

# HUMANE ED NEWS

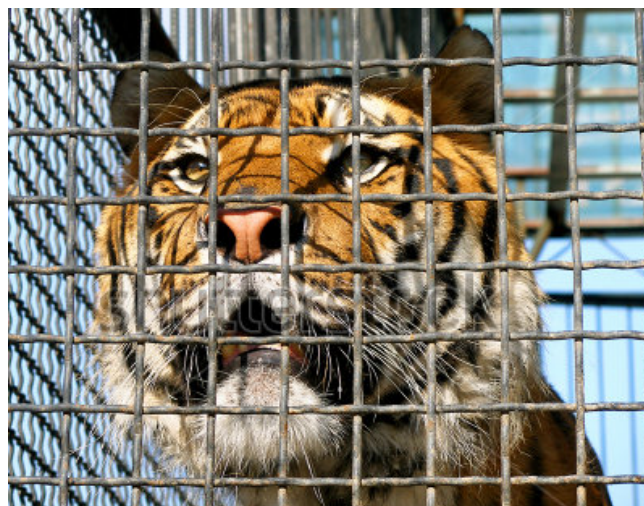
Newsletter of the United Federation of Teachers Humane Education Committee

## Born Free USA

“Born Free USA: Keep Wildlife in the Wild” was the theme of a humane education workshop held Saturday, January 19, 2013 at UFT Headquarters. Born Free was created by Will Travers, the son of Bill Travers and Virginia McKenna the stars of the legendary movie Born Free. Their mission is to end the suffering of wild animals in captivity; rescue individual animals in need, and protect wildlife — including highly endangered species — in their natural habitats. Their primary campaign areas currently include animals used in entertainment, captive exotic animals, trapping & fur, and the international wildlife trade.



Adam Roberts, Executive Vice President of Born Free USA, led the presentation covering a range of issues including exotic wildlife in captivity such as entertainment arenas, including distressing behaviors sometimes seen. Observations such as elephant swaying, bar biting, rocking, self mutilation and pacing behaviors within captive enclosures were described. Included for teacher and classroom use was the **Born Free Zoo Checklist**. This document, which can be viewed at [http://www.bornfreeusa.org/alb\\_zoocheck.php](http://www.bornfreeusa.org/alb_zoocheck.php), is a questionnaire and observation form that students can take to circuses, zoos, aquariums or any other place exhibiting animals. Students, who can integrate photos and video, are then free to submit the information back to Born Free USA. This is a project that students can collaborate on to help Born Free USA monitor the conditions of these captive animals.



Suggested class projects include creating timelines for the banning and lifting of the ivory trade, using charts to graph the lion population around the globe, writing cause and effect essays regarding wildlife trade, researching how animals parts traded actually function for the animal's anatomy. Students can also compare and contrast the lives of 'free' versus 'captive' animals, create posters or writings from the animal's point of view or design a brochure with facts about the animal.

Teachers participated in an activity which included photographs of animals both in their natural habitat and performing in the circus for a compare and contrast investigation. The emotional, physical and mental impact of captivity and performing on these animals was discussed. Ritalynn Forman, the UFT/HEC Executive Board member who arranged this program, also provided an activity that teachers can readily duplicate in their classrooms to get students thinking about how animals are trained and treated in the circus.

We also learned that the Born Free USA Primate Sanctuary provides a safe haven for nonhuman primates rescued from abusive situations ranging from research labs, private possessions or roadside zoos. The sanctuary provides a high quality of life and meets the innate physical, social and psychological needs of the primates there -- many for the very first time in their lives.

Roberts also talked about **National Bird Day** held every January. The Born Free USA website states that,

- “The beauty, songs, and flight of birds have long been sources of human inspiration.
- Today, nearly 12 percent of the world's 9,800 bird species may face extinction within the next century, including nearly one-third of the world's 330 parrot species.
- Birds are sentinel species whose plight serves as barometer of ecosystem health and alert system for detecting global environmental ills.
- Many of the world's parrots and songbirds are threatened with extinction due to pressures from the illegal pet trade, disease, and habitat loss.
- Public awareness and education about the physical and behavioral needs of birds can go far in improving the welfare of the millions of birds kept in captivity.
- The survival and well-being of the world's birds depends upon public education and support.”

Adam Roberts explained to the gathering that exotic birds are among the most lucrative illicit wildlife commodities. Nearly one-third of the world's 330 parrot species are threatened with extinction due to the combined pressures of habitat loss and collection for the pet trade. Whether captive bred or wild-caught, birds are not domesticated animals and frequently lead depressed lives languishing in cages and conditions that deny and frustrate their natural behavior.

Students can take action for helping captive birds through letter writing to shops, breeders and trappers. Teachers can utilize *Lucky the Lorikeet*, a children's book that is based on a true story. It tells the story of Lucky -- a parrot who is captured in the wild-- and eventually regains his freedom with the

help of a young Indonesian boy. Log on to <http://www.nationalbirdday.com/> for additional information about National Bird Day including free posters, matching the sounds a bird makes to his/her picture, information about a National Bird Day Teacher's Pack and a coloring contest for kids.

For bird units, log on to our *Humane Education Resource Guide* at <http://www.uft.org/files/attachments/humane-ed-resource-guide.pdf> and the elementary school *Humane Science Curricula* <http://www.uft.org/committees/humane-education-committee/humane-science-curricula/pigeons-city> and <http://www.uft.org/files/attachments/uft-birdwatching.pdf>. The secondary school *Humane Science Curricula* contains a unit on “Award Winning Student Projects” at <http://www.uft.org/award-winning-student-projects>. It includes summaries of several bird projects including two projects on the exotic birds Myiopsitta Monarchs, also known as the monk parakeets, who live in Brooklyn, NY. **There is a “Wild Brooklyn Parrot Safari” on Sat, March 2** and it's free. See <http://www.brooklynparrots.com/>.



monk parakeets

More information on Born Free USA can be found on their website at [www.bornfreeusa.org/](http://www.bornfreeusa.org/). Additionally, teachers can also access the UFT Humane Education Committee website for “A Trip to the Zoo” curriculum unit at <http://www.uft.org/elementary-school-units> and our “Humane Trip Advisory Guide” at [http://www.uft.org/files/attachments/humane\\_trip\\_advisory.pdf](http://www.uft.org/files/attachments/humane_trip_advisory.pdf).

# Teaching Humane Education with Minimal Resources at the High School Level

by Gail Frydkowski, Teacher, Murry Bergtraum High School, Manhattan

Whether it is early September or any given Monday morning, when I walk into school and find no textbooks, missing textbooks, broken copiers or printers and sometimes hardly a piece of chalk, I know that I can still create lessons and discussions surrounding humane education topics!

My morning routine on the NYC bus to school is to read my daily newspaper cover to cover. I have just enough time to reach that goal without missing my stop! Anytime I found an article relating to animals in any way, I tear it out for my upcoming classes later in the morning. One particular semester, while I was assigned a class of 11<sup>th</sup> graders who needed to take the ELA Regents, I had decided to use Humane Education materials. This way I satisfy both school and personal requirements! My news clippings would come in quite handy. By the way, for those doing Regents prep, I had students write responses to humane and character quotes, which are free! Using these quotes whether you do Regents or not is still a great idea to teach both humane and character education with little expense.

It soon became apparent that I was tearing things out of the newspaper almost daily. While it alarmed me that so many animal stories were appearing in the news, many quite negative, I

realized the teachable moments in them. So before the actual lesson of the day would begin, I would present the latest local, national or international animal news and we spent time in either great debate or engaging conversation. I went ahead and created a Humane Ed bulletin board and would then post the articles on the board for future reference. If lessons lent

themselves, I could use the board during a gallery walk in which students view materials posted around the room relating to various topics and perspectives on them. I invited students to seek out news clippings from their local papers or from online resources. Using the school library gave them options for researching and printing if home use was limited. I won't even begin to mention how much the use of technology provides and it costs little if you have access as we do in our school! Think of all the videos available online!

Fill your bulletin board or bring to class newspapers, photographs that you or your students can share. Create posters on legal size paper rather than poster paper. I had my students create 'Awareness' posters that were submitted and later hung in a common staff area at a well-known animal sanctuary. Some were submitted for a local humane education contest and a number of students won prizes, including cash! They were very proud of

this and it cost us little to do. During the year, I pick up magazines and save them for making collage pieces. The only additional materials are, again, some legal size paper, scissors, glue and markers. Some of your more artistic students will draw their own pictures and not use magazines at all.

To add information without using any physical resources, we created an online blog and posted links and resources for students to view. This was easy, practically free -- you may pay a small fee for your domain name -- and you could add unlimited information. A daily reminder to read the blog was placed on the blackboard. You could post articles, assignments, projects and homework quite effortlessly. Without access to a lot of resources or using the minimum, you can not only teach your core subject areas, ELA, Science and Social Studies, but if you ask me, just involving students in conversation is priceless!





# ***Choices For Our Future: A Generation Rising for Life on Earth*** by Ocean Robbins and Sol Solomon

Book review by Dr. Joyce Boom, Teacher, Bronx,  
New York

*Choices For our Future*, a 1994 book, is still a powerful guide for inhabitants of the earth from the perspective of high school and college age students. There is joy and positive direction in the book, despite the seriousness of the enduring global problems presented. The well-documented, easy to understand discussions are engaging and point to individual and collective action for saving the earth. Scientific facts are discussed, interspersed with human interest anecdotes, emphasizing the need for action based on the nature of earth's problems. The fundamental thread throughout is humankind's treatment of the planet, the negative consequences of this treatment and future direction to make a better, cleaner, saner living world.

The authors analyze four kinds of choices we make in the human world that dramatically affect the ability of the earth to thrive and sustain us. They are:

- \* the material objects we make and consume
- \* the food we eat
- \* the energy sources we use and
- \* who we are and how we relate to our world



We learn that:

- \* while 40,000 children are dying of starvation every day, 80% of the nine-year-old girls in California have already been on their first diet (page 77)
- \* Over a billion trees are used to make disposable diapers every year (page 45)
- \* Every year farmers pour 1.5 billion pounds of pesticides onto American farmlands. Many of these pesticides were originally developed during World War II to kill people. (page 89)

Despite the depth of the problems, each chapter shows how to climb back to environmental sanity. We can become green environmentalists through the guidance of the chapters, as well as the appendix which organizes useful resources. Options for helping the planet heal itself include more sophisticated recycling programs, adopting an acre of rainforest, zero population growth, and of course making well-informed conscientious consumer transportation choices.

This book is suitable for secondary school through adult learning. "Earth work, for humans of all countries and all ages is a mission, a cause, and a labor of love, never just a job to do." (page 21) *Choices For Our Future* is sold by Amazon.com.

