

HUMANE ED NEWS

Brooklyn Fifth Graders Write A Book To Help Save Rhinos



Andatu, the first Sumatran rhinoceros born in captivity in Indonesia, checks out the book about him. Photograph by Bill Konstant, International Rhino Foundation.

A new children's book, [*One Special Rhino: The Story of Andatu*](#), written and illustrated by fifth graders at the P.S. 107 in Park Slope, Brooklyn, celebrates the 2012 birth of a Sumatran rhino—and takes up his cause.

Since 2007, an exploding black market for rhino horn, mistakenly coveted by Asian cancer sufferers, has led to rampant poaching. The Sumatran is the most [critically endangered](#) of the five remaining rhino species. Scientists estimate that there may be no more than a hundred left in the world, a decrease of 50 percent in 20 years.

“They really feel like Andatu is their rhino,” says Katherine Eban, co-chair of Beast Relief, the PTA committee at PS 107 that helped the fifth-grade class produce the book. “They’ve gone ‘rhino mad!’” Beast Relief was founded in 2012 when Eban, currently a contributing journalist for Fortune magazine and mother of a second-grader at PS 107, was disturbed by the rhino-poaching crisis. She shared her concern with other parents, including now co-chair Heather Millward, and they decided to create Beast Relief.



June 2014 fifth-graders (from left to right) Gaia Gambboa, Owen Bryson, Matthew Pisano, Tess Lovell, and Katie Tanzer pose with “One Special Rhino: The Story of Andatu” after a reading for younger students at PS 107.

Eban says they intended for Beast Relief “to be an animal welfare committee in which we were going to try and inspire in the kids a desire to take care of wildlife and the importance of conservation.” The PS 107 students first became involved in animal activism through efforts such as making the video [The Secret Lives of Rhinos](#).

Dominique Frieda, the fifth-grade reading teacher responsible for many of the organizational efforts of the book project, said that student work on *One Special Rhino* coincided with their nonfiction reading section. Between 15 to 20 students participated in the research and the writing of the book while the rest of PS 107’s 85 fifth-graders made illustrations of Andatu to be included in the book. Frieda says the project helped the students understand the value of nonfiction literature. “They learned a lot about working together and collaborating.” Visit <http://ps107.org/beastrelief/> for more information.

Information was gleaned from NY Metro Parents and was sent to us by Debra Tanzer, the grandmother of one of the PS 107 students pictured.

Institute for Humane Education

The Institute for Humane Education (IHE) believes that education is the key to creating a just, humane, and sustainable world for all people, animals, and the environment. They offer programs and resources designed to train, educate, and inspire people to become humane educators and changemakers, and to live with compassion and integrity while working to solve the most pressing challenges of our time.

They work to achieve this by:

- offering education and training opportunities, including five accredited [graduate programs](#) and [workshops](#), for people all over the world
- providing relevant [resources](#) and tools for educators, activists, and citizens
- advancing the field of humane education and working to redefine the purpose of education

For almost 20 years, The Institute for Humane Education (IHE) has worked to create a healthy, sustainable and humane world through education. To reach and educate youth of all ages, they are now developing a model curriculum, identifying facilities, preparing master teachers

and securing funding to open **the first humane education school in NYC in September 2016. Beginning with K-1st grade classes in their inaugural year, over four years they plan to build into a full K-8 school, followed by a high school.**

You don't have to wait to 2016 to get involved. The following are two sample IHE activities that you can download for use in your classroom right now.

1. Teach True Price

Inspire students with an activity on True Price -- how our daily choices can do the most good, and least harm to ourselves, other people, animals, and the environment. Students examine the hidden costs of a water bottle, a hamburger, a chocolate bar and more. The goal is to make it second nature for students to connect how all their decisions relate to creating a just, humane, and sustainable world. Recommended for grades 5 and up. Get started by downloading the Institute for Humane Education's instructions at: <http://ow.ly/EK3jB>

2. Start A Solutionary Team!

Gather your students to do something

amazing! Start a Solutionary team and hold a Solutionary congress. Rather than debate issues, this approach engages students to team up and create practical solutions to problems affecting people, humans, animals, and the earth. Students develop critical, creative problem-solving, and conflict resolution skills. Get started by downloading the Institute for Humane Education's free solutionary congress toolkit at: <http://ow.ly/EK7HX>

Teachers can subscribe to IHE's humane education blog and may also be interested in one or more of their five online master's programs which are fully accredited and offered through an affiliation with Valparaiso University.

Log onto the IHE website at <http://humaneeducation.org/> for a wealth of information including their graduate programs, their resource archive including lesson plans, grade-appropriate children's books, websites, videos, humane education jobs and volunteer opportunities.

HUMANE EDUCATION P-COURSE: Humane Education Advocates Reaching Teachers (HEART)

will offer a self-paced 36-hour After School Professional Development (ASDP) online P-course for grades K – 5 teachers in the Spring 2015 semester, titled, Promoting Success in Science and Literacy Through Humane Education, Course Code: P27-180S15. Participation in the course qualifies towards a salary differential. Participants will explore ways to utilize humane education content to implement strategies that support the development of science and literacy skills. Humane education informs students about issues related to human rights, animal protection, and environmental ethics through critical thinking, fostering reverence, and developing problem solving skills.

Additionally, the course will focus on specific Common Core State Standards in both reading and writing, NY State Science Standard 7, and Danielson Competencies 3b., questioning and discussion techniques, and 3c., engaging students in learning. Participants will gain the knowledge and ability to bring what they learn in the course directly into their classroom. The course will be multi-modal, with readings, videos, mini-activities, and whole group discussion boards. The ASPDP fee is \$125.

Registration information is available at <https://pci.nycenet.edu/asdpd/PublicPages/CourseCatalog.aspx/>. The course number is: P27-018.1S15. For additional information call Kim Korona at 313.282.7597 or Chris Parrucci at 631.807.8131.

MUTT-I-GREES Workshop at UFT

On November 8, 2014, Jayne Vitale and staff members of the North Shore Animal League presented the Mutt-i-Grees Curriculum to approximately 40 NYC Public School teachers. The Mutt-i-grees Curriculum uses stories and activities about shelter dogs to teach children about diversity, social awareness and compassion; combining the principles of Humane Education with those of Social Emotional Learning (or SEL).

The Mutt-i-grees Curriculum teaches students to care about themselves, other people and animals. The Curriculum was specifically created to be both easy to implement and not time-consuming with each lesson plan only taking about 30 minutes. What's more, it provides teachers with scripted lesson plans, activities and ways to engage families in both the school and community. **And for a limited time, Mutt-i-grees is offering complimentary curriculum kits.**



The Mutt-i-grees Curriculum uses activities and stories about dogs to reinforce critical skills including empathy, compassion and ethical decision-making. Children learn how to identify and label dogs' emotions and, in the process, develop the ability to better identify and label their own; a skill inextricably linked to self-awareness and children's capacity to manage their emotions in social settings. By being around animals and/or hearing animal stories, children naturally develop self-esteem, self-confidence and respect.

Then, children are better able to recognize and understand the perspectives of others. These interactions improve empathy and cooperation, while decreasing problematic behaviors like bullying and class disruption.

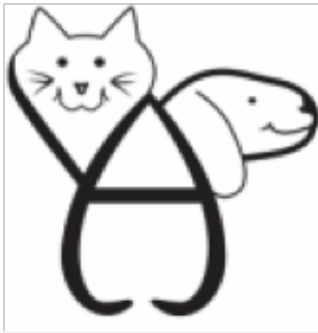
Cognitively, positive relationships with animals increase academic skills, concentration, mental acuity and the ability to focus. Lessons in the Mutt-i-grees Curriculum align with the National Health Education Standards and Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and include vocabulary, hands-on activities and reading resources.

The Mutt-i-grees Curriculum is designed for grades Pre-K to 3, 4 to 6, 7 to 8 and 9 to 12. It is available on request by a principal from an accredited elementary/middle/high school or by the director/coordinator of a school-based Head Start, Pre-K or after-school program. Each school is eligible to receive one of each complementary curriculum for each grade categories in their school.

Professional development and curriculum presentations are also available upon request. Check www.education.muttigrees.org for more information and details or contact Jayne Vitale at: jaynev@animalleague.org or 516.426.3411.



YAP Club - Changing Minds, Changing Laws, Changing Lives



Youth Animal Protectors (YAP) founder, Dr. Kimberly Spanjol, was a presenter at the UFT Humane Education Committee's November 8, 2014 workshop. She explained how the Yap Club at the Stephen Gaynor School on the Upper West Side teaches children and teens empathy, compassion, problem solving and related social emotional skills through learning about animal protection issues.

"YAP Club empowers young people by raising awareness and developing a greater understanding of others perspectives – both animal and human – as we explore how our choices impact our local and global communities," Dr. Spanjol stated. "In the process we learn how to create solutions and take action on issues that are important to us and benefits both ourselves and others".

Along with making a difference through education YAP Club holds fundraisers, volunteers, and engages in projects and events that promote the human-animal bond and helps people, animals and our environment in the process. If you are interested in forming a club in your school and would like to network with the Yap Club, please contact them via www.yapclub.org/.

A Fair Shake for Youth



A Fair Shake for Youth combines hands-on work with registered therapy dogs and a curriculum that helps students build empathy and self-esteem, hone critical thinking skills and address bullying. Over a semester, students meet in weekly one-hour sessions to learn and practice dog-handling skills, teach tricks and engage the dogs in cognition games and other activities.

Using a team-oriented approach the students discuss topics including animal shelters, rescue and breed discrimination. The curriculum is directly applicable to the Core Curriculum for Science as well as the Danielson Framework for critical thinking.

The dogs, honest and non-judgmental, serve as a catalyst for learning and growth; they make it safe for kids to let their guard down. Students learn to recognize and better understand both their own and others' needs and emotions, the power of verbal and non-verbal communication, to see how their behavior effects others, and to build academic skills as they explore and analyze issues and topics that relate to the dogs who they grow to love and who are so ready to love them back.

Audrey Hendler, founder and executive director of A Fair Shake for Youth, was named **NYer of the Week by NY1** for making a difference in the lives of young New Yorkers. For more information please contact: Audrey@afairshakeforyouth.org or 917-371-9005.