

**HUMANE EDUCATION NEWS**  
NEWSLETTER OF THE UFT HUMANE EDUCATION COMMITTEE  
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**New York Coalition for Healthy School Lunches**

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[www.healthylunches.org](http://www.healthylunches.org)

The New York Coalition for Healthy School Lunches is a grassroots organization advocating for healthy school foods in New York State. They are dedicated to implementing the recommendations of New York State Resolution K1888 (Assembly) and J3971 (Senate) that call for an optional healthy plant-based entrée to be available each day in all schools, nutrition education, replacement of unhealthy ala carte and vending foods and beverages, and encouraging farm to school programs, including organic

where possible. They work with state agencies, individual schools, food service professionals, parents, students, educators, health professionals, and other organizations to achieve this goal.

You can sign-up for their email list and join the coalition by going to their website at [www.healthylunches.org](http://www.healthylunches.org) and clicking the appropriate buttons. They will keep you up to date with a listing of their activities and tell you how you can get involved.



## **New York Coalition for Healthy School Lunches Fact Sheet**

- ✓ The American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Cancer Society, the American Dietetic Association, the American Diabetes Association, the American Heart Association, the United States Department of Agriculture and the National Institutes of Health all recommend a greater emphasis in the American diet on fruits, vegetables, whole grains and legumes with a reduction in the consumption of animal foods (which are the primary source of saturated fat and the only source of cholesterol).

- ✓ **US Dietary Guidelines 2000:**

“GET MOST OF YOUR CALORIES FROM PLANT FOODS (grains, fruits, vegetables).” From the section that tells you to make “food choices low in saturated fat and cholesterol and moderate in total fat.”

**Unified Dietary Guidelines:**

American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Cancer Society, the American Dietetic Association, the American Heart Association, and the National Institutes of Health created guidelines in 1999:

“According to the guidelines, the easiest ways to accomplish these goals are to:

- eat a variety of foods;
- **choose most of what you eat from plant sources;**
- eat five or more servings of fruit and vegetables each day;
- eat six or more servings of bread, pasta, and cereal grains each day;
- **eat high-fat foods sparingly, especially those from animal sources;**
- keep your intake of simple sugars to a minimum.”

- ✓ 25% of NY State (nearly half of NYC) children are overweight or obese, and the Surgeon General has reported that obesity is reaching epidemic proportions, particularly among children.
- ✓ According to Marion Nestle in her recently published book Food Politics, a 1997 survey found that American children and adolescents were getting half of their calories from fat and sugar that had been added to foods, and only 1 percent regularly ate diets that resembled the food pyramid recommended by the government. In New York, a 2001 federal survey found that only about a fifth of high-schoolers reported eating as many as five servings of fruits and vegetables daily, the minimum government recommendation. Now the recommendation is even higher, about nine servings per day for the average teen.
- ✓ Only 17% of children consume the minimum daily-recommended servings of vegetables, and 20% eat no vegetables on a given day. Less than 15% of children eat the minimum daily-recommended servings of fruit, and 35% eat no fruit on a given day.

- ✓ 90% of children consume amounts of saturated fat above the recommended level.
- ✓ 25% of children ages 5 to 10 have high cholesterol, high blood pressure, or other early warning signs for heart disease.
- ✓ “Adult Onset” Type 2 Diabetes, once limited largely to adults, is now seriously affecting children.
- ✓ A study, published in a June 1998 *New England Journal of Medicine*, showed that 50 percent of children 2- to 15-years-old have fatty streaks in their coronary arteries, a circumstance that sets the stage for further artery blockages and heart attacks later in life. Compounding the problem, the more meat and dairy children consume the fewer fruits and vegetables they eat.
- ✓ Fruits, vegetables, whole grains and legumes are generally lower in fat and calories than meat and dairy products, contain no cholesterol and promote good health because they contain fiber and essential nutrients including vitamins and minerals, as well as phytochemicals, which are protective against diseases.



- ✓ The number of school-aged vegetarians is increasing.
- ✓ Children receiving appropriate education will order healthy plant-based foods at a rate up to 20 times more than children who do not have the appropriate education.
- ✓ Healthy plant-based recipes that utilize USDA ingredients and cost less than .45 cents per serving are available.

References available at [www.healthylunches.org/factsheet.html](http://www.healthylunches.org/factsheet.html)

# **Pigeon Empathy**

by

Lisbet Chiriboga, Teacher

PS 50 Bronx

I want to make a plug for Project PigeonWatch. This is a program of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Ornithologists (people who study birds) are trying to figure out why pigeons come in so many colors. Project PigeonWatch needs students to observe pigeons, record data, and submit it to Cornell researchers so they can find an answer. Project PigeonWatch is obviously geared toward upper elementary students (and above) since Cornell requires the data recorded and submitted in a certain way. However, K-2 classes should not shy away from this activity. Students of all ages can participate! When I told my bilingual kindergarten class that scientists didn't know why pigeons came in so many colors they were eager to start watching pigeons.

We started out by watching the 5-minute video "What's So Special About Pigeons?" (I ordered this from Cornell Lab). This is a good video featuring kids observing pigeons, scientists talking about the project and some background and history of the pigeon. Afterwards, we discussed the video and then pretended to be pigeons and moved around the classroom. When I asked my kindergartners to show me how pigeons walk, they ran around the room flapping their wings. Then I had them stop and think about how pigeons they have seen on the street walk, they started to bob their heads back and forth. Ah, yes! This is how they do it. We also made cooing sounds to imitate the birds.

Next, I showed the poster "Pigeon Color Morphs" (I received this in the Project PigeonWatch packet with the video). This poster has color drawings of the different colored pigeons. Students picked their favorite pigeon and colored in the black & white pigeon ditto provided in the packet. This became "their" pigeon, or at least this is how they began to refer to their favorite one whenever the bird was seen.

Later, we learned about beaks. Not just pigeon beaks, but all kinds of beaks! I read some books about beaks to the students and showed them many pictures. Then we conducted an experiment to see how we could tell what kind of food a bird eats by what their beak looks like. We used clothespins, spoons, and scissors to simulate different beaks. We used rubberbands, pennies, and other little objects to simulate worms, seeds, and bugs. After this hands-on experience of using different "beaks" to try to pick up "food", students hypothesized what pigeons must eat based on what their beak looks like.

On our trip to the park, students sat for a while and just watched pigeons. They learned that it was easier to watch them if they sat still and were quiet (or else the birds flew away). They had paper and pencil in hand to draw what they saw and write a sentence about it. This was our version of "recording data" for Project PigeonWatch.

We did these pigeon activities in April, but students were still talking about "their" pigeons until the end of the school year. Almost every day a child would tell me that

they saw their pigeon and about what the bird was doing. Sometimes they would even tell me about how they saw one of their classmate's pigeons.

My kids would see lots of pigeons on the playground and loved to walk back from recess acting like a pigeon. Of course, I always joined in this dramatic expression. I must have looked a bit like a mother hen leading her chicks (pigeons have a walk similar to chickens!).

Another pleasant by-product of our study of pigeons was that the students became pigeon protectors. They learned that pigeons have feelings and although they originally perceived it to be fun to chase after them, they now understood that this frightened the birds. Many times I observed my students educating other kids on the playground about why it's no fun for pigeons to be chased.

A pigeon unit like this satisfies science and ELA standards. More importantly, it introduces students to scientific observation skills and gives them an authentic opportunity to write. My favorite outcome of this unit was that my students learned to have empathy for vulnerable creatures who are viewed negatively (and victimized) by many people. In our urban habitat, it is crucial that we take every opportunity to engage children in non-intrusive observation of animals. We don't need to cage an animal in the classroom for science, just go outside!

PigeonWatch/ Cornell Lab of Ornithology  
159 Sapsucker Woods Road  
Ithaca, NY14850  
607-254-2455  
[www.urbanbirds.org/ppw](http://www.urbanbirds.org/ppw)



Editor's Note: For a curriculum unit about pigeons for grades pre-k to one, go to our website at [www.uft.org/member/today/committees/humane](http://www.uft.org/member/today/committees/humane), click on "events, news and services," then click onto "elementary school units," and lastly "Pigeons in the City."

## **National Anti-Vivisection Society Humane Science Awards Honor High School Students at 2005 Intel ISEF Science Fair**

The Intel International Science and Engineering Fair (ISEF), which concluded on Thursday, May 12, 2005, set a record number for finalists, with more than 1,400 students competing from around the world. The National Anti-Vivisection Society was present, both to present its 4th Annual Humane Science Award, and to monitor the use of animals in science fair projects.

NAVS instituted this award at the only science fair that continues to permit invasive experiments on vertebrate animals in order to draw attention to innovative work being done without the use of animals, and to offer incentive to students to seek out projects that don't harm animals. As a result of their ongoing relationship with Science Service, Inc., administrators of the Intel ISEF, NAVS has been invited to participate in the process of development of new rules with regard to the use of animals. While the results weren't as far-reaching as they hoped, NAVS appreciates incremental changes that benefit animals used for education and research.

However an improvement in some of the animal use rules did not have a perceptible impact on the number of animal projects this year. In fact more animals were used for invasive experiments than ever before, though a vast majority of the projects were conducted in research laboratories, as permitted under Intel ISEF rules. This

points to the necessity of addressing the underlying basis of using animals in the laboratory, not merely as an educational tool for students, but as a way of conducting the business of research into human health issues.

More than two-dozen projects used live vertebrate animals in their projects, which resulted in the death of more than 500 animals for the purpose of conducting high school science fair projects. This number represents only the projects reaching the final level of competition, a small percentage of the experiments carried out throughout the country—and throughout the world.

One project in the category of Behavioral Science was particularly noticeable by its proximity to another project in the next aisle. The first used mice to study the effects of sleep deprivation, citing the lack of sleep as a problem among teens. The second study, in the same category, studied sleep deprivation, but this study actually used teens to measure the results. While neither project was particularly sophisticated in their methodology, only one of these students understood that sleep deprivation as a human issue required the use of human test subjects. The other student was focused on designing a science fair project without regard to the most effective methodology to obtain valid results.

This seems to approximate a great deal of scientific research in this age of rapid technological advancement. When questioned, students using animal models—or planning to use animals in the next stage of their research—were eager to explain how the “system” works, beginning on cells and tissue, but rapidly expanding to include animals from mice to monkeys in the testing process. Though when questioned, some of these students admitted that animal use may not be the most accurate way to obtain results, and that microdosing—giving very small test amounts of a drug with a tracker attached—would be a more effective way to test the efficacy of a new compound on humans.

In the accounting of animal use, a whole category was neglected. This is because Intel ISEF, and indeed the federal Animal Welfare Act, does not regulate the use of invertebrate animals. Yet thousands of insects, fish and crustaceans are used for science projects each year. One project used 72 crayfish to test the effects of antidepressants. Puffer fish, electric fish, and zebra fish were all used in a variety of lethal experiments. Bees and other insects were

used to test their anti-bacterial properties.

**These numbers also do not include the number of animals used for benign purposes, through non-invasive behavioral methods, or through minimally invasive, non-harmful testing (i.e. scraping the cells from the cheeks of horses). The number of such projects this year was small, but one deserves a special mention. An environmental project called, “Electronic Rangers: Assistance for Visually Impaired Canines,” addressed the problems of loss of eyesight in companion animal dogs, devising a pyroelectric infrared detector to help dogs sense objects around them. While the device has a long way to go in its development, the time and energy spent by this student in developing a project that will have such a positive impact on a dog’s life is commendable.** It affirms the importance of motivating and encouraging the practical application of science among students with the creativity and ingenuity to tackle just about anything.



On that positive note, it is time to acknowledge the high caliber of projects that continue to be presented by high school students. In order to exhibit at the Intel ISEF, students must excel at local and regional competitions, earning the right to display their project and defend their research before teams of judges in more than a dozen categories. Prizes ranging from membership in professional organizations, to four-year paid scholarships are awarded during two days of ceremonies.

Despite the rise in animal use, a vast majority of projects do not rely on an animal model for advancement of their scientific objectives, with projects on applied mathematics, space science, structural engineering, and many on environmental issues. This year had a number of projects working on more effective prosthetic devices and wheelchair mobility for the disabled, as well as a large number of projects addressing water pollution and plant-based sources for anti-bacterial agents. The range and complexity of the projects at Intel ISEF vary enormously among the 1400 projects, making the selection of the winners a real challenge.

This year, three students received the NAVS award for projects that promote scientific advancement through methods

that do not harm animals. The projects covered the disciplines of Biochemistry, Medicine and Health, and Microbiology.

First prize—\$5,000 Alan Ho-Yin Gee, Metastable Conformations in the Secondary Structure of the Poly (A) Signal in Human Immunodeficiency Virus Type-1

Second prize—\$2,000 Jijun Chow, Use of Homology Modeling and Molecular Docking to Map Retinoid Binding Sites on Protein Kinase C

Third prize—\$1,000 Jeff Silpe, “Evaluations of MMP and TIMP Expression in Human Pediatric Brain Tumors”

The NAVS judging team included Dr. June Bradlaw, Chair of the Scientific Advisory Board for the International Foundation for Ethical Research and Dr. Ray Greek, Scientific Advisor for NAVS. Their scientific and medical expertise was invaluable in evaluating and choosing the winning projects.

For additional information contact NAVS at 1-800-888-NAVS or log onto [www.navs.org](http://www.navs.org).



# Humane Science Fair Projects

## Developed By New York City High School Students

Each year in February, the New York Academy of Sciences holds a Science Expo in which high school students throughout New York City enter proposals as well as full science fair projects. One of the many awards categories is humane science, that is science projects which meet at least one of the following humane education objectives:

1. Promote greater understanding of other species.
2. Encourage more humane treatment of animals.
3. Encourage a greater respect for the intrinsic value and worth of animals.
4. Illustrate the relationship between human well-being, environmentalism and the interests of animals.
5. Create models of non-intrusive, productive animal research through natural (non-manipulative) observations.
6. Foster the study of threatened or endangered species in non-laboratory settings.
7. Document research that advances human health without harming animals.

In the last 16 years, humane science awards have gone largely to projects in which students observe birds in our outdoor urban environment, study zoo animals and the ways in which to enrich their environment, and study human-animal interactions -- often in nursing homes.

Organizations which have donated about \$2,000 in award money each year would like to see projects dealing with chimpanzees in the wild versus those in captivity, rescued farmed animals, as well as knowledge, attitudes and behaviors regarding vegetarianism in high school students.

Dr. Bill Samuels, ASPCA Education Director is willing to mentor a small number of students in developing proposals as well as full projects. His areas of expertise include the benefits of the human-animal bond as well as animal needs, emotions, memory and intelligence. You can contact him at 212-876-7700. Carol Moon, New York City Education Director for Farm Sanctuary can be reached at 212-567-4556 for information about farmed animals and vegetarianism. You can log onto the Chimpanzee and Human Communication Institute at [www.cwu.edu/%7Ecwuchci](http://www.cwu.edu/%7Ecwuchci) to learn about chimpanzees who know sign language and use it to converse with each other and their human caretakers.

Get involved in helping your students develop award-winning projects which reflect concern for animals and the environment. Visit the UFT/HEC website at [www.uft.org/member/today/committees/humane](http://www.uft.org/member/today/committees/humane) for additional information.

May thanks to the National Anti-Vivisection Society and United Action for Animals for their continued financial support which makes these important awards possible.

## 2005 NYC Humane Science Fair Projects Award Winners

### Award Description      First Prize Awards of \$500

*Natural Instinct and Emotion as Factors for Canine Aggression*

Michelle Banker, Christ the King Regional High School

*Save Our Strays*

Ethan Felder, Townsend Harris High School

### Award Description      Second Prize Awards of \$250.00

*The Effects of Environmental Enrichment on Spectacled Bear (*Tremarectos ornatus*)*

*Social Interaction*

Eleanor Fallon, Queens Zoo

*Problem-Solving Skills in Feeding: A Study of Western Lowland Gorillas*

Henry Zeng, Museum of Natural History

### Award Description      Third Prize Awards of \$75.00

*A Comparison of Alarm Calls of Free Living *Myiopsitta Monachus* in Brooklyn NY and Cordoba Province, Argentina*

Morris Betesh, Magen David Yeshiva High School, Brooklyn, NY

*The Effect of a Care Package on a Persons Emotional State after the Loss of a Pet*

Robby Gadowski, Christ the King Regional High School, Queens, NY

*Bovine Insulin: A Possible Cause of Type 1 Diabetes*

Patricia Marie Zamora, Christ the King Regional High School, Queens, NY

*Comparison of Causes of Six Different Animals' Extinction and Future Prevention*

Nilhan Diker, Bayside High School, Queens, NY

### Honorable Mention Awards of \$25.00

*Foraging Patterns and Communal Nest Behaviors of Naturalized Monk Parakeets in Brooklyn*

Crystal Cuevas, Brooklyn College of the City University of New York. Brooklyn, NY

*The Causes and Treatments of Separation Anxiety in Dogs*

Michelle Donegan, Christ the King Regional High School. Queens, NY

*Relationships Within a Captive Group of Chimpanzees*

Andrew Fulmer, American Museum of Natural History, New York, NY

*The Effects of Change of Zoo Housing on Behavior of Western Lowland Gorilla*

Wendy Guillen, High School for Health Professionals and Human Services  
New York, NY

## Support Organizations

**League of Humane Voters of New York City** [www.humanenyc.org](http://www.humanenyc.org)

LOHV-NYC seeks to mobilize public concern for animals through the democratic political process. They campaign for the election of candidates for public office who will work to enact legislation to help NYC animals. Visit their website to view their endorsements of candidates for city council as well as their current campaigns.

**Just Choices** [www.justchoices.com](http://www.justchoices.com)

The goal of the *Just Choices* program is to encourage students to explore new ideas and reevaluate old ones while developing a strong understanding and appreciation of historical and contemporary social justice movements. A free video and worksheets are available to **high school** teachers.

**Farm Sanctuary**

[www.farmsanctuary.org](http://www.farmsanctuary.org)

Farm Sanctuary offers many excellent free programs for NYC classrooms and staff development workshops. Contact Carol Moon at 212- 567-4556 for additional information.

**Lantern Books**

[www.lanternbooks.com](http://www.lanternbooks.com)

Lantern Books has an amazing selection of books concerning animal advocacy, health and healing, nature and the environment, psychology, and vegetarianism. They also have a reading club which meets to discuss individual books at their offices. Phone 212-414-2275.

**EarthSaveNYC**

<http://nyc.earthsave.org>

EarthSave educates people about the powerful effects our food choices have on the environment, our health and all life on Earth. They encourage a shift toward a plant-based diet. For information concerning their dinners and lectures as well as other events log onto their website.

**ASPCA Education Dept**

[www.asPCA.org](http://www.asPCA.org)

phone #: 212-876-7700 ext 4409  
Log onto the humane education section of their website for lesson plans, children's book awards and electronic subscriptions to Animalessons. Call about classroom presentations as well as staff development programs for teachers.

**In Defense of Animals-Africa Thursday, September 29, 2005 NYC Reception**

Join other members of UFT Humane Education Committee at the IDA-Africa event to learn about the outstanding job they are doing in rescuing and rehabilitating chimpanzees. The sanctuary's unique focus on adult primates was conceived when Sheri Speede, D.V.M., befriended three psychologically abused chimpanzees outside a resort hotel, where they had languished for 35 years in isolated cages. Jacky, Pepe, and Becky's dramatic recovery from their years of deprivation and isolation can easily be seen as they explore a natural forest environment, groom and socialize with each other, and begin to form a family group. The success of these chimpanzees, the first rescued by IDA-Africa, marked a triumphant turning point for all adult chimpanzees awaiting rescue.

For additional information, log onto [www.ida-africa.org](http://www.ida-africa.org).

Outstanding Program. Highly Recommended by UFT/HEC.

# HEART



## **Humane Education Advocates Reaching Teachers (HEART) Seeks Schools Interested in Participating in its Humane and Character Education Pilot Program**

HEART, a 501(c)(3) public charity dedicated to fostering a more humane world through education, is introducing a free combined humane and character education instructional program that meets New York literacy and social studies standards.

HEART is looking for candidates to participate in its pilot program beginning in January 2006. New York law currently requires humane education in all elementary schools and character education in grades K through 12. HEART believes there is a natural synergy between Humane and Character Education. Combining the two will provide a cohesive program to allow schools to comply with both statutes and improve school climate while also encouraging students to include all living beings and the environment in their circle of compassion.

The curriculum is a comprehensive 10-lesson humane/character education program. The initial targets of the program will be the 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grades. Pre and post-program assessments will be conducted to measure students' cognitive, attitudinal and behavioral development.

For more information, interested teachers of grades 4, 5 or 7 and/or administrators should contact Meena Alagappan, Executive Director, HEART, 212-744-2504, [meena@teachhumane.org](mailto:meena@teachhumane.org).