

## **UFT Humane Education Committee News January 2014**

### **UFT HUMANE EDUCATION COMMITTEE SPEAKS AT AN ANTI-FUR CONFERENCE IN WASHINGTON, D.C.**

On June 1st and 2nd, the Anti-Fur Society, hosted by Rosa Close, held its annual conference in Washington, D.C. Gail Frydkowski, Co-Chair of the UFT Humane Education Committee, was invited to speak. Ritalynn Forman, Executive Board Member, was also in attendance. Gail discussed the status of Humane Education in NYC schools. Mandated educational laws were noted and the goals of the Committee were discussed. The major part of Gail's talk was focused on how the Committee imparts information and resources at teacher training workshops. She focused on the need to have teachers return to the classroom and offer critical thinking and debate activities which encourage students to make ethical and humane choices in the way they live their lives. Additionally, examples of collaborations with animal advocacy groups, information on the variety of topics covered at our workshops and an overview of our annual P- Course were presented to the group.

Gail also touched on other ways to bring humane education programs to communities. "Caring Kids," <http://www.animalhavenshelter.org/site/PageServer?pagename=CaringKids/> offered by Animal Haven of NY and the "I Read to Animals" program <http://www.sunews.net/article.cfm?articleID=772/> were highlighted. Finally, Gail presented the anti-fur artwork the "Caring Kids" created after listening to a reading of Rosa Close's book, *How The Little Fox Saved Her Coat*.

### **"EDUCATING FOR A JUST, PEACEFUL AND SUSTAINABLE FUTURE" CONFERENCE**

On Saturday, September 21, 2013, Libet Chiraboga, Executive Board Member, had the pleasure of participating in *Educating for a Just, Peaceful & Sustainable Future*, a Humane Education conference in New York City. The conference brought together a few hundred attendees from many walks of life -- teachers, students, activists... basically, anyone who wants to make a difference in this world through the education of young people. Jane Goodall, who is an inspiration, was one of the keynote speakers.

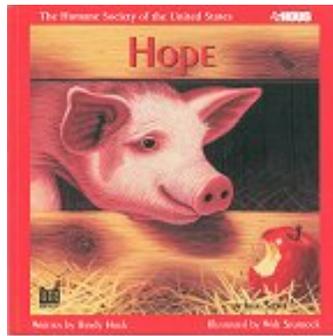
Lisbet presented at a breakout session entitled "Humane Education in Elementary Schools." Co-presenters at this workshop were Kim Korona, Program Coordinator, HEART; Chris Parrucci, Humane Education Instructor, HEART; and Dr. Bill Samuels, Director of Assessment, CUNY, College of Staten Island.

Lisbet's portion of the workshop was titled "Common Core with Humane Education Sprinkled on Top." She gave it this title to drive home the idea that Humane Education can be woven throughout the existing curriculum -- including ReadyGen. However, there are some key elements that a teacher must understand in order to deliver effective humane education. A teacher must be aware of issues facing humans, animals, and the environment, able to research materials and resources and discern their quality, and able to determine what is developmentally appropriate.

Teachers need not be an expert on every issue, but they can strive to stay informed. For example, if your curriculum has a unit on farms, then you need to be aware of what most farms look like today. They are windowless warehouses that house hundred of animals -- many times thousands -- mostly in cages. So, if you are still teaching children that farmed animals live happy lives with plenty of space to roam around, then you are not providing accurate information.

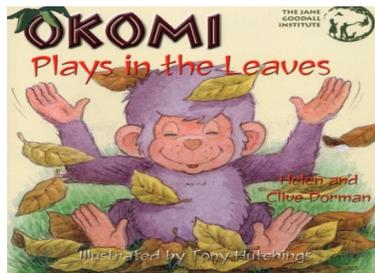
While it is not developmentally appropriate to show young students graphic pictures of factory farming, you can teach them about the animals' basic needs and natural behaviors. This way when they are older and exposed to the reality of factory farming they will understand how this practice denies animals their basic needs. You might also introduce the idea that most farm animals presently live in cages and ask students to explain whether

they think this is right or wrong and why. A good book for second grade is *Hope* by Randy Houk. It is a story of a piglet's rescue from a factory farm's dumpster where she was left to die. She is taken to live in an animal sanctuary where she is given the care she needs. It is based on a true story.

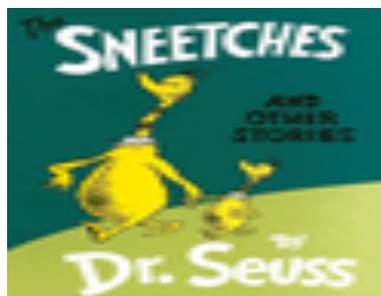


Lisbet's presentation at the September 2013 conference focused on skills for grades K-2 from the Common Core Learning Standards and easy ways to infuse humane education into the Common Core. Following are some examples.

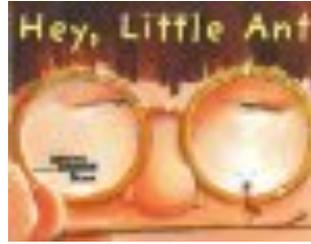
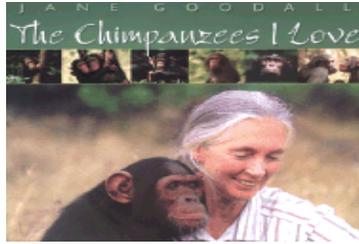
Kindergarten competencies include sequencing and recalling/retelling details from a text. Why not use a book from the *Okomi* book series? The *Okomi* stories are based upon real events and natural chimp behavior in the wild as observed by Jane Goodall. The *Okomi* books tell simple stories covering issues of fear, playfulness, laughter, surprise, and new experiences. You could even take this a step further and compare an *Okomi* story to the original *Curious George* story where he was captured and taken away from his natural habitat in Africa and brought to America. It's never too early to start teaching compare and contrast skills!



First grade skills include writing a sequence of instructions and story mapping. Why not use *Insect Rescue* to model writing instructions for students? Cover a bug with a cup, slide an index card under the cup, release the bug outside the window. Children are amazed that they don't have to kill insects! For story mapping, just pick a book with a humane theme and you will be able to discuss beginning, middle, ending or characters, setting, problem, solution plus so much more. An excellent book to use with first graders is *The Sneetches* by Dr. Seuss.



In second grade, students need to be able to recognize and understand non-fiction text features including captions, table of contents and diagrams. You might want to use *The Chimpanzees I Love* by Jane Goodall. It has wonderful photographs and true stories! Second graders also need to work on opinion writing. A great way to do that is by reading *Hey, Little Ant* by Phillip and Hannah Hoose. It is a great story about an ant who has to convince a boy not to squash him with his shoe. The ending is left open-ended so it is the perfect prompt for writing an opinion piece. Children will write quite enthusiastically!



As you can see, it is not necessary to add another class period in order to teach humane education. Just look at the required curriculum in your school and the opportunities for humane education will likely present themselves. Elementary teachers are required to teach about the humane treatment and protection of animals by New York State Education Law Article 17, Section 809. Humane education has the potential to motivate students struggling with a new, demanding Common Core curriculum and foster compassion for animals that will extend to humans as well.

### **“CHICKENS CAN FLY, TURKEYS CAN SWIM” WORKSHOP**



On October 23, 2013, UFT Humane Education Committee (UFT/HEC) held a workshop entitled “Chickens Can Fly.” Our keynote presenter was Karen Davis, Ph.D., founder and director of United Poultry Concern (UPC) <http://www.upc-online.org/>.

UFT/HEC has worked with Karen Davis since our inception in April 1989. She has come to NYC five times to speak at our conferences and workshops and we have provided significant input into the development of UPC publications, “A Home for Henny” and “Hatching Good Lessons” [http://www.upc-online.org/merchandise/humane\\_child.html/](http://www.upc-online.org/merchandise/humane_child.html/). Sheila Schwartz, founder and now co-chair of UFT/HEC has also worked with Karen Davis and others to establish the “Alliance to End Chickens as Kaporos,” [http://www.upc-online.org/pp/winter2013/kaporos\\_campaign\\_report.html/](http://www.upc-online.org/pp/winter2013/kaporos_campaign_report.html/) a group dedicated to ending the ritual slaughter of chickens as a means of atoning for human sins. Annual ritual slaughters are held yearly in Brooklyn, among other places including Israel.

Karen Davis provided an eloquent overview of the lives of chickens, turkeys and other animals at her Virginia chicken sanctuary and compared it to the lives of chickens raised as part of the meat industry. She stated that,

**“Farmed animals are sensitive and intelligent beings who should be portrayed accurately, fairly, and respectfully.”** She also informed the somewhat amazed gathering that **chickens can fly and turkeys can swim.** She reminded us that animals raised on farms have physical and behavioral needs, live in social groupings, care for their young and can feel hunger, fear, and joy among other emotions shared with humans.

Dr. Davis showed photos that reinforced her statement that, “While chickens are not long-distance flyers like geese, many chickens can easily surmount a six to eight foot fence, unless of course they’ve been genetically disabled by the chicken industry. Chickens fly in an arc, and many are well able to perch on rooftops and at other heights, as I’ve seen many times at our sanctuary.” She treated us to a PowerPoint presentation, which is **suitable for grades four and above, and available on request.** Lisbet Chiriboga and Ritalynn Forman, members of UFT/HEC’s executive board and Carol Moon, former NYC education director of Farm Sanctuary provided grade-appropriate presentations for teachers of grades pre-k to 12.

Many wonderful materials were distributed including stuffed toy hand puppet hens and finger puppet chicks for lower-grade teachers and exciting books including, *V is for Vegan*, *Our Farm*, *A Home for Henny*, *’Twas the Night Before Thanksgiving and Sanctuary*, *Portraits of Rescued Farm Animals*. If you missed this program but are still interested in the materials, many are available at [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) or through United Poultry Concerns. We also distributed the *Cultivating Compassion Curriculums* for grades 3 – 5 (which can be adapted for pre-k to two as well), 6 – 8 and 9 – 12. These are **available upon request.** Some of the aforementioned books will also be given as awards to winners in the UFT/HEC 2014 “Class Book and Essay Contest.”

Sheila Schwartz is now working with a national literacy curriculum development organization to update a manual for early childhood to reflect greater understanding and empathy for animals raised on farms. And if you haven’t heard, we now have an all-vegetarian school in New York City. See <http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/queens/queens-school-serves-all-vegetarian-fare-article-1.1331690> for more information. Did you know that Bill DeBlasio’s children are both vegetarians? Hope for positive change in our school system is increasing and we also hope that many of you will make the time to become actively involved in our programs.

For copies of the:

- Karen Davis PowerPoint presentation (suitable for grades 4 – 12)
- Cultivating Compassion (farmed animals curriculum unit for either grades 3 – 5 which can be adapted for lower grades, 6 – 8, or 7 – 12)
- UFT/HEC 2014 Class-Book & Essay Contest Rules and Application Form

call 212-410-3095 and leave your name and e-mail address along with a message requesting specific information or e-mail [uftprofessionalcommittees@uft.org](mailto:uftprofessionalcommittees@uft.org) with the words “Humane Ed Materials Wanted” in the subject line.

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