horace Mann (1796–1859), universal schooling's best-known proponent, based his educational philosophy on unlimited faith in the perfectibility of human beings and their institutions. His conviction that the public school could be the answer to all of the Republic's problems had roots in the deepest of American traditions, including Jeffersonian republicanism, Christian moralism, and Emersonian idealism. As Mann conceived the common school, it would be a guarantor of social order that reduced the destructive potential of class, political, or sectarian difference. This was not an unproblematic or unchallenged view, of course, and popular education was a subject of intense debate (Cremin 1969; Button and Provenzo 1983).

By 1860 Mann's ideals had reached fruition, with public schools operating in a majority of the states. Although their philosophies varied, supporters of the common schools hoped to improve children's character by inculcating morality and citizenship and to facilitate social mobility by promoting talent and hard effort. Through edu-

cation they would push young citizens toward what one reformer called the "civilized life" of order, self-discipline, civic loyalty, and respect for private property. Between 1860 and 1920, the common school movement, expanding its reach to include kindergarten, elementary, and secondary levels, became the dominant tradition in American education. During the same period, compulsory attendance requirements—rare before the Civil War—became universal, with Mississippi the one exception (Butts and Cremin 1953; Cremin 1969).

Mann recognized the value of humane instruction, noting that

the good man grows in virtue, and the bad man grows in sin....From the youthful benevolence that rejoices to see an animal happy, one grows up into a world-wide benefactor, into the healer of diseases, the restorer of sight to the blind, the giver of a tongue to the dumb, the founder of hospitals. . . . Another grows from cruelty to animals, to being a kidnaper, and enslaver, and seller of men, women, and children. (Mann 1861)

Over time, humane values were incorporated into formal systems of education, including those inspired by the object-teaching method associated with the State Normal School at Oswego, New York, and its president, Edward A. Sheldon (1823–1897) (Sheldon 1862).

Angell, influenced by Mann, stressed humane education's utility for ensuring public order, suppressing anarchy and radicalism, smoothing relations between the classes, and reducing crime. Humane education would be the solution to social unrest and revolutionary politics, he believed, and a valuable means for socializing the young, especially the offspring of the lower classes. Angell also appreciated the significance of the public school system as a forum for socialization in an increasingly secular society. He told the annual meeting of the American Humane Association (AHA) in 1885 that "the public school teachers have in the

first fortnight of each school year, about four times as many children, and have them more hours, than the Sunday school teachers do during the whole year.” Humane education provided a means of spreading the word that could be adapted easily by other advocates, especially women, in whatever region or situation they might be active. It did not require substantial funds, and anyone able and willing to work with children in the schools or elsewhere could participate (Unti 2002).

Angell’s enthusiasm for humane education helped to make it one of the most important elements of animal protection work in the Gilded Age and the Progressive Era. The MSPCA directed tens of thousands of dollars toward the production and distribution of humane education literature, making it the preeminent source of such materials in the nation. It also invested time, effort, and funds toward the formation of Bands of Mercy. The English temperance movement’s Bands of Hope, which rallied children against alcohol consumption and related evils, provided the model. Band of Mercy members pledged to “be kind to all harmless living creatures and try to protect them from cruel usage.” Angell and Thomas Timmins, a minister who had assisted with the development of Bands of Mercy in his native England, introduced the concept to the United States in 1882. Timmins worked to form bands, while Angell strove to raise money and awareness (Timmins 1883). In 1889 this initiative coalesced as AHES.

From the 1870s onward, Angell had been on the lookout for suitable literature to guide the young toward the values of kindness. He found his ideal vehicle in *Black Beauty*, the novel dictated by a dying British invalid, Anna Sewell, and first published in 1878. In 1890 Angell circumvented copyright laws and brought out the first American edition under the auspices of AHES. In just two years, more than one million copies were in circulation. *Black Beauty* cast a long shadow over the field, and Angell, wishing to

inspire a canine analogue, advertised a contest for the purpose. The winning entry was *Beautiful Joe*, by Margaret Marshall Saunders of Nova Scotia. Later, a spate of autobiographical works—written by a host of maltreated animals—appeared, and the animal autobiography became a staple of humane literature. The other books in the AHES series anchored by *Black Beauty*—*Our Goldmine at Hollyhurst* (1893), *The Strike at Shane’s* (1893), *Four Months in New Hampshire* (1894), and *For Pity’s Sake* (1897)—were mainstays of the field well into the twentieth century. The books, along with cash awards, medallions, badges, and rewards of merit, were distributed in schools in recognition of good behavior, recitations, essays, acts of kindness, and other attainments (Sewell 1890; Anonymous 1893; Bray 1893; Saunders 1893; Barrows 1894; Carter 1897; Unti 2002).

In the post-Civil War period, the formation of character became “a new social religion and the dynamic for social change,” especially for feminists and moral reformers. It was believed that the properly instructed child could resist temptation and internalize a morality consistent with middle-class ideals of social purity (Pivar 1973). Such preoccupation with youthful virtue provided humane advocates with both rationale and wider opportunities. The promotion of humane education as an antidote to depraved character and a panacea for numerous social ills brought animal protection into close alignment with other reform movements of the era. The movements for temperance, child protection, and humane treatment of animals, in particular, all reflected deep concerns about the ramifications of cruelty and violence for individuals, the family, and the social order. Each cause addressed issues that straddled the line between private and public spheres. Humane education work received an especially significant boost in the 1890s from the creation of the Department of Mercy as a division of the Women’s Christian Temperance Union during

its “Do Everything” phase under Frances Willard (Unti 2002).

The Compulsory Humane Education Movement

The first discussion of compulsory humane education occurred in Massachusetts in the 1880s, and by 1886 George Angell had helped to secure a humane instruction mandate as part of compliance with an extant statute requiring “the teaching of humanity, universal benevolence, etc.” By the early 1900s, the notion of a national campaign for compulsory humane education began to gather momentum. In 1905 William O. Stillman of AHA and professional educator Stella H. Preston formed the New York Humane Education Committee to advance a state requirement. In that same year, both Oklahoma and Pennsylvania passed state laws providing for moral and humane education. The Oklahoma legislation required humane instruction as part of the moral education of future citizens. Sponsors wanted educators

to teach morality in the broadest meaning of the word, for the purpose of elevating and refining the character of school children... that they may know how to conduct themselves as social beings in relation to each other...and thereby lessen wrong-doing and crime.

The law mandated that one half hour each week be devoted to teaching “kindness to and humane treatment and protection of dumb animals and birds; their lives, habits and usefulness, and the important part they are intended to fulfil in the economy of nature” (Unti 2002).

In 1909 the compulsory humane education movement achieved its most important benchmark—the passage of legislation in Illinois that

included sanctions for noncompliance and provisions for instruction in teacher-training schools. In November 1915 AHA adopted a resolution favoring establishment of compulsory humane education in every state, selecting the 1909 Illinois law as its model. However, of the twenty states that had humane education requirements in place by 1920, only two others—New York and Oklahoma—followed the Illinois model in providing sanctions for non-compliance. In New York compliance was tied to public funds, and the commissioner of education was directed to publicize the requirement (Unti 2002).

The emergence of the professional humane educator was a natural outgrowth of the compulsory humane education movement. The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) created a humane education department in 1916. The stated goal of the division was “not to do the humane education work in our schools, so much as to stimulate the work of the schools themselves.” By the beginning of the academic year in autumn 1921, the ASPCA was promoting essay contests within the school system. That summer, the humane education department cooperated with four Lower East Side school districts in New York City to measure the effectiveness of humane propaganda with the children of the foreign-born. The activity the ASPCA chose to encourage was the rounding up of unwanted strays. During 1922 the department estimated that it had reached 300 New York City schools in the course of its work. Preston estimated that, in the summer of 1923, New York schoolchildren brought in more than 28,000 small animals from the streets. As an instrument of character development, the kindness ethic nicely served the goal of assimilation by exposing immigrant children to normative values and expectations (Shultz 1924; Unti 2002).

Throughout most of the nineteenth century, humane educators relied on eclectic anthologies and an array of didactic stories and novels devoted to

kindness to animals. Many humane periodicals included selections for children, and some of these found their way into published works marked for use by Bands of Mercy (Firth 1883; Timmins 1883). In the 1890s, however, the first manuals and textbooks with systematic humane lesson plans, question and answer sets, and related offerings began to appear. In 1902 AHA formed a committee to promote the publication of textbooks that inculcated humane ideals and to draw up guidelines for publishers of children’s textbooks. By 1930 about a dozen humane education titles had appeared (Unti 2002).

Here and there, progress in institutionalizing humane education ensued. In Colorado the State Teachers College adopted a course of study in ethical and humane education that was directed by the state’s Bureau of Child and Animal Protection. For a time, humane advocates made efforts to canvass the meetings of the National Education Association (NEA), and it seems that animal protectionists were successful in their outreach to national and regional teaching organizations, as well as to school system administrators. In 1924 the NEA president endorsed humane education at the annual meeting of AHA (Unti 2002).

Despite such progress, the push for compulsory humane instruction was not necessarily instrumental in ensuring access or influence within the schools. The law was frequently a dead letter in those states where it was approved. Hostile and indifferent superintendents and teachers could ignore the statutes with little fear of recrimination, and effective texts and materials were not always readily available. Chicago, with its tradition of progressive experimentation in education, promised to be one place in which humane education might gain a significant foothold. But by 1923 advocates were casting doubt on the success of the movement for humane education even in Illinois. On the basis of her own experience in a small town outside New York City, a New York reformer concluded in the

late 1930s that the law in her state was “unevenly observed,” its enforcement usually contingent on “some superintendent, principal, or teacher with a kind heart, who personally has compelled action” (Shultz 1924; Krows 1938).

The Longevity and Impact of the Bands of Mercy

For years, *Our Dumb Animals* (the MSPCA’s monthly magazine) reported extensively on the formation of Bands of Mercy. However, such reports were better reflections of speaking engagements than of actual clubs or groups that went on to continuous activity. Referring to the “sixty thousand branches of our American Bands of Mercy” in 1905, George Angell wrote, “What does this mean? It means that over sixty thousand audiences have been addressed on kindness both to human beings and the lower animals” (in Unti 2002, 588). Some years later AHES claimed that more than 103,000 bands had formed between 1882 and 1916. In 1922 Angell’s successor, Francis Rowley, estimated that in forty years of activity, the Bands of Mercy had enrolled more than 4 million children (Unti 2002).

While admitting their positive influence, social scientist William Shultz underscored the “transitory character” of the bands. Where “no attempt is made to encourage them, they soon dissolve, leaving little or no effect upon the children’s characters.” AHA’s William Stillman conceded that the bands “were not as carefully looked after or as rigorously followed up as they might be.” Rowley believed that, in many cases, interest was sustained through the course of one school year, and that in successive years new bands would form at the instigation of teachers or humane educators who visited the schools again. In some cases, the bands

enjoyed great longevity (Shultz 1924; Unti 2002).

In fact under Rowley's leadership AHES launched an ambitious effort to hold the bands together by maintaining humane educators in the field. None of the organizational initiatives of the early twentieth century matched the accomplishments of AHES in building and sustaining a cadre of humane missionaries during the period from 1910 to 1925. Educational outreach to the schools was especially robust in the pre-World War I years.

The success of the AHES initiatives depended heavily on its field representatives, at least some of whom were paid (Unti 2002). The field representatives were armed with a broad selection of humane education materials, including novels such as *Black Beauty*. By 1913 AHES was the world's largest publisher and distributor of humane literature by far. *Our Dumb Animals* enjoyed a monthly circulation of 60,000. In December 1916 931 new bands were reported, the largest figure ever for a one-month period, although one third of these formed in Massachusetts. That same year AHES estimated that it had spent more than \$100,000 on literature and its distribution since 1882 (Unti 2002).

Once World War I began, the focus of many animal protection organizations shifted to war concerns. Not simply a distraction, however, the war threatened humane ideals more fundamentally as the United States prepared for battle. In the years before America joined the war, humanitarians could point to humane education as a powerful solution to the world's ills. With the war tearing Europe apart, American advocates cast it as an inoculant against the animosities and prejudices bred by conflict, and the guarantor of peace. But the wartime focus on preparedness also placed on the defensive humanitarians who had so closely identified themselves with anti-militarism. Humanitarians felt vulnerable to the charge that their own educational program would lead to the "soften-

ing" of American youth. Rowley met the matter straight on in an editorial, writing:

Should anyone imagine that humane education means a generation of boys and girls with all iron sapped from their blood, a generation of cowards and cravens, he only reveals his total ignorance of what humane education is. The spirit of chivalry toward all the weak and defenseless, the hatred of injustice and cruelty. . . will make of the citizen, should the time demand it, a far better patriot and soldier than the selfish, bullying pugnacious spirit that often proclaims not a possible hero, but only an arrant coward. (in Unti 2002, 590)

In any case, once America entered the conflict, war animal relief filtered straight into Band of Mercy work and such other humane initiatives as Be Kind to Animals Week. The message of universal peace through humane education was subordinated to patriotic imperatives. The movement's most vital activity—its outreach to children—was reconfigured dramatically to serve the interests of American nationalism (Unti 2002).

The Failure of Institutionalization

It was not the war but the lack of success in institutionalizing humane education that led to its decline during the middle decades of the twentieth century. Very few of the initiatives launched by humane organizations gained the lasting attention of teacher-training institutions, and humane education certainly did not become a regular element of teacher preparation. The fate of a \$100,000 donation to Columbia University in 1907, specifically earmarked for promoting humane education, was perhaps the most conspicuous setback on this front. Rather than direct the money toward Teachers College for studies and training in humane edu-

cation, university president Nicholas Murray Butler used it to support a faculty position in social legislation. The funds disappeared into Columbia's general accounts and, with the exception of several historical studies, no progress toward the goal of the donor was realized (Unti 2002).

The Columbia initiative was the most significant missed opportunity in the history of humane education. Had the gift been allocated differently, it might have supported the review and validation of teaching methods and content; the resolution of differences between humane education, nature study, and science education; the development of a training program for humane education specialists; or the institutionalization of the kindness-to-animals ethic in the curriculum. However, the bias of Butler and the professors he consulted made it hard for them to take seriously such academic investigations of humane education (Unti 2002).

At least a few researchers in the pre-World War II era believed that humane education was a proper subject for scholarly inquiry. In 1931 concern for animals found its way onto the agenda of the Conference of Educational Associations, whose members came together annually to discuss educational theory and practice in Great Britain. That year Susan Isaacs, chair of the British Psychological Society's Education Section, spoke about her research concerning childhood socialization and attitudes concerning animals. Her method, applied in a small Cambridge school during the years 1924–1927, permitted children the greatest possible freedom to pursue their own interests. In her research Isaacs paid special attention to the conflicting tendencies toward cruelty and kindness to animals that she observed in children. She had proposed that educators should strive "to make a positive educational use of the child's impulses" so that children could be helped to reach "a more satisfactory psychological solution for their own internal conflicts." This method of instruction, she asserted, would become "an

active influence in the building up of a positive morality of behavior towards animals, going beyond the mere negative standard of not being unkind to them, and expressed in an eager and intelligent interest in their life-histories, and a lively sympathy with their doings and happenings” (Isaacs 1930, 166).

Isaacs’s special focus was on children’s exposure to the death of animals and on dissection. The children she observed “showed greater sympathy with the living animals, and more consistent care, after they had ‘looked inside’ the dead ones, and fewer lapses into experimental cruelty,” Isaacs reported. “In other words, the impulse to master and destroy was taken up into the aim of understanding. The living animal became much less of an object of power and possession, and much more an independent creature to be learnt about, watched and known for its own sake.” Isaacs found that the children moved steadily toward the non-interfering, observational attitude of many modern naturalists, and developed a humane outlook and sense of responsibility toward their pets and toward animals in general (Isaacs 1930, 165–166).

Obviously, these findings, gathered in one school, could not be considered broadly representative or conclusive. Nevertheless, the very singularity of the approach taken by Isaacs and her colleagues makes one thing clear: fruitful research on children’s psychological development and on the methods by which an attitude of respect and interest in animals could be inculcated was a neglected pursuit for much of the twentieth century.

The Mid-Twentieth Century

In the early twentieth century, arguments in favor of increased emphasis on education as distinct from practical relief work for animals surfaced regularly. If actively pursued, the

emphasis on humane education promised to shift the balance of humane work. As an *Our Dumb Animals* editorialist, probably Rowley, optimistically predicted,

More and more societies organized for the prevention of cruelty to animals will turn to the work of humane education. . . as their widest and most important field of service. Train the heart of the child aright, and the cruelty from which animals suffer will end far more quickly than by punishing the ignorant and cruel man. (Unti 2002, 610)

As it happened humane education did not become more central to the work of SPCAs in the years that followed. By the era of the Depression it had diminished greatly, as the practical and financial burdens of shelter and hospital work, animal control obligations, and law enforcement cast other initiatives, including humane education, to the margins of activity. What survived was the simple lesson of kindness to pets, carried into the schools by SPCA staff members and volunteers who continued to enjoy access to the earliest grades of elementary school. Changes (such as the advent of motor vehicles) that eliminated from Americans’ daily experience the abuse of horses and other working animals rendered obsolete much of the earlier practical education concerning animal welfare. At the same time, the movement’s educational focus, normally centered on acts of individual cruelty, failed to touch upon newer and socially sanctioned forms of animal use. Both self-censorship and the constraints imposed by educational institutions prevented humane education from reaching into the realm of the new cruelties—institutionalized uses of animals such as animal experimentation and the mass production of animals for food and fur that were well beyond the experience and influence of most individuals. Undoubtedly, too, the disillusionment wrought by war, depression, and other events deflated the grand claims and expectations expressed by Gilded Age and Progress-

sive Era animal protectionists.

These considerations render the success of the campaign for compulsory humane education legislation highly ironic. Its clear relationship to moral instruction and the inculcation of good citizenship was endorsed in state houses all across America. Paradoxically, however, the determination to see such laws passed was not matched by commensurate effort to see them honored. In general, the cadre of SPCA activists committed to humane education dwindled, and efforts to see its principles enshrined in the curriculum of teachers’ institutes and colleges failed (Unti 2002).

Ultimately, the difficulty of penetrating local and regional school system bureaucracies proved insurmountable for a movement with limited resources and more urgent concerns and responsibilities. Yet the blame for such failures should not be laid simply upon organized animal protection itself; the impact of countervailing forces was decisive. The classroom and the educational system were the subject of increasing struggles during the twentieth century, and the question of how humans ought to encounter and treat animals was implicated in several of these. Humanitarians were not the only ones with an interest in animals. Agricultural societies, industry associations, religionists, and science education groups also fought for a stake in shaping modern American education. Many of these interests promoted consumptive uses of animals that were at odds with humane imperatives (Unti 2002).

The fortunes of “nature-study,” a contemporaneous education movement, were very similar to those of humane education, as both declined in the face of a professionalizing field of science instruction. The rise of a professional science education cadre, committed to the unification, rationalization, and standardization of American science curricula, crowded out both nature-study and humane education, incorporating some of their elements but ridding those elements of their romantic notions of

affinity with nature and non-human animals. By the 1930s the term *elementary science* had subsumed nature-study, and humane education as a discrete subject of instruction was on the wane. As one scholar suggests, the “abstract rationalism” of biology instruction in the higher grades and in university courses also left little room for the empathy-building emphasis of nature-study and humane education approaches (Pauly 2002).

The anti-cruelty movement’s overall loss of influence and lack of vitality in the interwar period also had its effect. Humane education suffered as much as any area of organized animal protection from the absence of enlightened and energetic leadership, and the loss of a receptive public. By World War II, organizations were using badly dated humane education materials, if any.

In some regions viable outreach programs undertaken by regional humane societies survived and enjoyed good access to public schools even during the mid-twentieth century decades (Matthewson 1942; Whyte 1948; Walter 1950; American Humane Association 1952). While humane education outreach now tended to focus on the treatment of companion animals and the benefits of keeping pets, it nevertheless reinforced the simple message of kindness to animals as an important standard of individual conduct. In addition, the kindness-to-animals ethic continued to resonate through children’s literature (Oswald 1994) and other cultural media (Cartmill 1993). These influences certainly strengthened decades of effort aimed at promoting personal rectitude in dealings with animals.

After the post-World War II revival of organized animal protection (Unti and Rowan 2001), humane education gradually resurfaced as a priority of both national and local groups. In the mid-1960s, The HSUS began to invest serious attention and resources in humane education, collaborating with university researchers to formulate and test methods and techniques

of humane education. By the 1970s such efforts sparked the formation of a separate division of The HSUS, predecessor of the National Association for Humane and Environmental Education (NAHEE). Founded in 1973 NAHEE has become a preeminent source for information, research, and analysis in the field of humane education.

The Status Quo

Today the locus of humane education activity in the United States continues to be the animal care and control community, as elementary and secondary schools and colleges of education have yet to accept and integrate the teaching of most humane concepts into their curricula. Many animal care and control agencies (SPCAs, humane societies, animal rescue leagues, and the like) offer education programs in some form, working primarily at the municipal or county level. Such programs frequently involve partnerships with schools or other youth-oriented institutions.

What methodologies does humane education employ? What is being taught and how effectively? How significant is the role of youth education within the animal welfare movement?

A study conducted by Jaime Olin (2002), a graduate student at the Tufts University Center for Animals and Public Policy, provides some answers. Olin surveyed 600 animal shelters, selected at random from approximately 2,800 in existence nationwide, about the scope and nature of their efforts to teach children humane values. The results of her investigation paint a picture of humane education as a relatively widespread enterprise, yet one that typically is relegated to side issue status, addressed perfunctorily by most animal care and control organizations and simply ignored by others.

Of the 203 animal care and control agencies that responded to Olin’s 32-item questionnaire, 144—71 percent—were classified as having a humane education program. Those respondents reported being involved in humane education for a median of ten years, and 42 percent reported relevant activity for between eleven and fifty years (Figure 1). The majority of shelters with humane education programs claimed reaching between 100 and 500 children per year, most of whom were of elementary school age (Figure 2). The vast majority of respondents—94 percent—indicated that they regard humane education as either “essential” or “very impor-

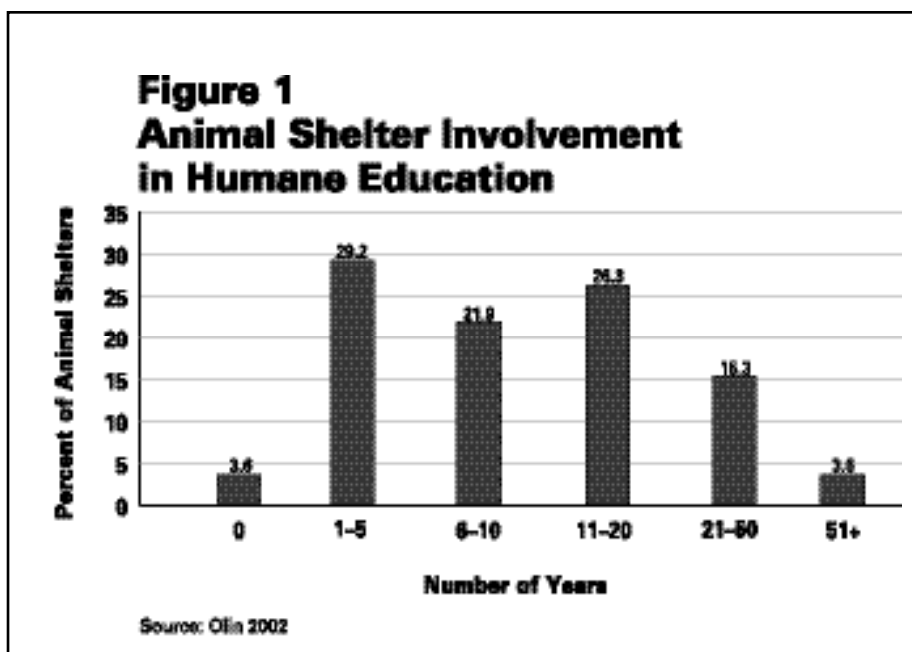
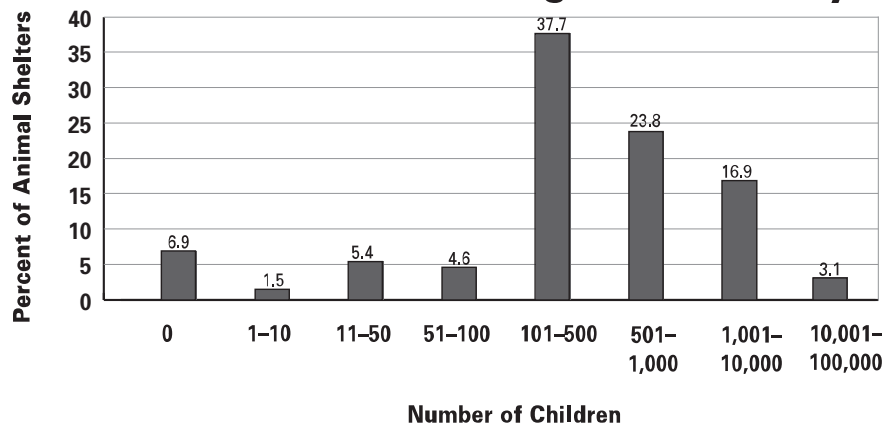


Figure 2
Children Participating in Animal Shelter Humane Education Programs Annually



Source: Olin 2002

tant” to their overall mission.

If classroom visits and shelter tours traditionally have been the educational methods of choice employed by animal shelters since the mid-twentieth century, then it appears from Olin’s investigation that little has changed (Figure 3). Eighty-eight percent of respondents reported conducting classroom visits, and 77 percent included tours of their facilities in their programs. Fewer organizations reported offering youth com-

munity service programs (44 percent), junior volunteer programs (30 percent), after-school activities (23 percent), and summer camps (15 percent). Thirty-six percent reported serving as a source of curriculum-blended materials for classroom teachers. Children saw live animals in 86 percent of humane education programs and were allowed to touch an animal in 73 percent.

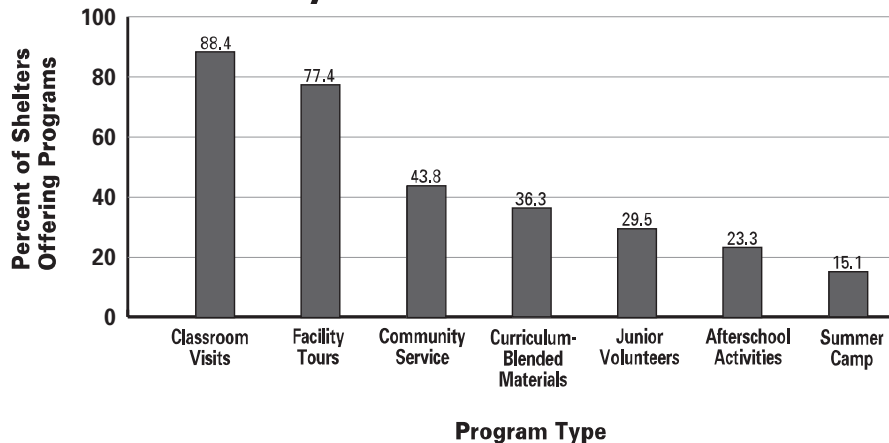
The content of humane education programs at the local level is domi-

nated by companion animal issues (Figure 4). Olin’s respondents indicated that responsible pet ownership accounted for an average of 49 percent of their programs’ subject matter, safety around animals for 26 percent, and the role of animal shelters for 20 percent. On average, 8 percent of programming was devoted to wildlife issues, and 2 percent to topics related to farm animals. Obviously, this distribution of priority reflects the primacy of direct care and protection of companion animals in the missions and day-to-day activities of animal shelters. In addition, omission from youth education programs of such topics as intensive farming, the use of animals in research, and consumptive uses of wildlife may stem from other factors. These include the philosophical orientation of shelter administrators and boards of directors; sensitivity to local politics; the influence of competing and sometimes hostile interest groups; the view that such issues do not fall under the purview of animal care and control agencies; and the reluctance of school officials to accept special interest topics into the curriculum—especially those that may be considered age-inappropriate, inflammatory, or inimical to a community’s values, traditions, or economic base.

Olin’s investigation also reveals that 88 percent of local animal care and control agencies obtain at least a portion of their youth education materials from outside organizations. Materials were procured most often from national animal protection groups with a history of providing shelter-related services and disseminating youth education resources with a strong emphasis on companion-animal issues: The HSUS, the ASPCA, and AHA. Thirty-five percent of the respondents reported using *KIND News*, a classroom newspaper published by NAHEE. Sixty-four percent said they included their own materials in their programs.

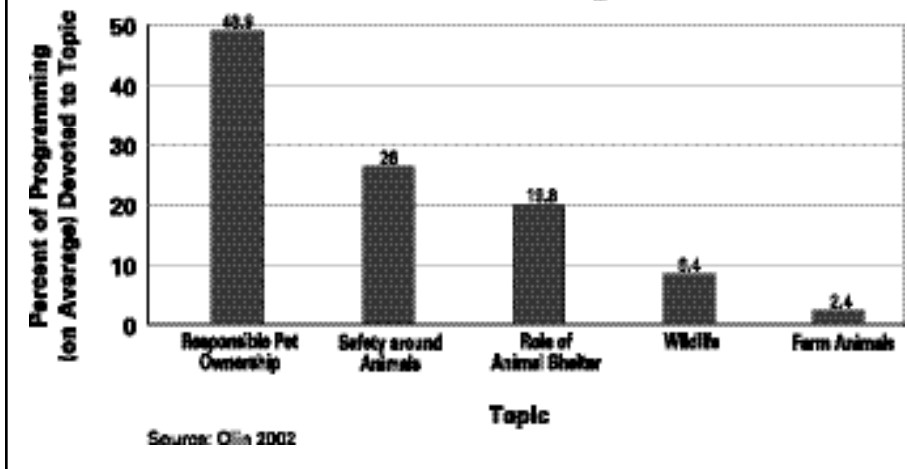
If, *prima facie*, the above data shows humane education to be a vibrant enterprise, the deeper reality is that it remains a peripheral compo-

Figure 3
Types of Humane Education Programs Offered by Animal Shelters



Source: Olin 2002

**Figure 4
Content of Animal Shelter
Humane Education Programs**



ment of animal welfare activity, as it was throughout most of the last century. Despite the fact that a majority of local animal care and control agencies report offering humane education programs, have been doing so for quite some time, and regard humane education as mission-critical, commitment to youth education as measured by funding—perhaps the most salient measure—is anemic. Although the median annual budget reported by Olin’s respondents was \$200,000 (Figure 5), 63 percent of organizations with humane education programs reported allocating less than \$1,000 to those programs, and only 21 percent reported having an annual humane education budget of \$5,000 or more (Figure 6). Most respondents (74 percent) admitted that the amount of money budgeted for education was “not enough,” while 26 percent said the amount their organizations had allocated was “just about right.”

The animal care and control community’s reluctance fully to embrace youth education also can be inferred from staffing-related data. Organizations responding to Olin’s study reported a median of one paid education staff member (a significant number given that the median number of full-time, paid staff overall was four) and one education volunteer (Figure

7). But personnel responsible for youth education often are spread thin, charged with handling a wide variety of disparate job duties. For example, when asked to give the title of the person involved most directly with humane education, 26 percent of respondents indicated “shelter director,” while only 12 percent cited “humane education director.” Thirty-eight percent indicated “other,” and in most cases, Olin found, that meant “animal control officer” (Figure 8).

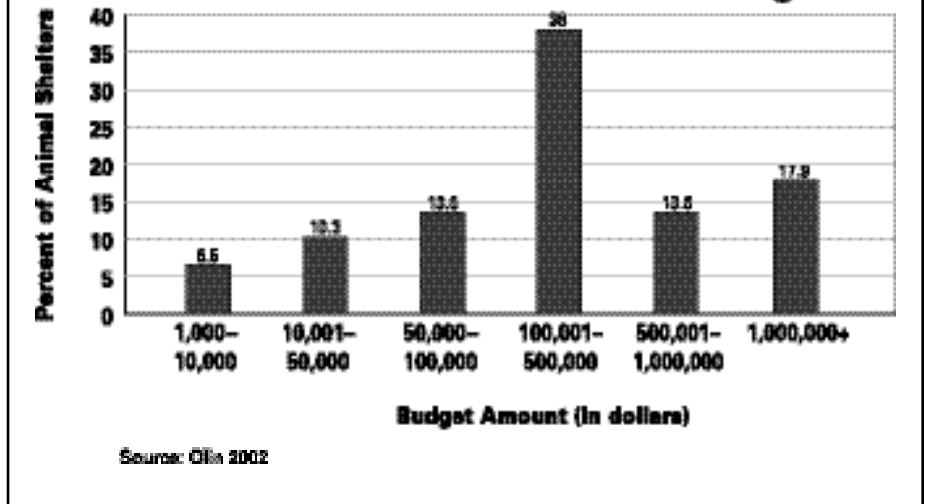
When asked by Olin about other services performed by education staff,

57 percent of respondents said “media relations”; 51 percent said “adult education”; 33 percent said “animal behavior counseling”; 25 percent said “violence prevention”; and 23 percent said “pet therapy.” Although some of those job duties are not unrelated to children, it is clear that youth education, per se, rarely is given the undivided attention of one or more staff members. That education personnel are spread thin is also reflected in the fact that an average of only 21 percent of children reached by Olin’s respondents received more than one humane education intervention, e.g., more than one classroom visit or shelter tour, per year.

If youth education were a high priority in the animal care and control community, one might expect that formal education credentials would be a criterion in the hiring of staff assigned to teach children. Olin found, however, that only 15 percent of respondents reported that the staff member most directly involved with humane education had classroom teaching certification, while 50 percent cited “on-the-job-training” in lieu of such credentials. Twenty-four percent indicated that their education staff had informal teaching or youth leadership experience (Figure 9).

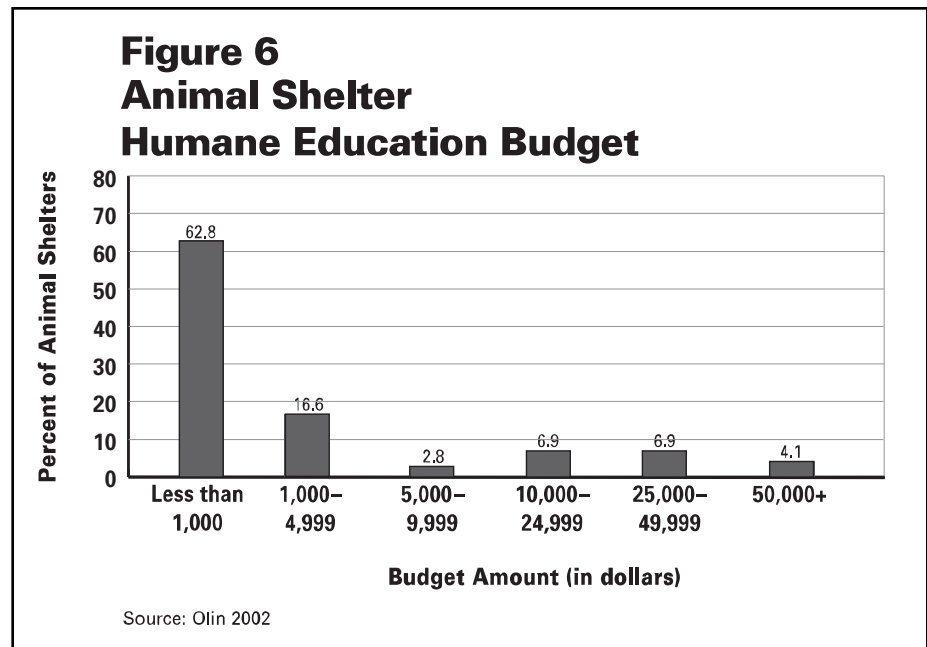
One of the most telling signs of generally tepid support for humane

**Figure 5
Animal Shelter Total Annual Budgets**



education is that 29 percent of the organizations answering Olin's questionnaire did not respond to the item asking about the size of their education budget. Olin classified those organizations as not having a humane education program. While the assumption behind that classification (i.e., no education budget means no education program) may not be entirely valid, the fact remains that a significant number of animal care and control organizations make no effort to teach humane values to children, while most make a weak attempt at best. Why? Why would an undertaking that, at least intuitively, holds such promise for advancing the cause of animal protection and that was so energetically pursued during the early decades of the animal welfare movement be given such minimal attention nowadays by those most directly engaged in solving their communities' animal-related problems?

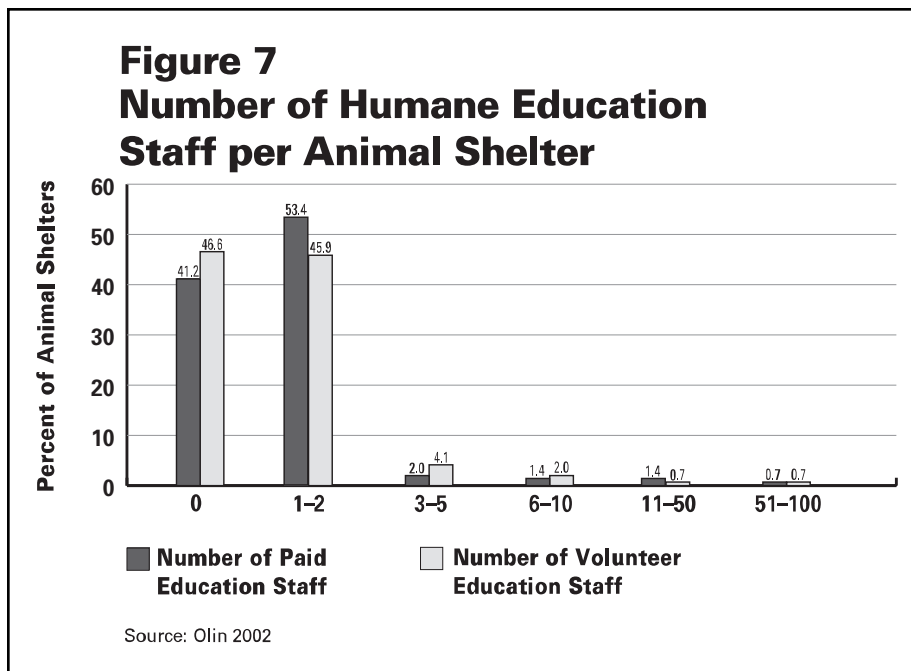
Answers from animal shelter professionals typically hinge on points about lack of time and/or funding—points raised, in fact, by some respondents to Olin's survey. Such rationales, however, beg the underlying question, since if youth education were seen as crucial to achieving animal protection objectives, time and funds to support it would be allocated



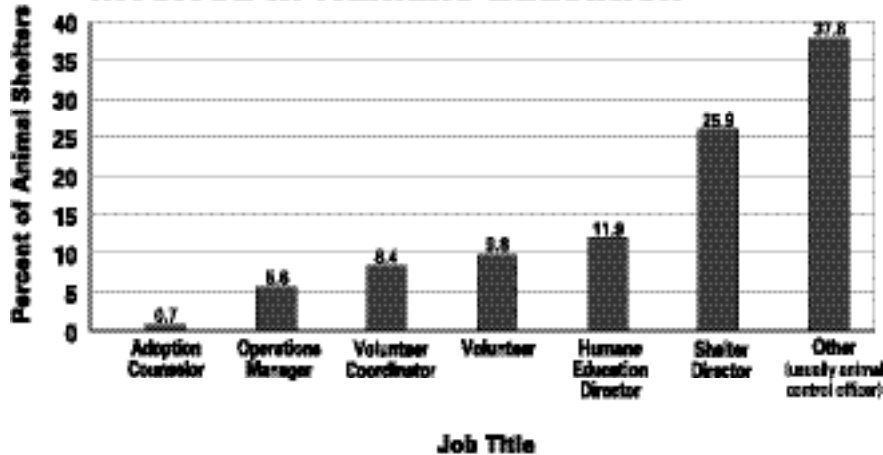
or funds would be raised to augment existing budgets. Perhaps a more fundamental answer lies in the dilemma faced by animal care and control personnel: how can they meet basic, short-term needs—such as a community's need for adequate animal control and sheltering—and also reach broader, long-term goals, such as eliminating or significantly reducing animal abuse, neglect, and the overpopulation of companion animals? Although youth education is seen as an important means of permanently

solving or preventing the problems animals face, it typically does not render the same immediate, tangible outcomes or level of emotional fulfillment as, for example, uniting a family with a homeless pet or rescuing a stray dog from the hardships of the street. In contrast its potential rewards may seem distant and abstract. So, while animal care and control professionals may view youth education as mission-critical in a long-range sense, it often is treated in the short term as a drain on resources that might otherwise be applied to more pressing, day-to-day concerns.

That seems to have been the prevailing reasoning for many years. In 1922 Francis Rowley speculated that the promise of immediate results was what kept so many humane advocates involved in direct relief of animals rather than humane education of subsequent generations (Unti 2002). It appears that similar forces are at work now. As a result, youth education continues to be a marginal if not entirely dispensable facet of animal welfare work in the United States.



**Figure 8
Job Title of Animal Shelter
Staff Member Most Directly
Involved in Humane Education**



Source: Olin 2002

Can Humane Values Be Taught?

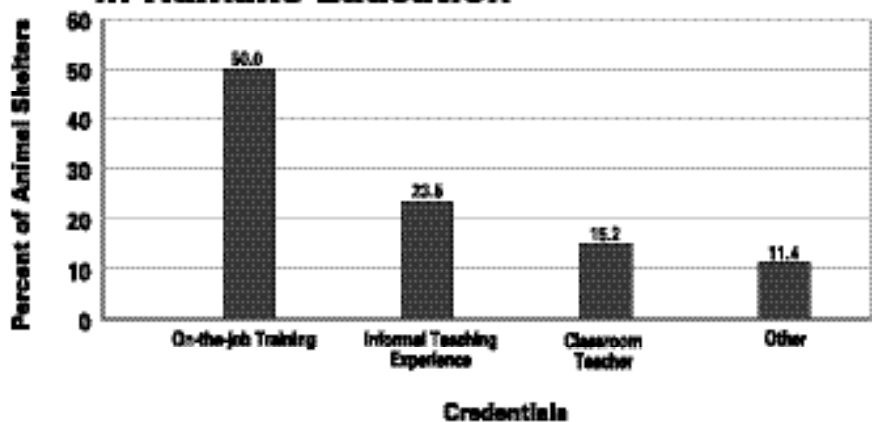
If, as suggested, a lack of immediate—or at least immediately visible—results is a disincentive for humane organizations to expend resources on youth education, it would seem that definitive empirical evidence demonstrating the effectiveness of humane education programs would provide an important incentive. That is, if the intended benefits of teaching humane values to children (e.g., gains in general knowledge about animal protection issues and the development of positive attitudes and behavior toward animals) were consistently brought to light through program evaluation, perhaps humane education would come to be seen as more of an urgent imperative than an abstract panacea. But there is an obvious Catch-22 here: an interest in spending time and money to assess the effects of a humane education initiative presupposes a relatively high level of interest in committing resources to humane education in general, and such willingness has been in short supply.

Consequently, relatively little empirical evidence exists showing that humane education programs increase children's knowledge about or improve their attitudes and behavior toward animals. None exists showing that such gains are carried into adulthood. The issue is not that there is proof to the contrary—indeed, intuition, anecdotal evidence, and a handful of formal studies suggest that humane education *can* work. Rather,

it is simply that humane education initiatives typically are not subjected to formal evaluation to test their efficacy. Of the organizations responding to Olin's survey, for example, only 7 percent reported formally evaluating their programs. Given the relatively low level of support for humane education, this assessment gap is not surprising. But it is significant, for two reasons: first, a lack of formal evaluation limits understanding of what methodologies are most and least effective and how humane education programs can be improved; and, second, it deprives animal protection advocates of an important tool for convincing school officials, colleges of education, and the public that humane education is a worthwhile pursuit that deserves funding and representation in standard curricula.

Empirical studies conducted over the last twenty-five years have tended to show that education programs can indeed generate gains in knowledge of animal protection issues, improvement in attitudes toward animals, and improvements in *projected* behavior toward them. Positive results have been inconsistent, however, and investigations have not been undertaken to determine whether humane education results in positive changes in *actual* behavior related to animals.

**Figure 9
Credentials of Animal Shelter
Member Most Directly Involved
in Humane Education**



Source: Olin 2002

The special challenges associated with assessing actual behavior toward animals—such as cost, difficulty of observation, and potential harm to animals and children—have, no doubt, hindered such inquiries.

Systematic research to test the effects of general approaches to humane education and specific programs peaked during the 1980s. Several studies conducted early in that decade relied on the Fireman Tests, assessment tools that presented children with a story about a boy whose house is burning down and who is given the opportunity to ask a firefighter to save certain household items (Vockell and Hodal 1980). A list of ten items is given, consisting of seven inanimate objects, such as a television and a checkbook, and three animals: a dog, a cat, and a canary. The tests asked children to select three items from the list which they think the boy in the story should tell the firefighter to save, the rationale being that the more positive an individual's attitudes toward animals, the more likely it is that he or she will choose the dog, cat, and canary for rescue. The first investigation employing the Fireman Tests sought to evaluate the effects that a single classroom presentation conducted by a visiting humane educator had on attitudes of third through sixth-grade students, compared with simply giving the children reading material (Vockell and Hodal 1980). The researchers found that the one-time presentation had no more impact on attitudes than did distributing the literature. The omission of a pretest from the study design, however, made interpreting those results problematic (Ascione 1992).

A year later another Fireman Tests study analyzed the impact of three different humane education treatments on the attitudes of fifth and sixth-grade students in Jefferson County, Colorado (Fitzgerald 1981). The three approaches tested were: light-treatment—reading material with no instruction; intensive treatment—reading material with one instruction session; and repeated

treatment—reading material with four instruction sessions over a two-month period. (A control group received no instruction or materials.) The lessons and reading material focused on responsible pet ownership and related topics. In contrast to the earlier study, results showed that, although all three interventions led to an increase in positive attitudes toward animals, the intensive, one-lesson treatment had a greater positive impact on attitudes than did the reading material alone. Somewhat unexpectedly, however, the repeated treatment was not found to be more effective than the one-time presentation. The researcher suggested that the more focused nature of the intensive treatment contributed to its success compared with the repeated intervention, the content of which was only loosely connected. No differences in test scores were found between boys and girls or between fifth and sixth-graders.

Contradicting the results of that investigation was a similar one designed by the Animal Rescue League of Boston. Relying on the Fireman Tests as the assessment tool, the Boston evaluation found that a repeated humane education treatment consisting of lessons and materials presented over a period of several days had a greater positive effect on the attitudes of fourth and fifth-graders toward animals than either a one-time presentation or reading materials without instruction (Malcarne 1983). The fact that the repeated intervention in this case took place over a fairly concentrated period of time may have contributed to its success compared with the more diluted, two-month repeated treatment employed in the Jefferson County study.

An innovative study during the same period analyzed the effects of role-play as an empathy-building technique. Malcarne (1981) found that playing the role of animals is an effective means for children to increase their empathy with animals and that playing the role of children helps to increase empathy with other chil-

dren. Children who had been induced to empathize with animals, however, showed little tendency to extend that increased empathy to other children. That finding calls into question the validity of the transference theory, which holds that positive attitudes toward animals are transferable, or will generalize, to humans—a tacit assumption in much humane literature. Findings casting doubt on the transference theory also have been reported by Ray (1982) and Paul (2000), while Poresky (1990), Ascione (1992), and O'Hare and Montminy-Danna (2001) have found evidence to support it.

In one of the few efforts during the early 1980s to assess the impact of humane education on older children, Cameron (1983) compared the effects of two intensive, classroom-based interventions on the attitudes of eighth-graders. One relied on print material and media-based instruction (films and filmstrips), the other on print material and lecture-method instruction. A control group received no materials or instruction. Students receiving media-based treatment showed the greatest improvement in attitudes. The lecture treatment group also improved but to a lesser extent, while the control group showed no positive change in attitudes.

The Humane Education Evaluation Project

Perhaps the most ambitious attempt at program assessment was NAHEE's Humane Education Evaluation Project. In that investigation, Ascione, Latham, and Worthen (1985) sought to measure the impact of a curriculum-blended approach to teaching humane values, using as the prototype NAHEE's *People and Animals: A Humane Education Curriculum Guide*. The guide consisted of more than 400 classroom activities, each

designed to teach a humane concept along with a skill or concept in language arts, social studies, math, or science. The study involved more than 1,800 children in kindergarten through sixth grade and 77 teachers from various urban, suburban, and rural school districts in Connecticut and California. Using a battery of instruments developed by the Western (formerly Wasatch) Institute for Research and Evaluation, the investigation was designed to test the effects of a relatively weak treatment: teachers were required to lead only twenty activities (the equivalent of about ten hours of instruction) from the curriculum guide over the course of an entire school year. The objective was to evaluate the materials as they realistically might be applied during a typical school year by teachers with many other curriculum requirements to meet. The instruments were designed to measure the curriculum guide's effect on (1) children's knowledge of animals; (2) their attitudes toward animals; (3) their projected behavior toward animals, i.e., their perceptions of how they *would* behave in situations that allowed humane or inhumane behavior; and (4) whether children's attitudes toward animals transferred, or generalized, to people. The assessment tools were administered as pretests and posttests to the study sample, which was divided into an experimental and control group, the latter receiving no instruction from the NAHEE curriculum guide at any point in the school year.

Results showed statistically significant gains in knowledge as a result of the curriculum guide intervention at the kindergarten and first-grade levels. Knowledge scores of second through sixth-grade children in the experimental group also improved, though not to a statistically significant degree. Attitudes toward animals improved along similar lines: kindergarten and first-grade children in the experimental group showed significantly more humane attitudes than their counterparts in the control group. Although experimental-group children at the higher grades also

showed improvement, generally their attitude gains were not pronounced enough to be statistically significant. The researchers suggested that the disparity in the treatment effects between the younger and older children may have been due to the possibility that conceptual knowledge and attitudes are more malleable at the earlier grades, or that baseline levels of knowledge and attitudes are lower at the earlier grades, leaving more room for improvement. They also cited the weak treatment as a possible factor in the inconsistency of experimental-group gains.

The NAHEE study's examination of projected behavior produced results that were somewhat the reverse of the knowledge and attitude findings in terms of age-group comparisons. At the kindergarten through third-grade level, the projected behavior scores of experimental-group children did not differ significantly from control group scores. In contrast, at the fourth through sixth-grade levels, the experimental group showed significantly more humane attitudes than did the control group. Why did older children respond more humanely on this measure, while younger students showed greater gains on the knowledge and attitude tests? According to the researchers, test format could have had an influence. The knowledge and attitude scales were composed of multiple-choice or yes/no items, which gave children a choice from which to select an answer. The instrument used to test projected behavior, on the other hand, required children to describe verbally the scenario depicted in a drawing, formulate a response to the situation, and explain why they responded as they did—tasks that the older children may have been developmentally more prepared to handle than were the younger students. In addition the researchers surmised that teachers at the higher grades may have been more likely than those at the lower grades to focus their instruction on the intentions and rationale behind humane behavior.

To determine if humane attitudes

toward animals would extend to people, the NAHEE project researchers developed two instruments: the Attitude Transfer Scale (ATS), which used photos depicting situations involving other children to which students could respond with varying degrees of kindness and compassion; and the Revised Aggression Scale (AG), a multiple-choice instrument that presented school and home situations to which children might react with varying degrees of aggression. (The AG was administered only to children in grade three and above.) Results of the ATS and AG showed no statistically significant differences between experimental and control group children at any grade except fourth. Surprisingly, fourth-grade boys in the experimental group had lower interpersonal kindness scores on the ATS than did their counterparts in the control group. Fourth-grade experimental-group children (girls and boys) also scored more aggressively on the AG than did fourth graders in the control group. The researchers noted, however, that the fourth-grade experimental-group scores were on the kind and non-aggressive ends of the continuum of scores for the attitude transfer measures.

Despite its somewhat ambiguous findings, the Humane Education Evaluation Project produced some encouraging—and intriguing—results overall. The instruments that were created, the conclusions reached, and the insights gained were valuable in providing direction for subsequent research and can aid in development and refinement of humane education methodologies.

Recent Research

Humane education program evaluation continued sporadically in the years following NAHEE's landmark study. In 1988 the MSPCA completed an extensive investigation to examine the impact of its statewide humane education program on the animal-welfare-related knowledge and attitudes of second through fifth-graders. Third, fourth, and fifth-grade children

received three instruction sessions, and the investigation found gains in their knowledge and attitudes. This was not the case, however, among second-graders, who were exposed to a single classroom presentation. The researchers concluded that results were positive but limited, and suggested that a more marked impact might be achieved by consolidating the program, i.e., delivering a more intense intervention (Davis et al. 1988).

In a follow-up to the Humane Education Evaluation Project, Ascione (1992) assessed a treatment employing NAHEE's *People and Animals* curriculum guide and other materials in thirty-two first, second, fourth, and fifth-grade classrooms. Pretests and posttests were administered to assess changes in children's attitudes toward animals and human-directed empathy. (The attitude measure was the same as that used in the 1985 study.) Results showed that the intervention enhanced fourth-graders' humane attitudes to a statistically significant degree. In addition fourth-grade scores revealed a significant generalization, or transfer, effect from animal-related attitudes to human-directed empathy. Fifth-grade children in the experimental group also showed more humane attitudes than did the control group, though the difference was not statistically significant. Ascione suggested the more modest gains among fifth-graders were due to the fact that fifth grade control group teachers reported substantially more instruction related to humane education than their experimental group counterparts. (Ascione noted that restricting the content of control group teachers' instruction for purposes of the study would have been unacceptable.) No statistically significant effects on attitudes or human-directed empathy were found at the first and second-grade levels, although the first-grade experimental group children did show some gain in humane attitudes over first-grade children in the control group. In comparing those results to the more pronounced gains from the 1985 study, Ascione noted that the

mean attitude scores of the first and second-grade control and experimental groups were higher (more humane) than the mean attitude scores from the 1985 investigation. One reason, the researcher suggested, was the possibility that the children participating in the 1992 study were more aware of and better educated on humane and environmental issues than were their 1985 counterparts. If that was the case, by 1992 scores on the instrument used to measure the younger children's attitudes may have been reaching a "ceiling," which would make detecting differences between control and experimental groups more difficult. Ascione noted that the scale used to measure the older children's attitudes was less susceptible to such ceiling effects.

As a follow-up to the 1992 investigation, Ascione and Weber (1996) tested fifth-grade students who had participated a year earlier in the above study to determine if the effects found when they were fourth-graders were maintained. Results showed that fourth-graders who had received the *People and Animals* intervention the previous year scored higher on humane attitudes scales than did those who had not. Once again a generalization effect from attitudes toward animals to human-directed empathy was found. The researchers interpreted their findings as evidence that classroom-based, curriculum-blended humane education can be an effective means of developing sensitivity in children toward animals and people.

Positive results also were found by O'Hare and Montminy-Danna (2001) in a comprehensive evaluation of a humane education program for third and seventh-grade students. The program was offered by the Potter League for Animals, an animal care and control organization serving southeastern Rhode Island. The Potter League study was unique in that it employed qualitative research methods as well as more typical, quantitative techniques. It included the following components: (1) the administration of a true/false pretest

and posttest to determine the Potter League program's effect on animal-welfare-related knowledge, attitudes, and projected behavior; (2) a measure of attitude transference obtained by comparing pretest results with scores from instruments designed to gauge children's human-directed empathy and quality of peer relations; and (3) an examination of the intellectual, affective, and behavioral responses of children to the program through the use of student and teacher focus groups and classroom observation. The study sample consisted of 181 third-graders, who took part in eight weekly forty-five-minute classroom lessons, and 152 seventh graders, who participated in five weekly forty-five-minute lessons. The third-grade lessons covered such areas as basic pet care, the role of animal shelters, and safety around animals; the seventh-grade lessons covered animals in entertainment, endangered species, pet overpopulation, and animal-related moral dilemmas.

The Potter League investigation revealed statistically significant gains in knowledge, attitudes, and intended behavior at both the third and seventh-grade levels. In addition the examination of attitude transference indicated that children who were more knowledgeable about and favorably disposed toward animals also were more likely to respond with greater empathy to people and have better relationships with peers. Qualitative analysis yielded a wide range of information, most of which reflected positively on the Potter League program. Conclusions regarding the third-grade intervention included that the children enjoy the program (especially the opportunity to relate stories about their pets), that concepts are presented in a clear, age-appropriate manner, and that positive behavior toward animals is constantly reinforced throughout the program. During focus groups third-graders related evidence of behavior change, some stating that they had begun to spend more time with their pets, had stopped hitting or teasing them, or had shared their new knowledge with

friends and family members.

At the seventh-grade level, classroom observations revealed that the Potter League material was presented in a way that allowed students to see both sides of controversial issues, that the program stressed the positive impact a single individual can have, and that it appeared to have an immediate effect on some students. (One boy, for example, said he would no longer shoot birds.) The researchers also noted that some seventh-grade students appeared somber after discussions of particularly hard-hitting issues. During focus groups several seventh graders, like their third-grade counterparts, suggested that their behavior had changed or would change as a result of the Potter League program. Some, for example, indicated that they had become kinder toward their pets and would be more willing to speak up about mistreatment of companion animals. Most seventh-grade students expressed concern about the uses of animals in entertainment and stated that they would curtail participation in activities that involved the mistreatment of animals. A few, however, thought the program's emphasis on the cruelty of circuses and other forms of entertainment was overstated. The findings of the Potter League evaluation were overwhelmingly positive, though the investigators noted several limitations of the study (i.e., that it lacked a control group; it did not measure the retention of cognitive or attitudinal gains over time; and its outcomes were based on the presentation of a program by only one instructor), and thus advised caution in interpreting its results. Nevertheless, the project generated a host of recommendations useful to the Potter League's education personnel—and potentially to others in the field—and represents an important contribution to the body of knowledge concerning the effectiveness of school-focused humane education programs.

Although the above survey of humane education program evaluation is not exhaustive, existing research still is too limited to tell us

definitively whether children can be taught to think and behave kindly toward animals or what the best instructional methods might be. The empirical evidence compiled thus far, however, suggests that humane education has promise. Moreover, investigations such as those reviewed here are significant not just for what they may prove or disprove, but also for the questions they raise and the directions they provide for future inquiry. Do gains resulting from elementary-level humane education initiatives extend into the teen years and beyond? Do improvements in projected behavior translate into more humane behavior in fact? At what ages is humane education most effective? What impact, if any, do instructor enthusiasm and teaching style have on the efficacy of humane education interventions? Such are just a few of the questions waiting to be addressed in a field that is ripe for study, not only because of the paucity of existing research, but also because humane education seems especially relevant at a time when the connection between childhood cruelty to animals and interpersonal violence in adulthood is widely known, and the perceived moral decline of our nation's youth is a common and increasingly fervent lament.

The Road Ahead

Vitalizing humane education research would create a solid foundation on which to build a more prominent, influential humane education movement. A substantial body of empirical evidence not only would provide humane educators with the knowledge necessary to develop effective pedagogical strategies, it also would lend much-needed credibility and recognition to humane education as a serious discipline. Animal care and control organizations can become involved in humane education program evaluation in a variety of ways that need not be prohibitively elaborate, expensive, or time-consuming. Assessment can be as basic as interviewing teachers to ascertain whether

and how they are using humane education materials provided to them. It can entail simply identifying program objectives, and administering brief surveys to students or teachers to determine whether those objectives, e.g., positive changes in attitudes toward animals, are being met. Even evaluation efforts as limited as these can provide valuable information that ultimately can help an agency make the most effective, efficient use of its humane education resources. Several national organizations, such as NAHEE and the Character Education Partnership, offer guides to basic program assessment. In addition, copies of the instruments used to assess the impact of the *People and Animals* curriculum guide in the 1985 Humane Education Evaluation Project are available from NAHEE and can be adapted for use in assessing other humane education initiatives.

Certainly, conducting rigorous experimental investigations of the impact of humane education programs requires expertise and resources beyond the reach of most animal shelters. But providing the impetus for such investigations and facilitating them does not. By partnering with college and university academic departments (including education, child development, social work, and psychology), animal protection organizations engaged in youth education can provide the subject matter for study and access to teachers, children, and classrooms. In return, academic institutions can offer expertise in instrument development, study design, and data analysis, as well as a pool of graduate and undergraduate students in search of topics for senior projects, master's theses, and doctoral internships and dissertations. In addition, since both universities and animal-protection agencies typically are skilled in the art of fundraising—and often have established relationships with philanthropic institutions—partnerships between the two can be mutually beneficial when it comes to obtaining grants to fund humane education research.

Back-to-Basics Revisited

Closing the assessment gap will not, by itself, ensure the advancement of humane education. Insofar as giving the teaching of humane values a more prominent, permanent place in American schools remains a goal, the chief obstacle continues to be humane education's identity as a special interest. Traditionally, special interests have been objectionable to school administrators, and low priorities for teachers (Underhill 1941; Westerlund 1982). The back-to-basics movement of the 1970s and 1980s rendered humane education and other special interests all the more superfluous to educators facing declining test scores and general complaints that children were advancing to higher grades with substandard reading, writing, and math skills. Today, back-to-basics thinking is reflected in the adoption of state curriculum standards by all states except Iowa, where directives regarding curriculum content are generated at the district level (Topics Education Group 2001). Curriculum standards enforced by state departments of education or school districts, combined with a growing emphasis on standardized testing (teacher career advancement is often directly tied to test scores now) has made schools and teachers more accountable—and more pressed for time. Consequently, winning representation in the classroom for the issues of special interest groups, including animal protection organizations, has become an increasingly formidable challenge.

Meeting that challenge will require that animal protection professionals keep the needs of teachers and schools paramount—a simple but sometimes overlooked precept. Failure to convince school officials of the importance of teaching humane values often has resulted from an inability or unwillingness on the part of humane education advocates to articulate the benefits of their programs within the framework of teachers' and administrators' priorities (Wester-

lund 1982). For humane educators, recognizing school priorities typically has meant creating lessons and materials that are “curriculum-blended,” i.e., provide instruction in core subject areas—math, English, science, and social studies—as well as convey a humane message. A prerequisite for the success of school-focused humane education initiatives in the future will be the addition of another dimension to curriculum blending: the alignment of humane education programs with state curriculum standards. Indeed, in their report to the Potter League, O'Hare and Montminy-Danna (2001) recommend that the league collaborate with school officials to tie its programs to curriculum standards. Teachers and administrators are likely to be more receptive to the teaching of humane values if they know specifically which curriculum standards a particular humane education program or lesson plan will help them meet. The task of linking lessons to curriculum standards need not be burdensome for humane educators. On the contrary, various Web resources, e.g., www.explorasource.com, provide ready access to all state curriculum standards, and the standards themselves can serve as valuable guideposts in developing pedagogical objectives and humane education program content.

The Character Connection

An obvious but not yet thoroughly exploited strategy for ensuring future representation for humane content in school curricula—and for invigorating humane education in general—is alignment with character education, an incarnation of the back-to-basics trend in the moral education realm. Today character education typically refers to the teaching of “core” or “consensus” values, basic principles of right and wrong, which, proponents argue, transcend political, cultural, and religious differences. In a return to a more traditional, virtues-centered moral education model, and

in response to the widespread public perception that our youth have fallen into a state of moral decline, the modern character education movement departs sharply from the values-clarification trend of the 1960s and 1970s. While recognizing that debate about moral issues has an important place in the classroom, character education seeks not to assist children in clarifying their own personal values but to train them to develop certain fundamental character traits. Typically those traits include respect, responsibility, caring, fairness, and citizenship—principles that have formed the conceptual underpinnings of humane education since its inception. Over the last twenty years, the character education movement has benefited from growing public and legislative support and significant government funding (DeRosa 2001). In 2002 \$25 million in federal grants was made available to state departments of education for the development and implementation of character education programs (Grenadier 2002). Such programs already have been incorporated into the curricula of thousands of schools nationwide, and the movement shows no signs of weakening.

The rise of character education and its conceptual symmetry with humane education present animal protection organizations with a clear opportunity for blending the teaching of humane values into school curricula. Relying on the widely recognized effectiveness of animal-related content for capturing children's attention and imagination, humane education has great potential for enriching and enlivening lessons in core values, making abstract concepts such as respect and responsibility more accessible and engaging for children. By providing programs that focus on the ways in which treating animals humanely is an essential part of good character, humane educators can serve as valuable resources to classroom teachers who increasingly are being required to incorporate formal character education lessons into their classroom activities (DeRosa 2001).

Alternative Methodologies

Aligning humane education program content with state standards and character education curricula will help ensure that proposals to introduce the teaching of humane values in schools will be well received by teachers and administrators. Actually institutionalizing humane education in schools—i.e., making the schools themselves a primary source of instruction in humane values—and providing teachers with the necessary training, tools, and motivation will require a reexamination of traditional humane education methodology. Standard practices such as classroom visits and shelter tours typically relegate the classroom teacher to the role of bystander, involved marginally at most in the presentation of humane concepts and lessons. Such approaches can reinforce the notion of humane education as a novelty or special interest, exclusively the purview of the animal protection organization, and both separate from and subordinate to core curricula. Making schools partners in the propagation of a humane ethic will involve, at the very least, cultivating ongoing working relationships with teachers and administrators. Creating humane education committees, composed of teachers representing target schools, to assist in the development of curriculum-blended interventions may be an effective first step in fostering such collaboration. Inevitably, however, integrating humane education in school curricula will require that animal protection professionals divert at least some of their attention from instructing children directly. Conducting professional-development workshops for teachers and providing them with instructional materials (aligned, ideally, with state standards and character education curricula), for example, will help transfer the locus of humane education from the animal protection organization to the schools themselves. Such an approach will enable humane educa-

tors to reach, albeit indirectly, more children more consistently than would be possible through classroom visits or shelter tours.

In addition to teacher training and support, other school-focused strategies may provide animal protection organizations with opportunities to maximize their impact while limiting the expenditure of time and money. These include the use of technology-based methodologies, such as chat rooms and videoconferencing, to link elementary and secondary teachers and their students to animal care and control professionals and to provide virtual field trips (Finch 2001). By positioning themselves as service learning sites, organizations with a particular interest in reaching teens—an audience traditionally neglected by humane education—also will benefit from the growth of service learning as an educational model in American high schools (Winiarskyj 2002). Working with education departments in colleges and universities to introduce the teaching of humane values in relevant courses will ensure that new teachers are familiar with humane education and that they understand its connection to character education and other curriculum areas. In shifting their primary role from practitioner to trainer and facilitator, humane education professionals can benefit from assistance offered by various national animal protection organizations—some of which offer supplementary classroom materials for the elementary and secondary levels—as well as training in such areas as the creation and implementation of teacher in-service workshops and strategies for reaching teens.

Exploring potentially more effective, efficient alternatives to traditional humane education practices may also take animal protection organizations away from the schoolhouse entirely. Savesky (2002) has argued that obstacles to classroom access, such as increased emphasis on standards and testing, have made school-focused approaches inefficient or unfeasible for many organizations. While access to classrooms and gen-

eral receptiveness to humane education will vary among school districts, animal care and control agencies may indeed find that non-school options provide an expedient use of limited resources. Such options may also provide a means of broadening programming beyond companion animal issues in cases where school officials are resistant to accepting potentially controversial subject matter into the curriculum. Strategies employed by organizations either as supplements to or replacements for school programs have included summer youth camps; family humane education programs; interactive shelter-based exhibits; programs designed to instill empathy in youth at risk for violent or antisocial behavior; Web-based instructional material on a broad range of animal issues; and the creation of partnerships with social service agencies, law enforcement, and pet product retailers. Other potentially productive non-school strategies include reaching out to faith-based youth organizations, home-schooled children, and after-school programs, especially those serving communities where children and families and their animals may be at high risk for abuse or neglect (D. McCauley, personal communication with B.U., July 3, 2002).

Ultimately, the success of any methodology, whether school-based, shelter-based, or dependent on collaboration with some other agency, will be measured primarily by a single standard: its effectiveness in improving children's attitudes and, most important, behavior toward animals. As a result commitment to a particular strategy must be accompanied by the resolve continually to evaluate it and, if necessary, improve or abandon it.

Conclusions

Virtually unlimited faith in the influence of humane education has long been a hallmark of organized animal protection in the United States. From an early stage, the humane movement pinned its hopes on education as the remedy to cruel treatment of

animals by future generations. However, the movement has not supported humane education with practical and financial resources commensurate with this expressed interest. Moreover, the effects of humane education outreach remain unclear, and, for a variety of reasons, the work of promoting kindness to animals through school programs proceeds with limited prospect for measuring results and outcome. The movement's inability to institutionalize the teaching of humane education in teacher-training schools and related institutions has restricted its influence, and the penetration of humane education programs run by humane societies has proceeded unevenly where it has proceeded at all.

Nevertheless, there is no question that the diffusion of humane values throughout American culture has advanced in the years since the advent of organized animal protection in 1866. Whatever the level of success on other fronts of humane work, wanton acts of individual cruelty against animal pets are now usually seen as the signs of a maladjusted and sick personality. Conversely a kind disposition toward such animals is considered an important attribute of the well-adjusted individual (Lockwood and Ascione 1998). Humane education undoubtedly has reinforced such ideas about healthy social and psychological development. Indeed, it is unlikely that such awareness could have coalesced in the absence of a movement that accepted this perspective as a commonplace and pursued extensive measures to carry the lessons of kindness to generations of American youth.

Now, as at other times in the past, heightened interest in character education promises to increase opportunities for promoting humane education programs. Teaching kindness-to-animals is highly compatible with the focus of contemporary character education, concerned as it is with the inculcation of compassion, caring, responsibility, respect, and sociality. Animal welfare organizations may be able to take advantage of the growing

consensus about the importance of character education, by offering their services to schools and school systems, and by asserting the value of humane education to the objectives of the character education movement (DeRosa 2001). They may further enlarge their opportunities by providing humane education lessons that can be correlated with conventional subject matter.

For the most part, organized animal protection has been unable to secure the introduction and perpetuation of humane education programs and philosophy within institutions of higher learning and teacher training. This remains the great unrealized goal, and perhaps the most promising objective, in the field. Yet it presupposes an increased commitment to humane education strategies on the part of humane societies. Expanded levels of activity on this front can broaden possibilities for collaboration with institutions of higher learning and teacher training and generate opportunities for program evaluation and ongoing curriculum development.

One limiting factor undoubtedly will be the tenuousness of programs tied to humane societies and their budgets. American animal protection is highly decentralized, and the responsibilities of municipal animal control; fluctuations in donor support; and the press of other priorities have all had an impact on commitment to humane education by local societies. Without a steady investment of resources in this arena, the spread and impact of humane education efforts are likely to remain uneven and uncertain.

Humane education would seem to be an especially fruitful channel for foundation support. Historically, philanthropic foundations have played a crucial role in helping to shape the course of social change through strategic investments and subsidies. During the civil rights era, for example, foundations underwrote voting rights campaigns in an effort to direct the freedom movement's energies toward the creation of viable and last-

ing structures to enhance representative democracy. A similar approach might be taken for subsidizing the hiring and placement of humane education specialists within humane societies, or for the endowment of relevant positions and proper training programs within institutions of higher learning. Such an investment might serve to free humane education from subordinate status within organizations that otherwise are well equipped to promote the lessons of kindness to animals. Higher levels of activity, expanded levels of research, and more rigorous evaluation programs all will help to bring greater credibility to humane education and validate the hopes that advocates have attached to it in the several centuries since appreciation for the value of kindness to animals as a didactic instrument first surfaced.

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Appendix Milestones in Humane Education: A Pre-World War II Chronology

	Publications Released	Organizations Founded	Legislation Passed	Other
1693	John Locke, <i>Some Thoughts on Education</i> published			
1765	<i>Goody Two-Shoes</i> published			
1780	Jeremy Bentham, <i>Principles of Morals and Legislation</i> published			
1783	Dorothy Kilner, <i>The Life and Perambulations of a Mouse</i> published			
1785	Sarah Trimmer, <i>Fabulous Histories</i> published			
1792	Herman Daggett, <i>The Rights of Animals</i> published			
1794	American edition of <i>Fabulous Histories</i> published			
1794	American edition of Arnaud Berquin <i>Looking Glass for the Mind</i> published			
1802	American edition of <i>The Hare, or Hunting Incompatible with Humanity</i> published			
1824		Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) founded		
1828	American Tract Society edition of <i>Louisa's Tenderness to the Little Birds</i> published			
1829			New York State anti- cruelty statute passed	
1835	<i>The Spirit of Humanity</i> published			
1845	American Sunday School Union edition of Charlotte Elizabeth's <i>Kindness to Animals; or The Sin of Cruelty Exposed and Rebuked</i> published			
1850		American Vegetarian Society founded	Fugitive Slave Act passed	Flogging in the U.S. in the U.S. Navy abolished
1851	Grace Greenwood, <i>History of My Pets</i> published			
1852	Harriet Beecher Stowe, <i>Uncle Tom's Cabin</i> published		Massachusetts compulsory school attendance legislation passed	

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Appendix Milestones in Humane Education: A Pre-World War II Chronology

Publications Released	Organizations Founded	Legislation Passed	Other
1866 Anson Randolph, <i>Autobiography of a Canary Bird</i> published	American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) founded		
1867	Pennsylvania Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (PSPCA) founded		
1868	Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (MSPCA) founded		
1874	Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) founded		
1875	New York Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children launched by Henry Bergh and Elbridge T. Gerry		
1877 Anna Sewell, <i>Black Beauty</i> published	American Humane Association (AHA) founded		
1882			Band of Mercy concept introduced to United States
1883 Abraham Firth, <i>Voices of the Speechless</i> published Thomas Timmins, <i>The History of the Founding, Aims, and Growth of the American Bands of Mercy</i> published	American Anti-Vivisection Society founded		
1886		Humane education mandate in Massachusetts spurred by MSPCA	
1889	American Humane Education Society (AHES) founded		
1890 AHES edition of <i>Black Beauty</i> published			
1891	WCTU Department of Mercy formed by Mary F. Lovell		
1892			AHA campaign against classroom vivisection spurred by Albert Leffingwell
1893 Marshall Saunders, <i>Beautiful Joe</i> published			

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Appendix Milestones in Humane Education: A Pre-World War II Chronology

Publications Released	Organizations Founded	Legislation Passed	Other
1893 ASPCA, <i>Kindness to Animals: A Manual for Use in Schools and Families</i> published			
1894 American edition of Henry Salt's <i>Animals' Rights Considered in Relation to Social Progress</i> published		Ban on classroom vivisection in Massachusetts secured by MSPCA	
1895	New England Anti-Vivisection Society founded		
1897 Sarah J. Eddy, <i>Songs of Happy Life</i> published Emma Page, <i>Heart Culture</i> published			
1899 Ralph Waldo Trine, <i>Every Living Creature</i> published			
1902			AHA Textbook Committee formed
1904 Nora Finch, <i>Colliery Jim: Autobiography of a Mine Mule</i> published			William O. Stillman assumes presidency of AHA
1905	Humane Education Committee in New York State formed by Stillman and Stella Preston	Oklahoma and Pennsylvania pass compulsory humane education laws	
1906 J. Howard Moore, <i>The Universal Kinship</i> published Richard von Krafft-Ebing, <i>Psychopathia Sexualis</i> discusses sadistic behavior toward non-human animals			
1907	Henry Bergh Foundation for the Promotion of Humane Education established at Columbia University		
1909		Compulsory humane education legislation passed in Illinois	
1910 Flora Helm Krause, <i>Manual of Moral and Humane Education</i> published			
1911	Millennium Guild founded		
1913 S. Louise Patteson, <i>Pussy Meow</i> published			

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Appendix Milestones in Humane Education: A Pre-World War II Chronology

Publications Released	Organizations Founded	Legislation Passed	Other
1915			Be Kind to Animals Week launched AHA votes to seek compulsory humane education in every state
1916	Sandor Ferenczi, "A Little Chanticleer" (case study of a boy's cruelty toward humans and non-human animals) published		AHES produces the first humane education film, "The Bell of Atri" ASPCA creates humane education department
1917		Compulsory humane education laws passed in Maine, Wisconsin, and New York	
1919	Harriet C.C. Reynolds, <i>Thoughts on Human Education: Suggestions on Kindness to Animals</i> published		
1920		Kentucky approves compulsory humane education law	
1923		Florida approves compulsory humane education law	
1924	William J. Schultz, <i>The Humane Movement in the United States</i> , judges humane education the most important development of the previous decade Frances E. Clarke, <i>Lessons for Teaching Humane Education in the Schools</i> published		
1925	Alexander Ernest Frederick, <i>The Humane Guide: A Manual for Teachers and Humane Workers</i> published		
1931	Susan Isaacs, <i>Intellectual Growth in Young Children</i> published		