THE ASSOCIATION OF PROFESSIONAL HUMANE EDUCATORS
Professional Guidelines for Humane Educators

The following guidelines were developed to help members of the Association of Professional Humane Educators (APHE) meet and maintain the highest standards of practice in their humane education careers.

I. The Humane Educator

A. Definition

A humane educator is anyone who teaches and promotes humane attitudes toward people, animals and the environment. This includes, but is not limited to, anyone who teaches animal welfare, animal rights, animal behavior, environmental concerns, character education, social justice, cultural studies and any combination of the above.

B. Education

Familiarity with the principles of teaching techniques and child development is highly recommended. While many humane educators find a degree in education an asset, it is not a requirement. Print and online resources, such as those included in the APHE online Resources, will be helpful in introducing these principles to those who require them. It should also be noted that a humane educator need not be an expert in all areas of humane education. However, APHE recommends that the humane educator be familiar with a variety of humane education topics, including where to find information and resources on each. Again, the APHE online Resources will be helpful for this purpose.

In an effort to learn about the many topics within humane education, training may be sought through many avenues, including hands-on training and public or private schools, colleges and agencies. Information can also be obtained by attending humane education, animal welfare and Environmental Education webinars, seminars and conferences sponsored by a number of national and local organizations including APHE. Some organizations offer online degree programs in humane education, as well. It is important to take advantage of the many available education opportunities, conferences, webinars and seminars, which not only provide new information and techniques to humane educators, but also help develop a broader professional network of those with similar goals.

Each humane educator should know his or her own personal strengths and preferences and their agency's constraints. APHE recommends that humane educators conduct an informal self-assessment of their level of formal, informal or professional training on a recurring basis to assess changes that occur as a result of working in the field. Issues to consider include: which age, audiences, or topics are preferred, can be accomplished competently within the audience's cognitive range, and are consistent with his or her organization's mission.

C. Appearance and Demeanor

Humane educators may work for a variety of private and public agencies or independently. Through their teaching and title, the public will see the humane educator as a role model. When presenting lessons, humane educators should respect differing viewpoints and behave considerately toward others in their tone, words and actions.

APHE recommends that humane educators dress in a professional manner. Their clothing should be appropriate for the program, venue and planned activities.

D. Knowing Your Audience

1. Age and Developmental Appropriateness

Some topics and modes of presentation are better suited than others for certain audiences; therefore, it is imperative to assure that topics and presentations are age and developmentally appropriate. The humane educator should never assume that everyone in the same grade or age range has the same maturity level or base of knowledge. Many education and developmental psychology textbooks contain charts that outline basic developmental stages and accomplishments. APHE recommends humane educators contact the teacher or coordinator to discuss the presentation, materials and any concerns.

2. Learning Styles and Theories

In order to serve a diverse audience, APHE recommends that the humane educator be familiar with different learning theories and ways to foster different learning styles. It is also important to incorporate as many of these styles of teaching as possible into lesson plans so that the entire audience may benefit from the presentation. Again, many education and developmental psychology textbooks contain information about learning styles and learning theories.

3. Cultural Considerations

Customs and principles vary greatly from one culture to another. It is extremely important for humane educators to be aware of the existence of these variations. Also, because it is virtually impossible for an individual to be familiar with the idiosyncrasies of each culture and subculture, it is imperative that the humane educator asks questions of and involves respected cultural leaders in his or her community in an effort to better understand the audience. By having a basic knowledge of cultural issues, and asking when they are not completely certain, humane educators can be better prepared to teach any group.

4. **Addressing Sensitive Issues**

   Understanding your audience is extremely important when selecting topics to address and the level of complexity and detail to present. It is also necessary to determine if there are any restrictions or recommendations imposed by the school or teacher. There are some geographical locations and groups or organizations in which certain topics may not be acceptable.

II. Animal Partners

A. When to Bring an Animal

Before including an animal in a presentation, a humane educator must decide if the animal will truly benefit or complement the program. In some cases, the presence of an animal may directly contradict the message of the presentation. In other cases, the animal may be an asset. Photos, videos, a live video stream or puppet can often achieve similar or better results than a live animal, without stressing animals or sending contradictory messages.

When deciding whether to bring an animal, it is important to consider the age or grade of the students and whether the animal will be an asset or a distraction for a given audience in a given venue. The school or facility may also restrict the presence of an animal or members of the audience may have specific concerns such as allergies, asthma, or fear of animals.

Permission to bring an animal to a facility should be obtained prior to attending the program.

B. Animal Qualifications

APHE strongly recommends that all animals being considered as education partners be evaluated by a certified trainer, evaluator or behaviorist to ensure their physical and psychological well-being, as well as their comfort level in public settings. As a minimum, APHE recommends that dogs have their Canine Good Citizen certification or its equivalent. Domesticated and companion animals who accompany humane educators can be registered as therapy animals through national agencies such as Pet Partners. Local and regional organizations may exist in your area and may also serve as resources for training, evaluations and volunteers.

APHE recommends that humane educators and volunteers only take animals that have met the recommendations listed to humane education programs. Taking an inexperienced, untested, unknown and/or untrained animal to an unfamiliar setting is stressful for the animal, and could create a dangerous situation for the humane educator, the animal and the program participants.

C. Insurance for Staff and Education Animals

While many agencies carry liability insurance for their site, humane educators must be sure the agency insurance will cover them and their animal when they travel to programs off site. Many registered therapy animal/handler teams are insured through their own homeowners insurance policy or registering organization, as well. Some program facilities may request proof of this insurance. No program facility will cover the animal team on their insurance.

III. Logistics

A. Location

1. Agency or Facility

Tours are a great way to leave a lasting and positive impression on the community. Not only can informative tours educate the public, they can help boost adoptions, donations and community support, as well. Before considering the specifics of what will occur on tours of the facility, it is of paramount importance to determine if the agency's insurance will cover public tours and whether there are sufficient and capable staff or volunteers to lead tours. Once it has been determined that tours are possible, other things to consider include: areas of the facility that can be safely accessed by the public without disrupting the animals and staff; whether to allow guests to interact with the animals; whether or not a formal educational program will be presented during their visit.

2. School

Schools are the most common setting for humane education programs. In order to best serve the community it is important to determine the geographic areas in which programs will be offered. It is also important to determine the number of visits to a particular class or school that is feasible. Many times teachers will ask if it is possible to double-up or triple-up classes. Decisions on these requests should be based on the particular program and the comfort level of the humane educator.

3. Camp or Private Group

Visits to private clubs and camps are in many ways similar to school class visits. However, in these settings the age ranges of the audience members may vary more widely and the conditions may not be as conducive to teaching as one will find in a more traditional school venue. It is important to get as much information as possible prior to a visit so that adjustments can be made to accommodate different venues.

4. Community Programs

The audience for community programs will vary greatly in age, education, and all other demographic variables. The potential settings for community programs can also be highly

variable. It is important to gear the program to the audience and setting in which the program will take place.

B. Flyers and Other Promotional Items

It is always helpful to leave some form of literature with audience members. This allows for the information to be reviewed after the program is over, or better yet, be taken home and shared with other family members.

Demographics will vary from location to location. Therefore it is important to consider languages other than English in which it may be beneficial to produce flyers.

Other promotional items can include items such as pencils, pens, rulers, coloring books or magnets. Each item can have a humane education lesson printed on it or an agency or group identifier.

C. Using Technology

With technological advances moving at a breakneck pace, humane education has a myriad of opportunities to utilize technology to reach additional audiences. From distance learning to social media to the latest gadgets technology can be incorporated in classroom activities or used to educate remotely. Experiment with different forms of technology and 21st Century learning to enhance educational experiences for your audience. However, be sure to adequately prepare and familiarize yourself with whatever form of technology you utilize. When using technology in an educational setting, you will often become seen as "the expert." Remember to always have a back-up plan should technical difficulties arise.

IV. Resources

A. Literature

APHE recommends that humane educators be familiar with the literature their agency or organization publishes and be aware of where to obtain literature published by other private or government organizations (see APHE online Resources). It is important to review all literature to make sure that it is current and consistent with the mission statement of the humane educator's organization. Always remember that humane educators are a resource and should be able to expose their audience to multiple viewpoints.

B. Online Resources
Online resources are available from a variety of sources, including professional associations and businesses, research, and non-profit organizations. Please be aware of the original source when considering any online material. Some resources may reflect views of private entities, individuals, or organizations that may not align with the mission of your organization. It is very beneficial for humane educators to be aware of the vast quantity

and quality of information available online, while recognizing that some information may conflict with your educational curricula.

C. Other Professionals

It is highly beneficial for humane educators to be familiar with local experts in their organization and community. Places to look outside of a humane educator's own agency include animal welfare organizations, animal control agencies, police departments, zoos, veterinary offices, and private clubs that specialize in animals, birds, reptiles, and the like.

D. Other Agencies

See APHE online Resources for a partial list of agency referrals and Internet links.

V. Other

A. When Personal Ethics Conflict the Agency's Ethics

It is well within the realm of possibility that a humane educator's personal ideologies may not exactly mirror those of the organization for which the humane educator works. It is, however, generally a requirement that humane educators present the policies and ideologies of the organization that employs them. If the humane educator finds it difficult to present information inconsistent with his or her own personal philosophies APHE recommends that the issue be addressed with agency directors to arrive at a position with which all parties can agree.

B. Hosting Functions

There are many considerations for hosting a function at your agency or in conjunction with another organization. Such concerns may include the agency's mission and policies, the guests, including guest organizations, and the event. When hosting an event for the public, it is important to remember that how the event is organized conveys a message about the agency. Things to consider include the appropriate food to serve and what steps can be taken to reduce waste and encourage recycling.