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# Latham Letter

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PROMOTING RESPECT FOR ALL LIFE THROUGH EDUCATION

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## *Humane Education for All –*

*Making humane lessons work for students of all abilities*



By Sarah Kesty

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HUMANNE EDUCATION

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# Edith Latham's MANDATE:

MANDATE

"To promote, foster,  
encourage and  
further the  
principles of  
humaneness,  
kindness and  
benevolence to  
all living creatures."



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## ***The Latham Letter***

Balanced perspectives on humane issues and activities

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# The Latham Letter

Volume XXXVII, Number 1, Spring 2016

**BALANCED PERSPECTIVES ON  
HUMANE ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES**



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The Latham Foundation is a 501(c)(3) private operating foundation founded in 1918 to promote respect for all life through education. The Foundation makes grants-in-kind rather than monetary grants. Latham welcomes partnerships with other institutions and individuals who share its commitment to furthering humane education.

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Hugh H. Tebault III,  
Latham Foundation's  
President

# Reliving the good old days, or were they?

The older we get, the more we tend to refer to “the old days.” Some suggest that we look back through rose-colored glasses and selectively choose our memories. That may be true, but I believe it is important to remember and learn from both the good and bad experiences of our past, so we can apply those lessons to what we encounter today.

Latham is now 98 years young. In 2018 we will celebrate 100 years of promoting respect and kindness. Our founders and members believed that they could work together to improve society by promoting humane education. Some of our historic good times involved sharing the humane education story by using the characters Brother Buzz and Miss Busy Bee as narrators. These stories stressed compassion, respect, and personal responsibilities.

Brother Buzz began as a serialized story published in Latham’s *Kind Deeds Messenger* (1926-1941). The stories were dramatized for the then-new radio medium in the 1930s, helping convey good values and respect for animals. When Brother Buzz transitioned to television in the 1950s – 1970s, life was still fairly simple. We did not have cell phones or smart phones or the internet and cable television with hundreds of channels constantly available. Instead, there was time to go home each day, have dinner with the family, and socialize with neighbors and friends. We made time to volunteer in our community or to mentor someone who needed help.

Yes, we also had crime and strife. However, I believe we dealt with them as problems caused by criminals, not by making excuses for bad behavior. There was a clear understanding of right and wrong, which in and of itself gave society a more stable foundation.

In 1968 I was on the campus of SF State when a criminal group (unnamed) bullied students and then burned the library building. Lots of police were called, but few if any of the criminals were caught or prosecuted. The politically popular thought was that a social action group had a “right” to take actions that otherwise would be considered illegal.

I believe it is important for us all to face equal treatment under the law. It is also important that those we employ to represent us in the administration of government remain faithful to the rules (constitution and laws) we have agreed to. When we select some groups to get special benefits, everyone else is negatively impacted. The essence of humane education is that we are all equal, and that it is a personal responsibility for each of us to help one another. That does not translate into a government-mandated duty to order our behavior or to afford special privileges to only certain people.

So how much have we progressed since I witnessed that crime at SF State in 1968? Are we really better off with instant communication? Not necessarily. It still takes our personal involvement and attention if we are to develop, spread, and expect honorable behavior in our communities. We should not be content with dishonorable behavior or lawlessness. We should continue to examine our past for examples of good values and models – and plan our tomorrows so that they include those values and models.

At Latham, our plan is to make additional historic Latham material available for your use. Hopefully, that will spark imagination and encourage many to pursue a more civil society – a society in which diverse opinions coexist and laws are applied and followed equally – showing respect for all.





The Humane Society of the United States, through its Faith Outreach program and Humane Society Academy, presents an online Sunday school curriculum that incorporates animal protection issues and biblical teachings.

The five-lesson curriculum is designed for students in grades K-5 and includes the following lessons: Animals

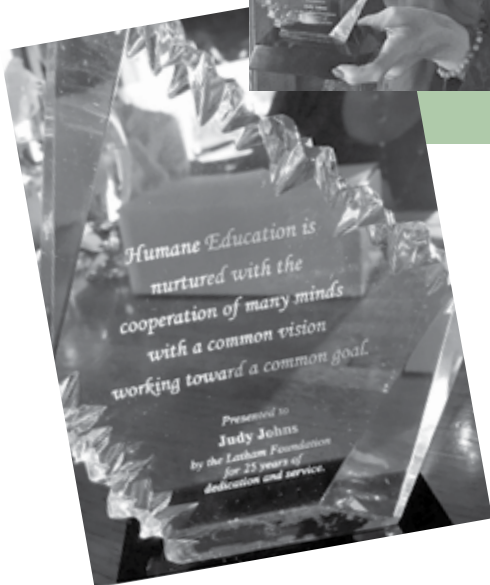
are Important to God, Being a Helping Hand for Birds and Wildlife, Protecting Pollinators, The Joy of Animals, and The Earth and Animals Belong to God. Each lesson includes hands-on projects, and the curriculum also includes a list of supplemental resources for the instructor to enrich his or her knowledge and background on the connection between animal protection and faith, as well as on humane education.

For more information and to download a preview of the first lesson, visit <http://www.humanesociety.org/about/departments/faith/forms/sunday-school-curriculum.html>  
Questions? Email [faith@humanesociety.org](mailto:faith@humanesociety.org).

## Congratulations!

*"I am pleased to announce that Judy Johns is celebrating her 25th anniversary working with the Latham Foundation, helping us promote humane education."*

~ Hugh Tebault



## National Bathe To Save Tour Hits The Road to Make Sure Every Dog Has Its Day



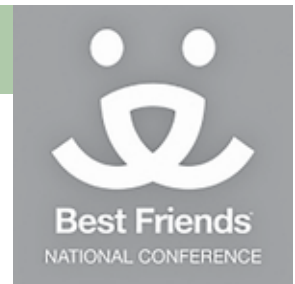
Family of Five Embarks on 18-Month, 50-State, 150+ City, Cross-Country Excursion to Wash 25,000+ Dogs and Raise \$1M for Animal Rescue Organizations.

By transporting the big blue HydroDog mobile grooming unit ([www.hydrodog.com](http://www.hydrodog.com)) to every state, the Bathe to Save Team aims to wash 25,000 dogs with 100 percent of the proceeds donated back to aid animal rescue groups and organizations throughout the U.S.

Contact Anthony & Rachel Amos at [info@BatheToSave.com](mailto:info@BatheToSave.com) for information on connecting your animal organization with the tour.

## COME BY AND SAY HI

Latham will have a booth at the **Best Friends Save Them All Conference** July 14-17 in Salt Lake City, Utah.



Stop by for a visit and preview our newest video, *Horses Heal Too, Two Different Paths to Healing*. You can also enter a drawing for a free book or video. We'd love to meet you.

For more information on the conference, visit <http://bestfriends.org/events/best-friends-national-conference>

# Humane Education for All –

## Making humane lessons work for students of all abilities



By Sarah Kesty

Imagine that you're called to present a Humane Education lesson in a special education classroom, or that a child begins to demonstrate special needs in your camp or shelter. Does your heart immediately ache for the kids? Does your mind play out the potential challenging behaviors? Does your schedule suddenly seem too full to accommodate the request?

I'll be real with you. I used to have a very different mental image of "special education," and I avoided these classes for fear of heartache and a deep fear that I wouldn't know what to do to help the kids. In my mind, I saw a blur of aide and student activity, mostly attending to intimidating medical needs and screaming children. If your mental image of "special education" is similar to mine, it's okay; you've generalized based on what you've known so far.

We're human, and according to educational researcher and advocate Dr. Anthony Muhammad (2015), generalizing is a way our brains have adapted to manage the giant amounts of incoming information we take in every day. But, the generalizations we make from the images we have been shown, through media and through experiences, sometimes inhibit our ability to see the truth. The important thing is that we maintain a level of awareness of our generalizations and allow ourselves to challenge our generalizations when we're presented with new or contradicting information. This article will make you do the latter! Special Education represents a wide range of programs, serving a wide range of students. Like me, you may find yourself intrigued by these exceptional minds, endeared to their authenticity, and inspired to teach and love them.

### **Special Education: A Historical Perspective**

1975 was a huge year for students with special needs. Prior to this year, students with significant needs were excluded from school, sometimes hospitalized or institutionalized, and very often misunderstood. Students with learning difficulties (but without physically obvious challenges) were often blamed for their lack of progress and regularly dropped out of school for a lack of engagement and success. But, in 1975, the federal government passed the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), which charged schools with the task of including and educating students of all abilities.

Although 41 years have passed, educators and school leaders continue to explore models of support for students with disabilities. In fact, the Diagnostic

and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5), used to diagnose some disabilities such as ADHD and Learning Disabilities, is reviewed and modified about every 10-15 years (DSM5.org), reflecting updates in brain and behavior research. Your Humane Education lessons and the observations you make in student growth will contribute to the larger movement of understanding all of our students.

## Roll Call: Who Are These Students with Special Needs?

“Special Education” is an umbrella term that refers to the services provided to meet the educational needs of students with disabilities. These needs can range from class-work modifications, to small group instruction, to physical assistance. These services can be provided by a teacher, aide, or specialist, in the general education room, a visit to a different classroom for part of the day, or in a specialized classroom.

An important trend is that students with special needs are included in general education classrooms as much as possible. Consider this: in 2000, just under 50% of students with disabilities spent 80% or more of their days in general education classrooms. About 30% of these students spent 40-79% of their day in general education settings, and only about 20% of students with disabilities spent less than 40% of their day in general education classrooms. Twelve years later, in the 2012-13 school year, over 60% of students with disabilities spend the vast majority (80%

or more) of their day in general education. And about 15% of these students are in general education less than 40% of their day. (See page 10 WORKS CITED)

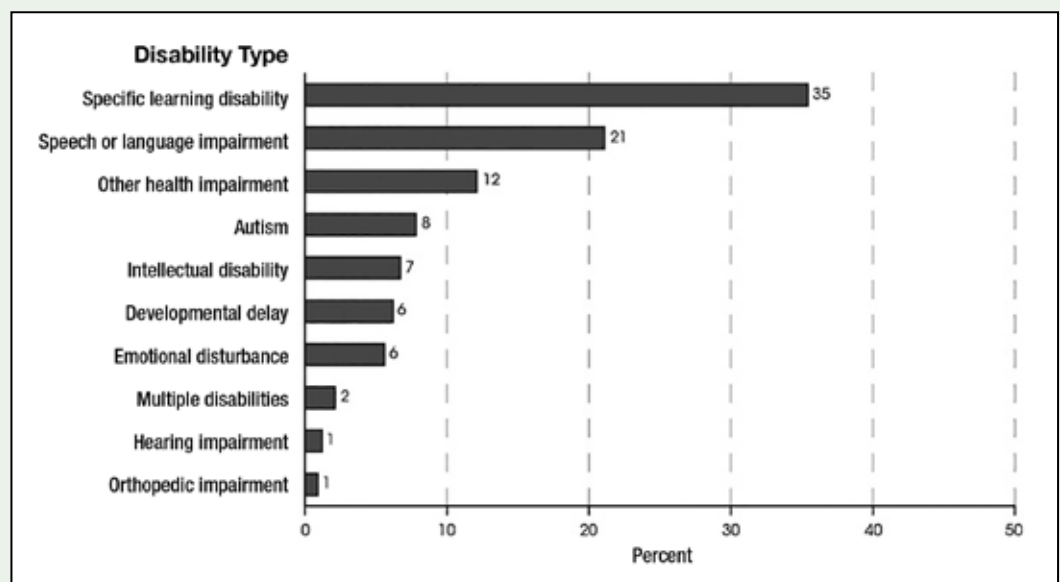
So what do these kids look like? The answer is simple: they look like kids. Sometimes their challenges are physically obvious, but most often, these are kids in classrooms where you already teach! Yes, you have already reached and celebrated these students! Now, it’s time to increase your awareness and hone your skills.

There are 13 federally recognized categories of disabilities. Of these, there are four categories that represent nearly 80% of students with special needs.

- *Specific Learning Disability*
- *Speech/Language Impairment*
- *Other Health Impairment*
- *Autism*

## Specific Learning Disability: What it is and how to support students

Students with Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD) represent 35% of all students with special needs in our schools. To qualify as a student with an SLD, students are assessed by a team of specialists and found to have a profile similar to that shown in Figure 2: the student will usually have close to average intellectual ability but will demonstrate much lower scores for academic achievement. The difference (discrepancy) between intellectual ability and academic achievement is often correlated to a processing disorder (the curvy line in the image). A processing disorder indicates that the student has trouble receiving or expressing information through one or more methods: sensory motor, auditory processing, attention, visual processing, phonological processing, and/or cognitive abilities.



**Figure 1.** Percentage distribution of children ages 3-21 served under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Part B, by disability type: School year 2012-13 ([idea.ed.gov/explore/home](http://idea.ed.gov/explore/home))

The children you work with may or may not be identified to you as having an SLD. However, you may recognize these students as:

- Students who are strong in one area and weak in another (a disjointed profile)
- Students who “get it” one day but forget the next
- Students who may act out/avoid class work in an effort to hide skill deficits
- Students who may need a little extra “think time” when you ask a question (because they do double-duty to process the question then formulate an answer)
- Students who may not have a history of success in group work

Students with SLD often need instruction tailored to their processing strengths. For example, a student who has difficulties with visual processing may benefit from being able to orally discuss a passage during the reading lesson. There is a huge body of research on processing disorders, and no one expects that you’re able to be spot-on with your instruction at all times.

However, there are a few strategies that reveal strong results when working with students with SLD:

- *Never assume behavior is personal.*
- *Always assume behavior is communication.*
- *See the needs as a “skill deficit” rather than a choice. This kind of thinking will often illuminate solutions for you.*
- *Allow students extra time.*
- *Give the questions ahead of time (if possible).*
- *Support writing with sticky notes to copy, sentence frames, and word banks.*  
 Sentence frames: Sentences with missing words that students fill in  
 Word Banks: Places where students can keep a list of words they have learned

## Speech/Language Impairment: What it is and how to support students

Students with speech and language impairments represent a broad spectrum of needs and are 21% of all students in special education. Some can have challenges with the articulation of sounds, while others can have difficulty stringing words together to make a coherent sentence. These students may be a little more obvious in class, as you can often hear their challenges when they speak. Consider what an impact your empathy lessons could have on the experience of a student who stutters; students who can take his perspective will likely encourage rather than taunt him. What a valuable role empathy will play!

Students with Speech/Language Impairment:

- *Some students with SLI have articulation challenges (think of the kids who have lisps or whose “r” sounds like a “w.”)*
- *Some students have difficulty with semantics, word choice, or word order.*
- *Some students have difficulty with expressing themselves (even though their thoughts are clear).*

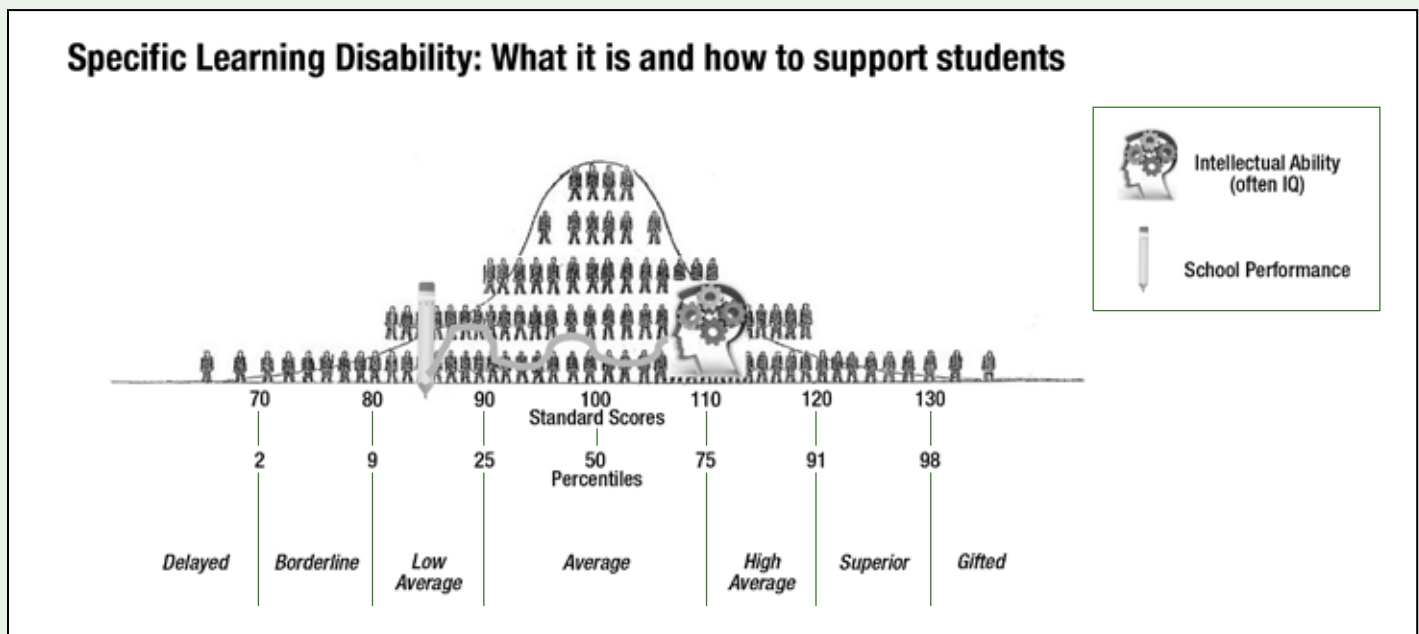


Figure 2.



- *Some students have difficulty interpreting language and/or social situations.*
- *Most students see a speech therapist during the school day.*

Your intuition and the empathetic tone of the lessons will be of great support for students with speech/language impairments. Other strategies to consider include:

- *Providing sentence frames to support discussions.*
- *Allowing for peer/teacher modeling.*
- *Avoiding rushing a student for time's sake.*
- *Allowing alternatives to talking such as writing, drawing, and practicing to self before sharing.*
- *Exploring communication devices in the classroom. If you have a heads up, you can make/ask the teacher to make icons or buttons to ensure participation.*

## **Other Health Impairment: What it is and how to support students**

Other Health Impairment is one of the broadest categories, covering health issues from anxiety to Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). In order to have special education support for an Other Health Impairment, the student has to experience school challenges related to the impairment. In my experience, ADHD is the most common diagnosis in this category. It is also my experience that ADHD is often the most misunderstood disability, and it is my hope to clarify some of the misinformation here.

Facts about ADHD:

- *ADHD is a brain difference and is shown in brain activity and measurements of brain chemicals. It is not a choice for the child and is not the result of bad parenting.*
- *Students with ADHD can indeed focus; they often have an ability to hyper-focus.*
- *Not all students with ADHD are hyperactive. In fact, ADD can often look hypo-active. (Think of the student who retreats into his own mind.)*
- *Novel things attract brain attention (giving better chemical feedback), so use this! Change your voice, move around, ask questions.*
- *Students with ADHD do want to succeed. They strive to be understood and accepted.*

Supporting students with attention deficits can feel daunting, even for seasoned professionals, so imagine what it must be like for the child experiencing these deficits! The more you frame the students' struggles as a puzzle to figure out, the more successful your ideas and interventions will be. Here are some methods I've used and found to be successful:

- *Remember, behavior is not personal and is often not a choice for the student.*
- *Think of ways to positively manipulate the environment and your own behavior to make the unwanted behaviors either more difficult or less enticing to display.*
- *Ask teachers to familiarize you with any behavior/incentive charts used.*
- *Use proximity!*

- *Accept alternative ways to participate or "listen." Students may not look like they're listening when they actually are. Does it really matter that the student sits and stares at you, or can they process information in their own way?*
- *Sometimes bodies just need to move. Try to discover how can you incorporate movement or allow for it so it's not disruptive.*

## **“ So what do these kids look like?**

**The answer is simple:**

**they look like kids.** ”

### **A quick note:**

A student may have special needs but not require special education. For example, a student with a physical disability may need some classroom modifications to be able to access activities, but he/she may not need supplemental supports to have educational benefit from the classroom. In this case, the student would have a 504-plan – a federally mandated plan that describes the school's responsibility for "leveling the playing field" in order to ensure he/she can access learning.

## Autism: What it is and how to support students

Autism is often described as a spectrum, as students with autism may share characteristics, but the severity varies greatly. Autism Spectrum Disorder is a developmental diagnosis that manifests in many ways and with many levels of effect. Most students with autism have sensory needs, communication/social delays, and repetitive or stereotypic behaviors.

Picture a hand near a chalkboard ... then the nails start to scraaatttchhh ... feeling yucky? That's often the analogy used to describe what it's like to have sensory processing challenges. Brain differences in students on the autism spectrum often cause students to seek sensory relief or feedback; sensory-seeking may look peculiar to others but is a legitimate need for these students.

Sensory-seeking may look like:

- Flapping
- Spinning
- Perching
- Squishing one's self
- Biting/grinding teeth
- Humming
- Covering one's ears

Communication needs may look like:

- Student may not look in your eyes. (It's okay to prompt.)
- Student may not understand idioms and may be very literal. It's okay to point out what the phrases mean.
- Student may not yet have verbal skills. In this case you can use picture exchange systems or communication boards. (Connect with the teacher ahead of time to get any icons you need.)
- Student may be overwhelmed by social demands even though he/she longs to connect.

Supporting students with autism takes many different forms. You won't be perfect at it, at first. Here are some tips:

- Watch the other adults to see and hear what prompts they use with the students.
- Allow students extra time to process your question before producing an answer.
- Pair words with pictures/icons. (Connect with the teacher ahead of time to be sure the icons are made for the book/lesson.)
- Allow for sensory-seeking behaviors, but ask for teacher/aide support if the behaviors are too disruptive to the lesson. (It's okay for students to take a break and come back.)

## Final Thoughts

Your experiences with special education students will be clunky at first but also very memorable. Just being in these classrooms sends a meta-message that these students are important and worthy of your time. We've come a long way in education since 1975, yet students with special needs continue to experience isolation, inequity in resources, and social challenges. Your visits and the empathy you inspire in all students will help positively change the school experience for kids with special needs.

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 Anthony Muhammad. *Overcoming the Achievement Gap Trap*. Solution Tree. 2015  
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 Figure 1: from: [https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator\\_cgg.asp](https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator_cgg.asp)  
 Figure 2: author-created graphic

*Sarah Kesty, who has a Masters in Special Education from Sacramento State and additional teaching credentials, has worked with students with a range of disabilities for over ten years. She is a passionate advocate for people with disabilities.*

*Sarah lives in San Diego, CA, and in 2014 she was named Twin Rivers School District's Teacher of the Year. She is an Academic Coach for special education programs and the proud author of a children's book that celebrates empathy and overcoming challenges: Everybody has Something: Together We Can.*



“ An important trend is that students with special needs are included in general education classrooms as much as possible. ”

## Specialized Humane Education

### *Good questions to ask teachers before your visit:*

- 1) Primary composition of the class (age, range of ability, typical length of attention span)
- 2) Classroom norms/expectations for (responding to questions, getting a drink, using bathroom, moving around the classroom)
- 3) Roll and responsibilities of classroom aide
- 4) Behavior supports: whole class, individual students
- 5) Communication: does anyone use a communication device? Can I provide words/icons to support my lesson?
- 6) Specific school needs. Is bullying a problem? Are students with special needs primarily included in general education?  
Does the school have a school-wide behavior or character education program in place?
- 7) Any students you'd like to tell me about ahead of time?

### *Tips for Teaching Students of All Abilities:*

**PEOPLE first language** (example: *person with disability, instead of disabled person.*

Student with a learning disability, instead of learning disabled student)

#### ***Behavior is not personal.***

You have influence over student behavior, but if students misbehave, they do not mean it against you. Try to stay objective and avoid power struggles or taking offense.

#### ***Behavior is a form of communication.***

No student strives to fail. Instead, they may mask failure or struggles in many (sometimes unpleasant) ways such as acting aloof, becoming disruptive, sharpening/re-breaking a pencil.

#### ***Praise effort, not achievement.***

Research on mindset shows that students develop a healthier perspective on challenges when educators celebrate effort and even mistakes and point out the opportunities inside a struggle.

#### ***Assume students can.***

The safest assumption is that students of all abilities, including those who may not yet be verbal, have thoughts, ideas, and questions inside of them. Students who may not speak or who appear to be significantly delayed may be waiting for us to find ways to help them express themselves.

#### ***Think in terms of Skill Deficits not lack of ability.***

If you see students' needs or challenges as skill deficits, the emphasis is on teaching these skills, rather than on their shortcomings.

#### ***Don't "should" all over a classroom.***

Stating that a student "should" know or a student "should" do puts blame on the student, community, family, etc. "Should" subverts responsibility and makes educators feel helpless. If you catch yourself thinking or saying "should," stop to reframe the situation; For example, where are the missing skills? How can we best teach and support the students?

#### ***Nobody's perfect ... not even you!***

When a lesson tanks, or you feel less effective than desired, stew in that a little while. Realize what you noticed, what you learned, and what you still want to learn...then forgive yourself. It's okay if you didn't quite hit the mark; the overarching message you sent to the students was that you were willing to come spend time with them because they are important and worthy. Your next visit will be better.



# The Guinea Pig Penthouse: A Room with a View

By Jenna Jasensky

**N**eon-colored ice castles, brightly colored food bowls, and an itty bitty living space. These have become the standard makings of a domestic guinea pig habitat in homes across the world.

In the United States, the Animal Welfare Act, as regulated by the United States Department of Agriculture only requires a 10"x10"x7" space to raise the rodents. These standards have been determined to provide enough space for basic movement and raising of young.

Now for a trip to South America, the native and wild world of the guinea pig. Rocky outcroppings, fields of native grasses, free housing in burrows abandoned by past animal inhabitants, forest edges with unlimited low growing shrubbery to hide in with ten of your closest friends as roommates, and an all-you-can-eat buffet of diverse plant life to snack on until your little rodent heart's content.

Although the minimal lawful requirements allow for basic functioning and health, their opportunity for natural behaviors is extremely limited. Guinea pigs appear to be less evolved than other species in their domestic habitats, still exhibiting the instinct to run for cover as you reach for them, even when they have been hand-raised. It is not necessarily their fear of humans that causes this instinctive behavior, but rather



the similarity of our reaching hand to the claws of natural predators descending from the skies, such as hawks, owls, vultures, etc. While many other domestically-raised animals lose much of their natural fears, guinea pigs seem to retain more of these natural habits in captivity. It then stands to reason that animals retaining these wild instincts might well do better in an environment that caters to their natural compulsions.

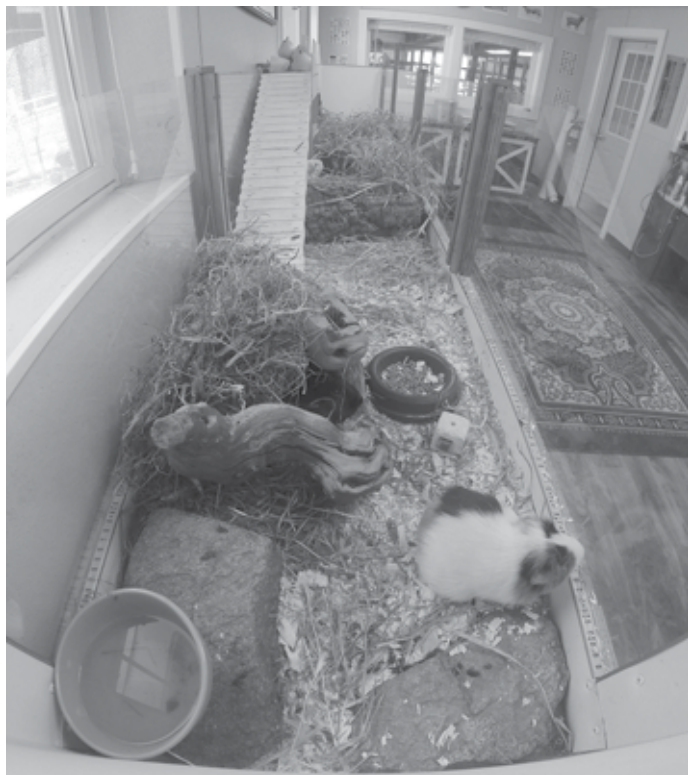
Green Chimneys School and Farm is a therapeutic school and residential facility for youth in grades K-12 with mental and emotional health issues. We utilize animal-assisted activities to help students succeed academically as well as to develop personal skills. As such, our programs offer the perfect venue to take up this challenge. Our Farm Science classes largely focus on the physical needs and well-being of the animals in our care. We also have a newly formed Vocational Carpentry course where high school students learn the hands-on basics of how to work within that industry. So with the end goal of providing our six guinea pigs with a higher quality of life, we decided to collaborate in the design and construction of an indoor environment for our furry friends Brownie, Trixie, Eclipse, Ferb, Gillette, and Seabiscuit.

We ultimately wanted to create a living space that would encourage them to feel comfortable by supporting their wild roots. Our collective efforts resulted in a cage for our farm classroom, spanning twelve feet in length. We filled it with almost completely natural materials such as wooden housing, bark, branches, hollowed logs, stone, and lots of straw. These naturally growing elements provide our guinea pigs with the opportunity to run, hide, burrow, and socialize as they normally would in the wild. Although guinea pigs aren't naturally fervent climbers, we built a second level with a Plexiglass railing because a Guinea Pig Penthouse, as it has become known, should always be a room with a view.



“ Our logical conclusion is that when domesticated animals are provided with opportunities that reflect the type of enrichment that caters to their natural environment rather than humanizing their surroundings, the happier and healthier they will be. ”

As an experiment in guinea pig behavior, our Farm Science classes set up one half of their new cage (a six-foot section) with plastic store-bought guinea pig houses, brightly colored Lego structures, and plastic tubes to climb through. In the second half, we walked through the woods, focusing on providing them with things we thought would more closely replicate their natural habitats. Unsurprisingly, we found that when given the choice between the plastic castles that have become standard for the average pet guinea pig, and the natural elements you can find in your own backyard, the animals will unerringly seek out the latter.



Furthermore, since making this change, the guinea pigs have developed quite a human following around the farm because they have become much more entertaining to watch in their daily activities. They are more active, frequently running laps around the cage, two of our older and skinnier pigs have begun to fill out, and we are hearing them make many more noises when socializing, some of which we never heard when they



were in their old cage which lacked any resemblance to their origins. Our logical conclusion is that when domesticated animals are provided with opportunities that reflect the type of enrichment that caters to their natural environment rather than humanizing their surroundings, the happier and healthier they will be.

The fact that living things will seek out what makes them feel safe and comfortable is a simple concept, but one that is often dismissed as we expect pets to adapt to our domesticated world rather than the other way around. However, the bottom line is simple: happy pets make happy pet owners. When pet enthusiasts take the time to make considerations based on what is most natural for the animal, we greatly improve the quality of their lives, and in turn, the quality of our interactions with them.

“ We ultimately wanted to create a living space (for our guinea pigs) that would encourage them to feel comfortable by supporting their wild roots. ”

*Jenna Jasensky teaches Farm Science at the Green Chimneys School in Brewster New York, and specializes in human/animal interaction. She received her Masters of Education in Agricultural and Extension Education from Penn State, also studying Agricultural Business, Animal Science, and Education over the course of her undergraduate work. She is currently teaching over 200 students with psycho-social challenges about the unique care of over 80 farm animals of different species.*

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See also Latham's film, *hGreen Chimneys, Blue Skies*, page 22.



# Food as a Unique Teaching Tool

By Kevin Archer

“Tell me what you eat, and I will tell you what you are,” wrote celebrated French epicure Anthelme Brillat-Savarin in 1825. Proctor & Gamble, consumer product monolith, adopted a skewed version of his theme in the 1960s, with their TV commercials for Joy dishwashing liquid. “I can see myself!” a homemaker would declare as she proudly surveyed her newly washed dishes.

Their random point of agreement is perfectly on target, for our daily meals do indeed proclaim our core values, far beyond class identifiers and consumer status. Within their nuanced and complex messages our meals tell of our humanity, compassion, and dedication to progress.

If, then, I were to show you what I eat, what would you say that I am?



*Beauty & Sadness*, the final harvest of 2014

I enjoyed this salad in the autumn of 2014, as my garden was releasing its last harvest of mixed greens, the tiniest of baby carrots and beets, and some late-season pea shoots. The squash blossom was the last to appear. The

berries were from a neighbor’s patch; we had shared produce throughout the season.

So among the messages projected from this plate, you hear about seasonality, sustainability, the work of my own hands. You learn about my neighborhood. The blossom speaks of the native pollinators that buzzed around my backyard garden. The pea shoots indicate that I utilized some soil regeneration methods in my small raised beds.

Each of these statements spawns dozens of stories on their own, not just because the salad is beautiful and homespun. Any food on a plate will do the same. A hot dog tells dozens of stories – and it speaks at a deafening volume.

If indeed all of our meals are telling us stories, what would they have us know?

As a means of answering this question, I began Peace Meal Supper Club, an ongoing project that utilizes culinary art to explore ethical themes. It is an immersive act of listening to the daily food dialog and allowing our actions to be directed by the messages heard. It is about finding powerful ways to re-establish our food independence and that of others.

In a culture that is saturated with stimuli, we must find new ways into our senses. We have to establish that eating is about listening. Listening is about seeing. Seeing is about feeling. Feeling is about acting. Our senses

never operate solo. Especially when the aroma of good food beckons.

In that spirit, dining becomes a multi-media inter-disciplinary examination of intersectionality – the study of intersections between forms or systems of oppression, domination or discrimination – applying it beyond studies of gender and race, to include undocumented agricultural workers, dirt, seeds, and the Mississippi River.

It could be said that art is an expression of dissatisfaction with the state of one’s world. Or stated another way, an artist struggles within their dissatisfaction with the world around them. Like many other art forms, mine is meant to illuminate, challenge, and suggest.

The goal is to re-imagine our world, to once again envision Utopia.

It seems simple, at first blush: eat in a manner that reflects who we wish to be. Yet even the most simple endeavor becomes complicated all-too-quickly.

To see these dinner plates in all their glorious color, visit the *Latham Letter* archive in the Research and Resources section at [Latham.org](http://Latham.org)

For example, consider this Double Tomato Tart.



*Double Tomato Tart*, from Peace Meal Supper Club #4: American Harvest

Perhaps it once spoke of the Victory Garden in the backyard, or of the bounty of a true family farm. The fresh tomato slices on the top of this tart rest upon sauce I made at the height of last year's harvest, so this tart also speaks of prolonging a personal garden connection. It presents a perfect world.

The mainstream story, however, is not so palatable: Labor abuse is the norm in commercial tomato fields. Growing practices operate in opposition to nature. Institutional collusion has weakened and narrowed our food supply.

The main ingredient in my version of this tart is mindfulness. Were it to be made in the day's more common methods, the main ingredient would be fragmentation. Every component is disconnected from its native character and/or environment – the tomato, the worker, the nutrients, the ethics, and the consumer. No one has a permanent vested interest in how things are going. Everyone is dispossessed. It's a perfect picture of intersectionality.

At the center of the intersection stands our extractive methodology: Resources, labor, and materials flow from nascent economies into

advanced ones, and very little flows back. It is an extremely unfair trade system, and though it offers to build developing nations it in fact depletes them.

While a double tomato tart should celebrate the bounty of one's backyard, it instead reflects the ever-spiralling force of globalization, sent into hyperdrive upon Columbus' landing in the Caribbean in 1492.

That landmark beaching uprooted a sustainable system that had fed American empires for centuries, as is depicted on this "three sisters" plate.



*Tres Hermanas con Dos Primos*

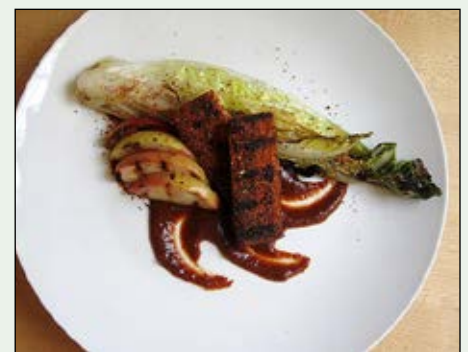
It very purposefully portrays an ancient Mesoamerican agricultural practice, that of growing multiple intermingled food crops in a single plot. The three sisters – corn, beans, and squash – also kept company with chiles, avocados, tomatoes, or any number of other plants. The intermingling formed one component of an integrative and sustainable method called milpa. Researchers have praised it for its longevity and ingenuity.

This plate is simple, and through its simplicity it attempts to reground us in a model that works. Beyond

“ Each of these plates spawns dozens of stories on their own, not just because they are beautiful and homespun. Any food on a plate will do the same. A hot dog tells dozens of stories – and it speaks at a deafening volume. ”

the agricultural portrayal, it also tells us of cultural tradition, pre-Columbian sustenance, and a time without GMOs.

As an art medium, food supports great complexity in messaging. As an example, look at this plate, the second course from Peace Meal Supper Club #13, Mississippi.



*Tempeh a la Memphis, Grilled Romaine, Charred Apple, and Hickory Barbecue Sauce*, from Peace Meal Supper Club #13: Mississippi

Behind this plate lies a philosophical idea and its social and geophysical outcomes. Descartes, Bacon, and other thinkers since them have promulgated the view that man controls nature. We can certainly try, but not without consequence.

Tempeh a la Memphis, Grilled Romaine, Charred Apple, and Hickory Barbecue Sauce vividly represents the environmental history of the Mississippi River since the establishment of New Orleans in 1718. With desperate economic imperative, the French inaugurated a system of levees and dams that has extended into the present complex of structures along the length of the river. These have restricted and diverted the river until it is no longer a natural waterway – although it was once the spine of a wetlands covering 35,000 square miles, with a watershed that reached across 41% of the present-day continental United States.

The 18<sup>th</sup>-century French economic crisis has passed, but the disruption has only grown in area and intensity. We now have a disabled and degrading delta (as depicted by the Hickory Barbecue Sauce); hundreds of physical obstructions in the river system’s flow (the Tempeh a la Memphis and the Charred Apple); and a rerouted and heavily restricted water course (the Grilled Romaine).

We feel the effects of these disruptions in the devastation of Hurricane Katrina, the cataclysmic Dust Bowl of the 1930s, the loss of native habitat, the displacement of indigenous peoples, institutional social inequality, and systemic ecosystem degradation. In some cases, actions have outsized reactions.

In all cases, our hubris is answered by nature’s irony: the more we try to control the river, the more we risk our own security.

When considering the political and social overlays, we see so many coterminous issues involving race, environment, dispossession, oppression, imperialism, and vaunted economy. So what do these remedies look like on a plate?

Ecosystem restoration might look like this Buckwheat Pilaf, Grilled Vegetables, and Lemon Rosehip Cream:



*Buckwheat Pilaf, Grilled Vegetables, and Lemon Rosehip Cream, from Peace Meal Supper Club #3: Pollination*

This plate illustrates the many ways in which we interact with the pollinators and the depth of

“ As an art  
medium, food supports  
great complexity  
in messaging. ”

our symbiotic relationship. Crops such as broccoli and carrots need pollinators in order to produce seeds. Squash need them in order to produce fruit. Roses to produce beauty.

These diverse crops provide something to pollinators in return, not the least of which is a seasonal progression of flowers upon which most bees, butterflies, and other pollinators depend. We can provide nectar and pollen from spring to autumn by planting diverse crops. Wouldn’t it be lovely to host migrating monarch butterflies, who must forage their way from Mexico to Canada? Keeping our pollinators healthy is not altruistic in the least. It is in our very basic best interest.

Monocultures taken into hyperactivity, however, create severely compromised ecosystems. They also create volatile economies and systemic rewarding of abuse. Addressing the abuse and adopting a vision of progress was the spirit behind this plate from the *Juneteenth* edition of Peace Meal Supper Club.



*Black Eyed Peas, Red Rice, and Chow-Chow, from Peace Meal Supper Club #12: Juneteenth*

The above-pictured dish, *Black Eyed Peas, Red Rice, and Chow-Chow*, speaks to the universality of soul foods. They are loved not only



by American descendants of African slaves but also by southern-born whites such as I.

The shared heritage is deep on this plate. I remember vividly my mother making and preserving chow-chow, a pickled green tomato relish. Her recipe was an adaptation of the one scribbled down by her grandmother. Almost identical is the one from former slave Abby Fisher, who published the first cookbook by an African-American woman in 1881. The crossover between classes and cultures is vast, covering far more ground than our differences.

This shared heritage is subject to cultural inertia, filtering through positive and negative biases. When we remove these biases and broaden our purview, we see a grander culture in which we can take part. What greater freedoms can we pursue?

Pursuit of freedom is the theme of an upcoming Peace Meal Supper Club. The menu, entitled Sanctuary, will portray the present-day Syrian refugee crisis and seek inspiration from humanitarian responses to past civil war crises.

This plate, the third course for Sanctuary, represents a journey on the Underground Railroad. Journeycake – also known as corn pone – indicates the railroad’s stations in the south. Succotash – a New England dish of lima beans, corn, and peppers – represents the various destinations in the northern US and Canada. Between the two terminals, a passenger might have to rely on their foraging skills, indicated here by a selection of roots, mushrooms, herbs, and nuts.

The route is challenging and not always clear, but the message is persistent: our humanity provides a



*Underground Dining Car, from Peace Meal Supper Club #17: Sanctuary*

bridge between disparate worlds. One is limited by human biases and folly. The other is idealistic and welcoming. The first is graphically represented daily. The latter is perhaps only a dream.

Utopian dreams are embodied in the Labor Movement, Occupy Wall Street demonstrations, Women’s Suffrage, and successive Civil Rights campaigns, all of which have nudged us closer to a unified view of rights, fairness, and compassion.

Utopian thought is among our most persistent obsessions. It’s there



*Green Tea Poached Pear, from Peace Meal Supper Club #6: Utopia*

You can reach Kevin at [kevin@kevinarcher.com](mailto:kevin@kevinarcher.com) and learn more about the Peace Meal Supper Club at <http://kevinrayarcher.com/WordPress/pmssc/>

“ Keeping our pollinators healthy is not altruistic in the least. It is in our very basic best interest. ”

in Eden, Shambhala, the Confucian Great Unity, Candide’s garden, monasteries, animal sanctuaries, and the Tao Te Ching. It is also with us at dinnertime, when we look into that most revealing of mirrors called our plate.

*Certified chef Kevin Archer leads Peace Meal Supper Club, a series of fine dining events focused on socially progressive themes. Through the use of multiple media forms – word, food, music, and film – these immersive events explore the ethical impact of our eating choices.*

*Kevin has worked as culinary director, executive chef, and general manager at several landmark vegan restaurants across the country. He is a frequent presenter at festivals throughout the eastern US. A nationally recognized humane educator, YES! Magazine includes him among their “Chefs We Love.”*



# FOR INTERESTED WRITERS

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## ... Author Guidelines

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The editors welcome manuscripts relevant to the Foundation's interests and mission but reserve the right to publish such manuscripts at their discretion. The Latham Foundation promotes respect for all life through education; *The Latham Letter*, which has been published for more than 30 years, presents balanced views on humane issues and activities throughout the world. We are particularly interested in articles that will appeal to the *Letter's* diverse readership. Subscribers include animal welfare and social service professionals, veterinarians, university students, and individuals interested in humane education, the human-companion animal bond, animal-assisted or animal-facilitated therapy and interventions, and the connection between animal abuse and other forms of violence.

Submissions should be between 500 to 2,000 words and e-mailed as an attached Microsoft Word document with a brief cover letter explaining your submission. The cover letter should include authors' names in publishing order and the name, address, telephone (home and work) and fax numbers and the e-mail addresses for the corresponding (submitting) author.

Photographs, tables, figures and other related graphics such as an organization's logo are encouraged. Photographs should be properly labeled with credit and captions and submitted either as high resolution files or as originals, which will be scanned (and returned if requested). Please include copies of all signed releases.

Tables and figures should be submitted as separate files in their original format. Please do not integrate them into the electronic text.

Submissions should conclude with a brief biographical paragraph about the author(s) including preferred contact information.

The ultimate decision regarding the appropriateness and acceptance for publication lies with the Latham Foundation. All accepted manuscripts are subject to editing for space and to conform to the *Associated Press Stylebook*.

Published authors will be expected to transfer copyright to the Latham Foundation for the Promotion of Humane Education. *Latham Letters* appear in their entirety as .PDF files on the Foundation's website [www.latham.org](http://www.latham.org). Please keep original copies of the manuscript in your possession.

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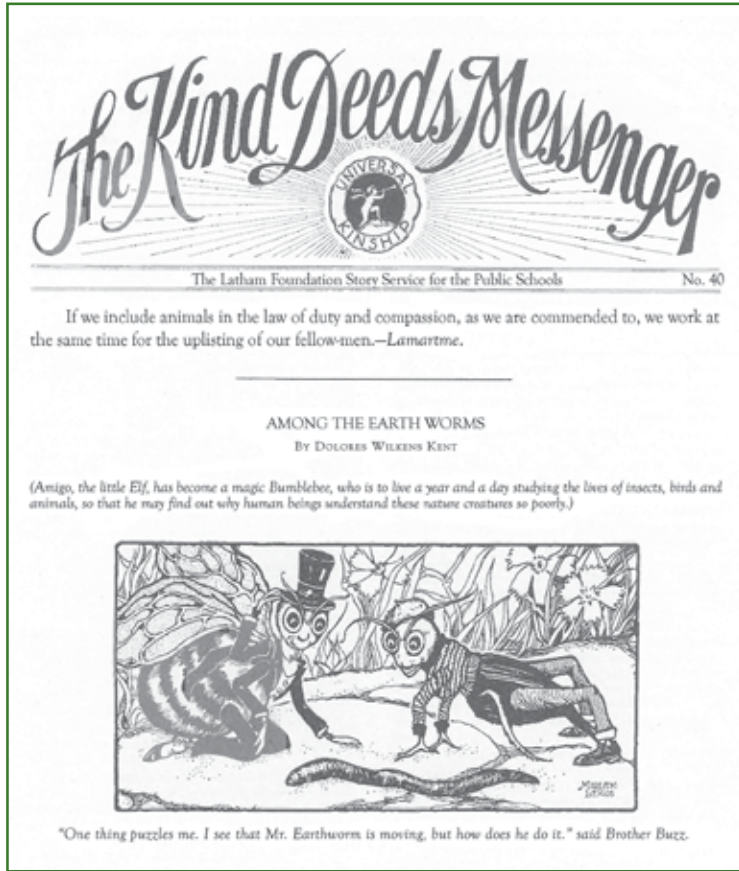
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# The Latham Foundation will be 100 years old in 2018

Over the years, we have shared humane education values in many different formats. One early method (1926-1941) was the publication of The Kind Deeds Messenger. The KDM was often a four-page magazine for schoolchildren with stories and activities that the teachers could include in their own lesson plans

The humane values shared then continue today, so we are now opening our library so that a new generation can read and reflect on these stories from the past. You can find KDM examples in the Research and Resources section at [https://www.latham.org/latham\\_resources](https://www.latham.org/latham_resources).



## Bringing the Message to the People in the 1920s

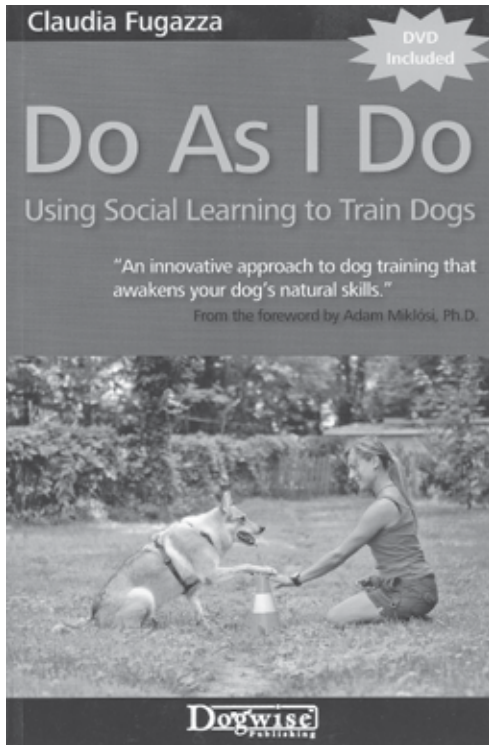
As Phil Arkow writes in *Latham and the History of Humane Education: A Centennial Celebration*, the Foundation was actively promoting humane education in schools in Alameda County (CA).

Latham’s early work consisted primarily of direct presentations in local schools by the Foundation’s field representatives. Classroom visits employed the “high-tech” media tools of the era – flannel boards – as well as live animals to assist in the trainings. Common-sense illustrations taught children to be kind to animals and to each other.



Examples of instructional tools in the 1920s (flannel boards) featuring a young Abraham Lincoln





## **Do as I Do: Using Social Learning to Train Dogs**

*By Claudia Fugazza*

Recent research suggests that dogs can engage in social learning, which includes the ability to observe the actions of other dogs and imitate them to learn new behaviors.

The big news for dog trainers is that author Claudia Fugazza and her colleagues in Europe have discovered that dogs can also imitate people. This natural skill can be used to teach dogs new behaviors using the *Do As I Do* protocol, which is presented in this book-DVD combination. The “Do As I Do” method is particularly useful in working with service dogs and canine athletes who must master skills such

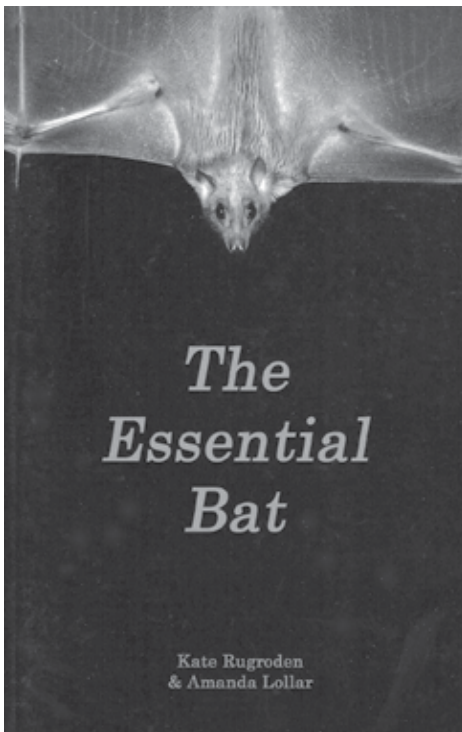
as ringing a bell, jumping over a hurdle, spinning and dozens more.

Learn about:

- The fascinating research which shows that dogs can observe, then imitate human behavior and remember it over time.
- How you can start with a known behavior, then teach the dog to perform the behavior after observing you demonstrate it, followed by the new cue “Do it!” Eventually the dog learns that “Do it!” means to do whatever has just been demonstrated by the trainer.
- How this method can build a closer bond between you and your dog, bring new energy and joy to your training efforts and challenge your thinking about how dogs learn.

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*By Kate Rugroden & Amanda Lollar*

To learn more about bats and how they make our world a better place, visit [batworld.org](http://batworld.org).

From the Foreword of this amazing and highly-recommended book:

*“Roughly one out of every four mammals on earth is a bat. Consider this: if your day includes soap, cosmetics, a toothbrush and toothpaste, coffee, margarine, paper or ink, cushions, wood furniture, fuel or lubricating fluids, rope or twine, timber, ... life saving medicines, air fresheners, candles, rubber, chewing gum, spices, vegetables, fruits, chocolate, margaritas or beer, you are not only involved with bats, you are dependent on them.”*

Foreword by Dottie Hyatt, V.P., Bat World Sanctuary

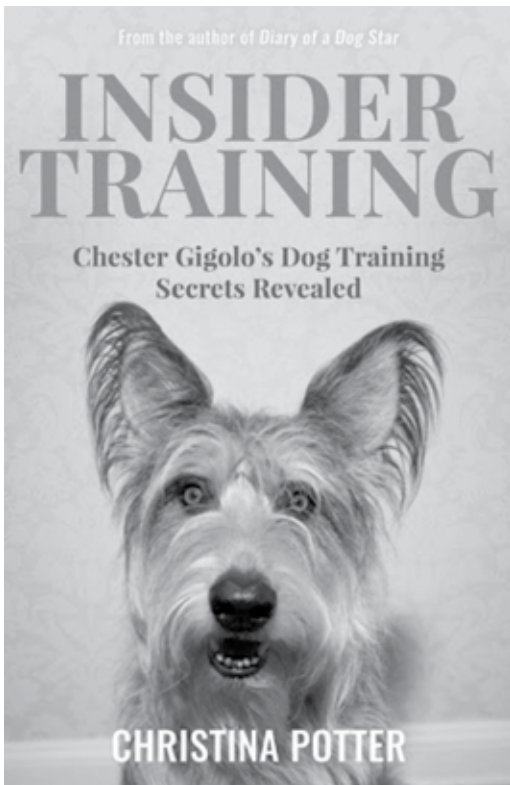
As co-author Amanda Lollar explains, “One of the questions we are asked most often at public presentations is, “Why bats?” There are so many myths and misconceptions about bats that people are at the very least a little bit afraid of them. However, once people begin to learn about bats, they find their fears dispelled and their sense of wonder engaged. “Why bats?” suddenly becomes, “I had no idea!”

For example, no blood-sucking bats exist. While vampire bats do exist, they lap blood, preferring to make their single bite in the hind leg of cattle and chickens, not the jugular vein of humans.

The book is a delightful tribute to a flying mammal that is critical to the health of our planet.



*A Bat World Sanctuary Publication,  
Mineral Wells, TX  
ISBN 978-0-9845479-1-3  
\$14.95*



## Insider Training: Chester Gigolo's Dog Training Secrets Revealed

By Chester Gigolo  
(with Christina Potter)

Reviewed by Trekker  
(with Becky Bartlett)

The name Chester Gigolo will likely be familiar to many as the protagonist of Christina Potter's *Chester Gigolo: Diary of a Dog Star* (Aperture, 2012; reviewed in *The Latham Letter* (Fall 2012). Those who read that account of Chester Gigolo's first year will not be surprised to know that he has now published his own book, a tell-all exposé of what (make that who) made him – and others of the canine persuasion – the well-behaved dog he is.

As Chester Gigolo makes clear, we dogs want to be good citizens and we love training – the positive reinforcement kind of training. And Potter is all about positive reinforcement. This is not rocket science, people, this is about rewarding us when we follow (even if accidentally!) a command – not hollering at us if we don't.

Suffice to say, this reviewer – a standard poodle – was trained by a person of like mind (albeit a rank amateur compared to Potter) and in the first four months of my life I myself mastered such advanced skills as sit, stay, down, wait, leave it (even tasty squashed worms), “pee” and “poop” (outside), and (I kid you not) “around the chair.” Accordingly, I am well positioned to attest to the efficacy of Potter's methods and so to proclaim Chester Gigolo's book essential reading for humans as well as dogs.

### **Insider Training: Chester Gigolo's Dog Training Secrets Revealed**

By Christina Potter

Photos by Taylor “Sherm” Potter

www.AperturePress.net • \$11.95 (paperback)

ISBN 978-0-9909302-9-7

## COURSE REVIEW

### **Animal-Assisted Therapy and the Healing Power of Pets**

An Online Continuing Education Course by Deirdre Rand, Ph.D.\*

Offered through Professional Development Resources [www.AnimalsAsNaturalHealers.com](http://www.AnimalsAsNaturalHealers.com)

*Animal-Assisted Therapy and the Healing Power of Pets provides an essential foundation for anyone interested in pet therapy work, whether as a healthcare professional or as a volunteer therapy animal team with their dog or cat. Dr. Rand uses a narrative writing style, supplemented with photographs, to give the reader a deeper, more experiential understanding of the material and this makes for a good read. The course includes numerous clinical examples that evoke the “love loop” between people and pets, which is at the heart of Animal-Assisted Therapy.*

Reviewed by Aubrey H. Fine, E.Ed.

Author, *Our Faithful Companions: Exploring the Essence of our Kinship with Animals*

Editor, *Handbook on Animal-Assisted Therapy: Theoretical Foundations and Guidelines for Practice*



### **Animal-Assisted Therapy & The Healing Power of Pets**



\* Course graduates receive a complimentary one-year subscription to the *Latham Letter*.



# Help Me Help You

SERIES

A series of films that examines a variety of animal-assisted activity programs across the USA – programs in which animals help children, and in turn, children help animals.



## FAITH and HOPE on a FARM

FIRST IN A SERIES

An inspiring reminder of why we teach compassion, empathy, and respect to help break the cycle of abuse.

This 15-minute DVD highlights Forget Me Not Farm at Sonoma Humane Society in Santa Rosa, California, where children and animals bond and heal. At this safe haven, children learn gentle touch and respect for both other humans and animals through animal-assisted and horticultural activities.

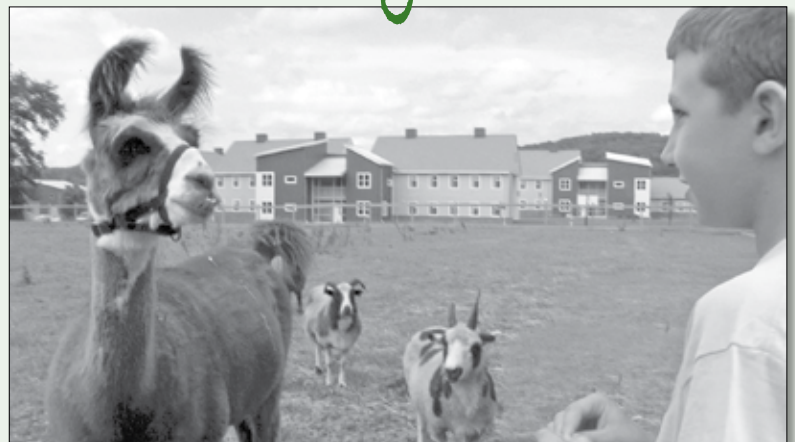


The film features Faith, a formerly-abused child who was adopted by wonderful parents. As you see her blossom, you'll be reminded that where there's life, there's hope.

2  
SECOND IN A SERIES

At Green Chimneys in Brewster, New York, visitors see smiling students and well-cared-for animals. What's not immediately evident on this beautiful campus is that the children there are struggling with emotional, educational, social, and behavioral challenges. Green Chimneys includes a New York State-Approved Special Education Program, a Residential Treatment Program, and a Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facility. All are designed to help children succeed academically, socially, and emotionally – to see blue skies in their futures.

## Green Chimneys, Blue Skies



The USDA-accredited Farm and Wildlife Center is at the heart of this unique, multi-faceted setting.

At Green Chimneys animals have been helping kids and kids have been helping animals for more than 65 years. How and why do they do it?

**Green Chimneys, Blue Skies** is a comprehensive and detailed look at the philosophy and methods behind this successful world leader in animal-assisted therapy. It is also a reminder of the power of the human-animal bond and sure to leave you moved and inspired.



# BARC

## If You Need Help

**Project BARC =  
Building Adolescent  
Responsibility and  
Compassion**

**Project BARC** is a collaborative program between the Humane Society of West Michigan and the Kent County Juvenile Detention Center. Its purpose is two-fold: to build responsibility, compassion, and self-confidence among the teens in the detention center and to increase dog adoptions.

The selected trainees participate in daily classroom lessons to build empathy. At the same time, they work with an animal trainer to help their dogs pass the Canine Good Citizen test, which greatly increases their chances for adoption.

You'll see some of the lives (both human and canine) that Project BARC has transformed in this inspiring film with a very happy ending: the BARC Graduation Ceremony and the joyful results of everyone's hard work.

(All ages; 15 minutes. Social Studies, Science, Undergraduates and above, Professionals, Occupational Therapy, Juvenile Justice, Criminology, Corrections)

4  
FOURTH IN A SERIES

# Horses Heal Too

## Two Different Paths to Healing

Rescued horses in two very different programs help troubled youth learn respect, responsibility, empathy, and compassion. Both programs benefit children and horses in need of a second chance.

**Zuma's Rescue Ranch** – A well-established program near Denver, Colorado, where rescued horses are paired with at-risk youth in mutually therapeutic programs.

**Reaching Hands Ranch** – A grass-roots program in northwest Wyoming where youth assist in the rehabilitation and adoption of horses after school and on weekends.

*(24 minutes, appropriate for all ages)*



See YouTube clips of these films at **Latham.org** in the Products/Services section or by searching "Latham Foundation" on YouTube.

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