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Latham Letter

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PROMOTING RESPECT FOR ALL LIFE THROUGH EDUCATION

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Reducing Shelter Admissions with an Animal Help Desk

By Bonney Brown and
Diane Blankenburg

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*Edith
Latham's
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 XXXV, Number 2, Spring 2014

**BALANCED PERSPECTIVES ON
HUMANE ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES**



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*Hugh H. Tebault III,
Latham Foundation's
President*

The Technology Trap

Over the years, The Latham Foundation has used many new technology tools to increase the reach of our humane education message. Each new technology brought with it a certain adjustment, but provided an improvement to our being able to reach more people and measure the impact.

We have to be careful to select the technology tools that help us reach more people more effectively, and avoid those that may simply be “time sinks”. Humane education at its core is a personal message, one that is best taught person to person. While our many films can share the humane education message, their best use for youth is in small groups where experienced humane educators may help guide the conversation during and after the viewing.

With wide-access technology like the Internet, the use is to present the appeal of humane education and have examples of excellent programs that cause the viewer to want to learn more. Use of tools like YouTube or FaceBook tend to compliment the Internet website tools allowing the viewer to learn.

Latham has recently added a Twitter feed. Time will tell if this is another good tool, or not. Tools like this may best be used for active small group interaction – or for followers of a celebrity - rather than a teaching tool.

Humane education is a personal sharing of values, and technology often isolates people rather than bringing them together. Let me give you an example that another organization just recently experienced.

A youth outreach organization had invited 50 youth from China to the US for two weeks. They had planned out each day, so the youth had visits to many major corporations in Silicon Valley, major colleges and a camp experience in California. On the first day, the youth were told they could not use their cell phones during the visit. The kids were not happy – however, after the first day they began to forget about the phones and were interacting with each other and with all the new people and experiences around them. Many of the kids recognized for the first time that they were isolating themselves by being trapped in their phone applications rather than working with other people directly. They returned to China with a much improved view of how people work together – and how to show respect to others directly. This improvement to their ability to show respect and compassion should serve them well over the years. Time will tell.

In your own sphere of influence, do you use technology tools effectively and appropriately? Or have you had technology tools get in the way of your message? Every so often it is good to review our strategies for effectively reaching people with our humane education message.



CONGRATULATIONS to Phil Arkow

Recipient of New Jersey Child Assault Prevention's 2014 Lifetime Achievement Award

“Over the past 40 years, Phil has become a prolific authority on the human-animal bond and has helped professionals across the state and beyond realize that what happens to our companion animals has the power to weaken or strengthen our families and the future of our children.”

Phil, a frequent contributor to the *Latham Letter*, also chairs Latham's Animal Abuse and Family Violence Prevention Project.

Say hello at Latham's Booth

HSUS Animal Care Expo • Booth 113
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Are you getting the LINK-Letter?

A monthly report of news from The National Resource Center on the Link between Animal Abuse and Human Violence

www.nationallinkcoalition.org

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Phil Arkow, Editor
 arkowpets@snip.com



CORRECTION

Animal Assisted Therapy: Techniques and Exercises for Dog Assisted Interventions, was written by **Francisc Ristol** and **Eva Domenec**, not Phil Arkow.

Phil *reviewed* their fine book for us.

Reducing Shelter Admissions with an Animal Help Desk

By *Bonney Brown and
Diane Blankenburg*



Animal shelters should be places of last resort for dogs and cats, just as a homeless shelter would be for people. While certainly there are situations where a shelter is a needed safe haven, we want to avoid creating the perception that animals are disposable by unintentionally facilitating the abandonment of pets. Rather, we want to be encouraging and enabling people to do right by their animals. The individual will feel better knowing they have done the best they can for their pet and, of course, the pet benefits also. With this premise in mind, we founded a free Animal Help Desk at Nevada Humane Society (NHS) in 2007.

Washoe County shelter admissions dropped by 8% during the height of the economic downturn, when many communities saw a double-digit increase in shelter admissions. For a two-week period, we tracked all calls coming into our Animal Help Desk and 60% of the callers who wanted to surrender one or more pets were convinced to try alternatives. For the past five years, the community has sustained a save rate of over 92% for dogs and cats.

Animals often arrive at shelters because of behavioral challenges, health issues, or lifestyle changes. In many cases, these situations can be resolved in a manner that will help keep the animals out of shelters. Most people have a limited understanding of animal behavior and not everyone is good at problem solving. What we have found, however, is that many people are willing to listen and at least explore other options to help keep their pet. Our suggestions may include behavior modification, training, changes to the environment, basic health care information or – if they really cannot keep the pet – giving them guidance on how they can find a new home for the pet themselves. Sometimes we also provide practical assistance like veterinary services, free spay/neuter options or pet food,

but in many cases, all the caller needs is information and moral support.

The need for these services is great. The NHS Animal Help Desk received 300 requests the first week it opened and has handled over 20,000 calls or e-mails every year since. The goal of the Animal Help Desk staff is to involve the caller in solving the problem. Most humane organizations simply cannot personally manage all of the daily problems that occur in their local neighborhoods. But even if one could do it all, it would be wise to enlist the help and support of the community. After all, the mission of humane organizations is to create a more compassionate society. The only way to do that is by touching the hearts and minds of the individuals that make up our communities. And we can start with the folks that call us for help.

Steven Covey once said, “Effective people are not problem-minded; they’re opportunity-minded. They feed

opportunities and starve problems.” Animal help desk volunteers and staff should be trained to be possibility thinkers, to empower the person seeking assistance by providing information, encouragement and support, and to bring out the best in them.

Providing an Animal Help Desk does not mean that the organizations needs to provide all the needed services. It can function as a clearing house, gathering information on all the animal-related resources in the community (low-cost spay/neuter, Trap-Neuter-Return for feral cats, vaccination clinics, breed rescue groups, dog training, pet-friendly housing options, and wildlife rehabilitation) and then providing this information to the clients.

The NHS Animal Help Desk is promoted, so that people know that it’s available and free, through standard marketing avenues such as news releases, flyers, posters, ads, business cards, social media, and public service announcements. The local animal services agency staff can also refer people to the Animal Help Desk.

NHS’s founding Animal Help Desk manager, Beata Liebetruith, created the following tips for success in counseling people who call about pet problems:

- 1. Listen.** Give the caller the chance to tell their whole story before you respond. If you listen to them, chances are they will be willing to listen to YOU.
- 2. Be non-judgmental.** Often callers tell us they have been scolded by other rescue resources they reached out to for assistance. Just because a person may not be able to provide the same amount of time and care that you provide to your own pets does not mean that the pet is unhappy in its home.
- 3. Be empathetic.** Show compassion to the caller and try to comfort them. Instead of saying “How can you just get rid of your dog!?!” try this approach: “I am so sorry to hear about your dilemma. That sounds like a tough situation. Let’s see what we can do to help you out.”
- 4. Don’t hesitate to use your powers of persuasion to get a good outcome for the animal.** The goal is to buy some time and get the individual involved in finding a solution. Try getting them to take small steps at first.
- 5. Focus on the positive outcome.** The happiness of a person who has hit upon a solution is as rewarding as knowing that we have kept a pet in their home. But even if the result is that the animal is surrendered, the caller will remember your kindness and the compassion you showed them.
- 6. Focus on the three E’s.** Educate – Encourage – Enable throughout your interactions with the public.

One of the most rewarding parts of animal welfare work is when we can turn someone on to helping animals. We have found that our Animal Help Desk is one of the ways we can create these transformative connections for people and their pets.

Note: The NHS Animal Help Desk Handbook can be adapted to meet the needs of other communities. Please email us at info@humanenetwork.org to request an electronic copy.



Authors Bonney Brown and Diane Blankenburg are Principal Consultants of



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Good Behaviors Are a Snap (or Click!) –

Students in an Alternative High School Become Teachers

“Baden High School serves students in the South San Francisco Unified School District who are deficient in high school credit. Students enter our program for various reasons – truancy, low motivation, transferring of school districts, and a lack of belonging at the comprehensive site.

The students in the SHIP program have developed something special through the program’s modules. They were given the opportunity to learn about a career path that typical high school students do not receive. In the process of excelling with clicker training, they were also able to grow and develop as individuals, gaining confidence and having a clear idea of their post-high-school goals.”

Joel Rebello, Counselor

By Mark De Alba, Veronica Sanchez, Karen Trinidad, Ivan Urbina and Lynn Loar

In the fall of 2013, The Peninsula Humane Society, the Pryor Foundation and Baden High School created Baden SHIP (Strategic Humane Interventions Program) to give a handful of high school students in South San Francisco, Calif., the opportunity to work with and train shelter animals to increase the adoptability of the animals and to introduce the students to the many animal-related careers they could pursue upon graduation from high school. Four students were selected from a dozen applicants; they agreed to attend four modules of twice-weekly visits to the shelter. What follows is their responses to a few key questions about what they have learned in the past several months.

Lynn: When we first met, each of you introduced yourself by saying that you loved animals, wanted to learn more about them and work with them. In the first module of our course, you learned to help animals in the shelter become more adoptable by learning to overcome their fears of people and master a few good behaviors through clicker training. In subsequent modules, you became masters of your body language to communicate safety to scared animals, and you became skilled clicker trainers.

Lynn: What did you learn about the animals' fears of people?

Karen: With dog training I learned that some dogs are scared, mad or even sad because of their past with their old owners. I learned that dogs aren't bad, just scared. I used to be scared of most of them but now I know what to do so no one gets harmed.

Ivan: When you approach a dog, walk at an angle and try not to make eye contact. This shows the dog that you don't want harm or trouble. This is an example of a calming signal.

Mark: I get to work with dogs that have been through a lot. I have learned how to approach a dog and read the dog's body language and use of calming signals. These calming signals show me if the dog is scared; backing away, looking away, putting its tail between its legs and so on.

Veronica: I learned how to approach a dog and cat safely, handle treats, and clicker training. Your approach to an animal is important so it sees you as someone who is harmless. Handling treats safely is also important; you have to accommodate to the animal by bending down to the level of the dog or cat.

Lynn: What did you learn about teaching the animals good manners?

Mark: I've learned clicker training. Clicker training is the use of positive reinforcement with a clicker to mark the behavior being reinforced. This method showed me how to be patient and how to approach a situation. I worked with a dog called Chocomoco. He is afraid of men, but after we used clicker training with him, we showed him he could be safe with men and we've made him a more adoptable dog.

Ivan: When it was time to reward the dogs with their treat, we would bend down and give it to them at nose level. We did this because it taught them manners and so they wouldn't jump for their treat.

In the first module we learned a lot about clicker training. We learned when was the right time to click and treat and we perfected our timing. Lynn told us that almost any living thing can be trained as long as you have patience. When we first started we saw a video of a fish being trained.* In the last two weeks we started working with cats, and we were told that cats were different than dogs – we can train dogs, but when training cats we need to let them think they are training us. By the end of the first module we learned the “do's and don't's” when working with cats and dogs.





Veronica: In clicker training, we learned that you click and reward behaviors, big or small, that are steps toward the goal. Clicking on time is most important. If you click, you must treat, even if you click a wrong behavior.

Karen: You can use targeting to teach dogs to respect your personal space. You have to have your hand a good amount away from you – it can be to one side or the other – so you teach the dog to touch your hand with his nose and not get too close to you or jump on you.

Lynn: What did you learn about yourself in the process?

Karen: In the program, I learned to be patient with myself as well as with dogs.

Ivan: I learned that I love working with animals and want to work more with them. I realized that I'm really good at learning new things with animals. I think this program will give me the skills I need to get a job with animals when we finish.

Mark: As a little boy, I was always impatient and rambunctious. I've always wanted every new toy that came out and also every new video game. If I didn't get it, I would throw a temper tantrum. But now that I have the opportunity to work with animals at the Peninsula Humane Society and learn clicker training, I have learned patience and how to approach a situation.

Veronica: This program has allowed me to learn more not only about myself, but also about animal behavior. Thanks to this program, I know what I want to do after high school: become a veterinary technician. I've enjoyed this program so far, and I look forward to the rest of the modules and the knowledge I'll obtain with every session.

Lynn: You are getting ready to graduate from high school. What are your short- and long-term plans?

Mark: When I graduate from high school I would like to use the skills I have gained at the animal shelter and put them toward a career.

Ivan: This program has showed me how much I like working with animals. I want to be a vet tech now. I have learned all the academic classes I need to take to get into the vet tech program.



Karen: This program may benefit me in the future because it actually made me think about being a veterinarian. Working with animals is fun!

Veronica: The program has helped me realize I love helping animals, and it's beneficial to my future of becoming a veterinary technician.

Lynn: How has clicker training made you a better student?

Karen: Now I know how a dog acts when he needs something or has trouble with something. I pay close attention.

Ivan: It helps me be better by paying attention and respecting my teachers.

Mark: Clicker training has made me a better student by teaching me to have patience and how to respect a teacher's space.

Veronica: Clicker training has made me a better student by showing me that small goals turn into big goals; it just takes time and patience.

Lynn: How has clicker training made you a better teacher?

Karen: Clicker training has made me a better teacher because now I know how to approach a dog.

Veronica: Clicker training has made me a better teacher by helping me develop strong leadership skills.

Mark: Clicker training made me a better teacher by learning how to read calming signals when approaching an individual.

Ivan: Clicker training made me a better teacher by letting me see calming signals and to take my time with people.

So, thanks to four students from Baden High School (and lots of clicks and treats), dogs, cats, rabbits, mice, rats, guinea pigs, iguanas and assorted other animals awaiting adoption at the Peninsula Humane Society have mastered good behaviors and improved their prospects for adoption. In a mere six months, these students have become skilled clicker trainers and discovered that they were also good students with promising futures.

*Karen Pryor's video "Clicker Magic" www.clickertraining.com

"The profile of a typical continuation high school student includes the words struggling, apathetic, and disengaged. So, it has been a pleasure to watch Baden High School students bring such enthusiasm and commitment to the Baden SHIP Program. Students not only developed skills, confidence, and knowledge related to animal training, they also established strong bonds with the Peninsula Humane Society staff and volunteers and were given an insight into education and career opportunities they did not know existed. Because of the Baden SHIP program, these students are looking at their future with a new sense of optimism."

Michael Coyne, Principal





New Program at Green Chimneys Provides Daily Interactions with Dogs

*Reprinted courtesy of the
Green Chimneys Gazette, Spring 2014*

Wet noses, wagging tails and panting hellos. This is the happy greeting from the dogs in the new Dog Interaction Program as students step off the bus and head to class each morning. The dogs tell the students: *You are here and I am happy about that.* Upon seeing the dogs, the students' faces begin to relax. *I am at Green Chimneys. I am accepted.*

In February, Green Chimneys introduced the new animal interaction program, which provides opportunities for day and residential students to play an important role in the adoption of rescued dogs. Students are actively involved in the everyday care, socialization and training of shelter dogs to help them become accustomed to human interaction, learn basic commands and become ready for adoption into loving homes. An interdepartmental team of therapists, teachers, dorm and recreation staff, and farm staff supervises children in daily care and recreation activities with the dogs during school hours, as well as interaction in the dorms in the evening.

Generous funding supported construction of a “dog dorm” and dog park just steps from Green Chimneys’ student residences and school buildings, for up to six dogs carefully selected from Animals for Adoption dog shelter in Ulster County, NY.

During a six-week socialization and training period, professional dog trainers from All About Dogs, Inc. training center in NYC work with the students and dogs three times a week to teach proper care, grooming, handling and basic commands such as *Sit and Stay*, as well as walking on a leash.

Each dog has its own “Wag Bag” containing a binder with daily schedule and progress notes to monitor the dog’s activities, skills development and behavior observations; toys; and a slip lead in case a small hand lets go of the leash unexpectedly. “Bus duty” has also become a popular socialization exercise in which the dogs are brought to the school bus drop off/pick up area to meet students each morning and afternoon.



Shelter dogs from Animals for Adoption greet students before a day of training.



Green Chimneys resident Elijah helps train one of the program's first dogs.

But this new program isn't just "for the dogs." Research is beginning to show what Green Chimneys has believed for more than 65 years: animal interactions help children to regulate emotions, learn trust, and develop compassion and responsibility. The students understand the objective is to prepare these dogs for adoption; their desire to help the dog learn the skills it needs to be "successful" motivates them to communicate more effectively and behave in positive and appropriate ways. These lessons help not only in training the dog, but also in the student's interaction with peers, teachers and family.

"The satisfaction a child gains from teaching a dog a complex task can be particularly significant for a child who has learning and/or communication challenges," says Maureen Doherty, program coordinator. "It's rewarding to watch a student praise a dog for completing a task because, in essence, they are also praising themselves."

Learn more about our newest animal program at www.greenchimneys.org/doginteraction.



Don't forget about Latham's new DVD

Green Chimneys, Blue Skies

See Page 23



Pay it Forward: How Working Together Can Change the World

Making Good Work helps organizations with few resources, but great aspirations, achieve their mission.

Dr. Lisa Lunghofer believes in giving back. That's why she is pleased to offer **Pay It Forward**.

The concept is simple. Organizations submit applications describing a project with which they need help. Every quarter Lisa selects an organization and provides services for free.

Lisa has been touched by the passion and good work of people from around the world who have reached out to her: "I am so thankful for the opportunity to help others achieve their dream of making the world a better place."

Recent projects have included strategic planning for a youth development effort in Malawi, program planning for a group in Uganda focused on helping women through sustainable

agriculture, grant writing for a Chicago initiative that pairs at-risk youth with at-risk dogs, and grant research for an international animal welfare organization.

Currently she's running a special competition specifically for pet-related programs. She has been overwhelmed by the response: "Within 24 hours of announcing the competition, more than 50 organizations expressed interest in applying."

So what's the catch?



All Lisa asks in return is that the organization pay it forward, agreeing to provide a specific service at no cost to another organization in need. Organizations that receive those services will be encouraged to pay that good work forward, too. Together we really can change the world.

Dr. Lunghofer has a Ph.D. in Social Welfare Policy from Case Western Reserve University. She contributed the cover story, "The Legacy of Chloe and Hercules," in the Fall 2013 Latham Letter.

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“ It is not enough to be
compassionate – you must act. ”

– The Dalai Lama

The International Dog Bite Prevention Challenge

By Joan Orr M.Sc.

Did you know that half of all kids are bitten by a dog and most often by their own dog? This information is reported in published studies and is easily verified. Just ask around and you will find that half the people you talk to will have been bitten as a child. Dog bites can leave children frightened of dogs and sometimes scarred physically and emotionally. The dog may lose his home, his family or even his life. Experts

agree that dog bites are preventable through education.

Non-profit Doggone Safe provides education to help children learn to act safely around dogs. Doggone Safe has announced the International Dog Bite Prevention Challenge with a goal of educating 50,000 children during March-May.

What Do Kids and Dog Owners Need to Know?

Happy dogs are much less likely to bite than are anxious dogs. Parents need to teach children to recognize the difference and to interact only with happy dogs.

A happy dog wags his tail loosely and pants. He shows interest in interacting with the child. An anxious dog may lick his lips, yawn, turn his head away or show a half moon of white in his eye. By learning to read dog body language and understanding that dogs have feelings, children will develop empathy for dogs.

Children must know what to do if they meet a strange dog or any dog is bothering them. We need to empower them with the knowledge they need to keep themselves safe. Doggone Safe teaches children to stand still, fold your branches (hands folded in front), watch your roots grow (look at your feet) and count in your head over and over to the biggest number you know until help comes or the dog goes away.

This is the skill that is going to save a life or prevent a serious mauling if a child ever meets that

rare and truly aggressive or predatory dog. We recently received an e-mail from a mother who said “[My 3-year-old daughter] was standing in a tree pose as well as she could, shivering while being surrounded by two of the dogs barking and growling at her. We would like to thank you for your campaign and online information. We are convinced that it saved our daughter’s life.”

How Can You Help?

Become a Be a Tree presenter, sponsor a Be a Tree session through your business, donate a Be a Tree teacher kit to a school, donate a family safety kit to an animal shelter, invite a Be a Tree presenter to your school and spread the word about the International Dog Bite Prevention Challenge. Visit www.doggonesafe.com and learn about dog body language and teach your kids. Watch your own dog for signs of anxiety. Supervise and intervene before the dog gets to the point of growling or biting because all of his other stress signals have been ignored.

Teach a child – save a dog.



I'm worried, stay away



I like you



Stop



Fold your branches



Watch your roots grow and count in your head until help comes



HUMANE EDUCATION: Treating All Living Things with Kindness

By Deirdre Rand, Ph.D.

Editor's Note:

Latham encourages the development of university-level courses promoting animal-assisted activities.

(See also the April, 2014 LINK-Letter, www.nationallinkcoalition.org)

One such course is Dr. Deirdre Rand's online continuing education course on Animal-Assisted Psychotherapy. This course, "Animal-Assisted Psychotherapy and the Healing Power of Pets," will be offered soon through the Zur Institute. The Zur Institute offers more than 170 online CE courses for psychologists, social workers, marriage and family therapists, counselors and nurses. For more information go to www.zurinstitute.com/CEcredits.html.

The Zur Institute currently offers two AAT courses on Equine-Assisted Psychotherapy, and a brief, introductory course on Animal-Assisted Psychotherapy.

Dr. Rand has kindly given us permission to quote from her extremely comprehensive chapter on humane education. An excerpt follows here.

The use of the term "humane" in relation to our treatment of animals is relatively new. Historically, concern for the prevention of cruelty to animals was preceded by other social reforms, such as abolishing slavery, giving women the right to vote, prison reform, improving conditions for factory workers, and treating the insane more humanely (Arkow, 2010).*

When societies for the prevention of cruelty to animals were formed circa 1900, prevention of cruelty to children was part of their mission. Over time, protecting children from abuse and neglect became a cause of its own, and agencies and organizations devoted exclusively to child protection were established.

The contemporary meaning of "humane education" usually refers to teaching children to treat animals with kindness and empathy. This is both a goal in itself and a way of helping children learn larger life lessons, such as patience, responsibility, and how to form and maintain loving relationships with other people.

Founded in 1918, the Latham Foundation is a private foundation whose mission is to provide information, tools, and resources related to humane education, the human-animal bond, the "Link" between animal abuse and domestic violence, and AAT programs for at-risk youth. Latham works in a variety of non-partisan roles including publisher, producer, facilitator, sponsor, and colleague. (Its collaboration with contributors such as Dr. Aline Kidd, Dr. Phil Arkow, Dr. Barbara Boat, and Dr. Risley-Curtiss illustrates this.)

Latham produces educational videos and written publications on humane education and AAT. The *Latham Letter*, which is published on a quarterly basis, is the source of three of the articles for this course. *Teaching Empathy: Animal-Assisted Therapy Programs for Children and Families Exposed to Violence* by Loar and Colman (2004) is a Latham Foundation publication and is representative of their mission. In 2012, the Association of Professional Humane Educators honored the Latham Foundation with an award for its ongoing work promoting humane education.

National Survey of Social Workers

Dr. Risley-Curtiss is an Associate Professor in the School of Social Work at Arizona State University where she is the co-director of the Child Welfare Training Project. As of 2007, Christina Risley-Curtiss opined that one of the most serious challenges faced by proponents of the link between animal abuse and interpersonal violence is that social workers and other human services professionals have had little academic training or professional development on the emotional significance of pets in people's lives.

* For a list of references, email info@latham.org. Put "Dr. Rand" in the subject line.



As of 2007, Dr. Christina Risley-Curtiss opined that one of the most serious challenges faced by proponents of the link between animal abuse and interpersonal violence is that social workers and other human services professionals have had little academic training or professional development on the emotional significance of pets in people's lives. ”

As a result, animal issues are often marginalized and not perceived by human services agencies as being relevant to their missions and priorities. Unfortunately, a serious consequence of disregarding human-other animal relationships is that it shortchanges our ability to help our clients. (2007, p. 10)

Risley-Curtiss surveyed a sample of 1,649 of social work practitioners who were members of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW). The study sought to explore nationally what social workers know about the relationships people have with companion pets and what social workers are doing in this area. This national research project was believed to be the first of its kind (2007, 2010).

The survey indicated that 381 of the participants, or about 23%, reported utilizing non-human animals in their assessments and interventions. Of the 381 participants who included animals in their interventions: 86 did Animal-Assisted Activities such as visiting elderly people; 143 did Animal-Assisted Therapy (animal as part of treatment plan); and 49 included animals in in-patient residences. The animals most commonly included in participants' practices were dogs (n=320) and cats (n=167), though a broad variety of other animals were also utilized.

Qualitative responses to how social workers involved animals in practice indicated that: 79 had an animal of their own present in therapy sessions; 26 asked or allowed clients to bring their own animals to sessions; 30 sometimes recommended getting a pet to clients; and seven discussed the benefits of pet ownership with clients.

According to Dr. Risley-Curtiss, previous research has shown that companion animals are part of the ecology of social work clients. She notes, for example, that many low income and homeless people will not go to shelters because they cannot take their pets. Risley-Curtiss recommends including the topic of human-animal relationships in the curriculum for training social workers. She opines that, "Simply modeling the inclusion of companion animals in genograms; in eco-mapping; and in definitions of family, support systems, and environment can raise awareness and legitimize the need to ask clients about companion animals" (2010, p. 44). Eco-maps are used in individual and family counseling by social work and nursing professionals. The client is depicted at the center of the eco-map. All the systems relevant to the client's life, including family connections, are arranged in a circle around the client. Lines and arrows are used to represent relevant qualities of the client's relationship with each system.

Humane Education & Animal-Assisted Therapy with At-Risk Youth

Children's connections to animals makes humane education and Animal-Assisted Therapy (AAT) programs good tools for improving the lives of abused and

neglected children, and children who are at-risk because of exposure to violence in the home or on the streets where they live. Humane education and AAT programs challenge the negative lessons children learn from violence, abuse and neglect and seek to replace them with healthier lessons about empathy, compassion, self-discipline, and patience.

According to Loar and Colman (2004), humane education and AAT programs have been growing in number, quality and success. Animals are being brought into classrooms, therapy sessions, after-school programs, and homeless shelters to support various therapeutic or educational goals. Loar and Colman cite several examples such as: a program which helps sexually abused girls heal by teaching them to care for horses; a program for adjudicated inner-city youth which teaches them to care for and rehabilitate wild animals who have been rescued; and the SHIP program, which brings shelter dogs together with troubled children and families.

The use of feline-assisted behavior therapy, is an example of AAT combined with humane education for the parents as well as the child. "Raising Arizona's Homeless Children with my Canine Companion" by Debra White gives a first person account of a humane education program with homeless children, designed to break the cycle of violence for at-risk youth.

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AAT programs share certain basic characteristics of content and structure. Successful programs are carefully planned, with a curriculum that creates safe environments and positive learning experiences in which vulnerable children and families can develop skills sustainable beyond the humane education or AAT experience. Their book *Teaching Empathy: Animal-Assisted Therapy Programs for Children and Families Exposed to Violence** provides the information, examples, and tools needed to create a safe and successful humane education or AAT program.

SHIP Program for At-risk Children and Their Families

The Strategic Humane Interventions Program (SHIP) provides an innovative way of helping shelter pets and families

exposed to violence at the same time. SHIP was developed by Lynn Loar, Ph.D., in 1999. SHIP works with its target population in a neighborhood setting familiar to its participants. Cincinnati SHIP works with battered women and their children who are living in transitional housing following crisis intervention at the local domestic violence shelter (Boat, 2005). A SHIP program in Sonoma County, California, works with at-risk children referred through agencies and organizations such as the juvenile court, the department of mental health, or a school (Loar & Colman, 2004). Regardless of geographic location, SHIP integrates its work into school and family life, providing crisis intervention, classroom support, job training, individual counseling and other services as needed.

SHIP itself consists of small group meetings conducted by a social worker and co-facilitated by dog trainers from the local animal shelter, who bring several carefully selected shelter dogs for the sessions. First, the human participants learn to use clicker training to train the dogs in basic manners, making the dogs more adoptable. Next, the participants learn to use clicker training to shape desirable behaviors in each other.

According to Boat, the most challenging assignment for the battered mothers and their children participating in Cincinnati SHIP is to think of positive behaviors they want to reinforce in each other, rather than trying to eliminate negative behaviors. The group sessions continue for a set period, usually about seven weeks. Participants who wish to work more on the skills taught in a group can sign up for another round of small group sessions.

SHIP has specific goals for the participants and measures each individual's progress. Measuring participants' skills before and after their participation in the program provides feedback on how well these goals have been met by each participant. This type of progress should not be confused with the kind of "progress notes" that counselors and therapists take to document what was done and said during psychotherapy sessions.

Teaching Empathy provides tools which fall into three categories: 1) Designing a program, assessment of animals suitable for the program, and assessment tools for human factors which could harm the human and animal participants; Dr. Boat's "Inventories on Animal-Related Experiences" can be found in this section; 2) Tools for assessing the progress of individual participants; and 3) Tools for assessing the effectiveness of the program itself. Tools for assessing the effectiveness of a program may include pre-and post-tests, videotapes of sessions with coded behavior, or comparing those receiving the group intervention with a control group.

Ethical Considerations Between Therapist and Client

In the Commentary titled "Therapy Dogs & Therapy Cats," I focused on ethical considerations of the therapist with regards to the welfare of the therapy animal.

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**Not all prospective clients
are appropriate candidates for AAT.**”

* Available thru latham.org and amazon.com.

In this Commentary titled “AAT and Clinical Practice,” the focus will be on ethical issues pertaining to the AAT practitioner’s interactions with clients.

According to Fine and Mio (2010), psychotherapists who utilize AAT should possess appropriate competence in a definable therapy in the absence of the therapy animal. Fine reports that some therapists naively believe that simply having a therapy pet in sessions will achieve the desired result. Not all prospective clients are appropriate candidates for AAT. Having good assessment skills and being a good diagnostician are also important. You may want to collaborate with another provider, such as a psychiatrist whose role is to prescribe medication while you are responsible for the Animal-Assisted Therapy. Sometimes it’s best to turn down a case, or refer it to someone else. Here are indicators that AAT may be contra-indicated:

- *Client is allergic to your therapy dog or cat*
- *Client feels strong dislike for the kind of therapy animal that’s assisting you*
- *Client has a history of violent or aggressive behavior and may cause harm to the therapy animal*
- *Client has a moderate to severe Cluster B Personality Disorder, such as Antisocial, Narcissistic, or Borderline*
- *Client has symptoms of psychotic, delusional, or distorted thinking*
- *Client is litigious with a history of filing lawsuits or board complaints*
- *Client sees AAT as more of a social interaction with the therapist because an animal is involved*

Counselors developing skills in a new specialty area such as AAT should take steps to ensure their competence in handling a therapy animal in the context of psychotherapy practice. Chandler (2012) provides a list of measures that will help keep the client and the therapy animal safe.

- 1) Provide proper socialization and behavior training for your animal co-therapist. “Socialization” in this context refers to the process by which a dog or cat gains experience with a variety of people, places, and situations while it is still young (there is a fairly narrow window of opportunity) and learns how to behave in polite society.
- 2) Obtain training in animal-assisted interventions and activities. Live workshops which provide specific training in Animal-Assisted Therapy in counseling and psychotherapy are few and far between, and may not be offered in your geographical area. Explore resources on the Pet Partners website and elsewhere online. Familiarize yourself with Chandler’s *Animal-Assisted Therapy in Counseling* (2012). Be creative.
- 3) Understand the basics of pathogens which can be transmitted from animals to humans (zoonoses) and precautions for preventing them; know how to prevent and respond to injuries. The “Guidelines for Animal-Assisted Interventions in Health Care Facilities” (2008) is a valuable resource for learning about these issues and the document is available on the Internet.
- 4) Always assess whether AAT is appropriate for a particular client, including the presence of client allergies and fears and phobias of animals.

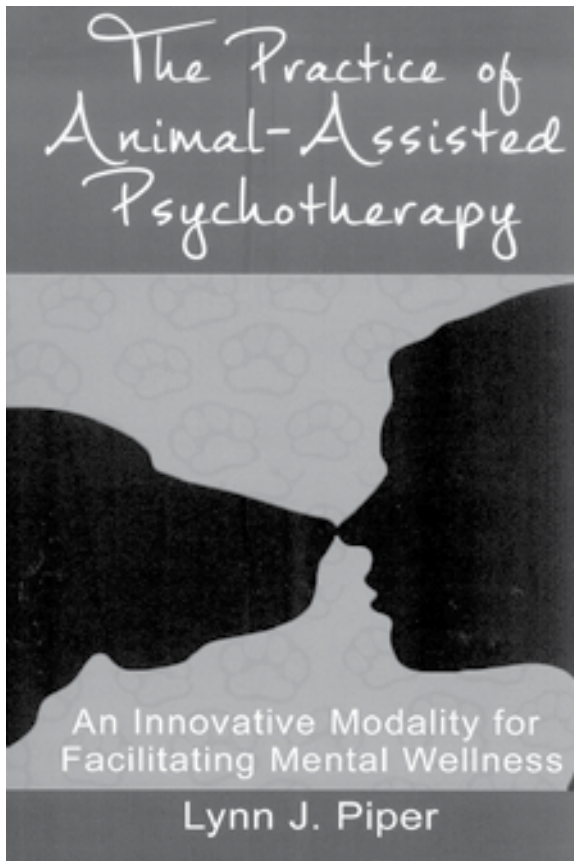
“**Risley-Curtiss**
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the topic of human-animal
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- 5) Ask prospective clients to sign an informed consent which covers issues relating to the therapy animal.
- 6) Assess the client’s therapeutic progress in response to the AAT approach.
- 7) Establish and maintain positive relationships with staff members when working in a group setting. Educate and instruct staff members as needed.
- 8) Practice within the bounds of your competence when it comes to establishing therapeutic or educational goals and utilizing AAT interventions.



Dr. Rand and Bella





The Practice of Animal-Assisted Psychotherapy: An Innovative Modality for Facilitating Mental Wellness

By Lynn J. Piper
Reviewed By Phil Arkow

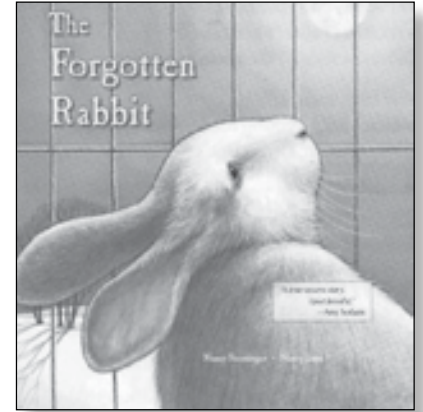
The literature describing practical, clinical applications of animal-assisted therapy was recently increased with the self-publication of this 326-page guidebook by Lynn Piper, a licensed clinical psychotherapist who openly includes Meika, Loki, Hobbes and Zoey as her canine co-authors and co-therapists. After an introduction describing the history of animal-assisted psychotherapy (AAP), the venues in which it can be implemented, and the types of animals most suitable, she explores in considerable depth the benefits and risks of AAP not only to the client but also to the client’s family, the therapist, and the therapy dog.

She addresses zoonoses and other risk management issues, compassion fatigue and a wide range of ethical issues affecting the animal and the client. After describing the process of choosing and preparing a dog for AAP work, she explores theoretical constructs and practical strategies for using AAP in such treatment approaches as cognitive, behavioral, client-centered, solution-focused, play therapy, attachment theory, psychodynamic, interpersonal process, and other orientations.

Piper then describes – with both practical guidelines and case studies – specific AAP interventions for children, adolescents, adults, and in family practice. A fairly comprehensive appendix lists animal-therapy organizations and programs.

The book is a successor to, and relies heavily upon, Cynthia K. Chandler’s earlier editions of *Animal-Assisted Therapy in Counseling*. For the therapist seeking specific ideas as to how to include therapy animals in practice, this book should offer much food for thought and practical tips.

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Reviewed by Judy Johns

This is a lovely book and a comprehensive one; I expected nothing less from Aubrey Fine. What pleasantly surprised me was the way he was able to present both a historical and a very contemporary account of our kinship with animals. By combining the latest research and his own personal experiences with examples of animals' ability to provide comfort such as after the school shooting in Newtown, Connecticut, Dr. Fine makes a compelling – and heartwarming – case for the importance of companion animals.

Our Faithful Companions features:

- An in depth exploration and explanation of the human animal bond and its benefits,
- New documentation on the use and benefits of animal assisted activities,
- Pointers on pet selection, parenting issues with children and pets, pros and cons of pet ownership, and

- Advice to help both children and adults handle the loss of a beloved pet.

Appropriately, Dr. Fine draws from his experience as a clinical psychologist by including a section in the Appendix called “Paws for Thought.” These are exercises that encourage us to reflect on our relationship and engage with our pets.

There is also a thoughtful note to parents on helping children deal with the loss of a pet and a section called “The Healing Workbook” to help children celebrate and remember their beloved companion. That workbook is also available free online as a downloadable PDF file.

Although this inspirational book is designed for the general public, even those of us who work with or for animals on a day-to-day basis will find much new to enjoy in *Our Faithful Companions*.

The Foreword is by Dr. Stanley Coren whose article we were honored to reprint in the Spring 2013 *Latham Letter*.

Author Aubrey H. Fine, Ed.D. is a Professor in the Department of Education of the California State Polytechnic University. He is also a licensed psychologist specializing in treating children with ADHD, learning disabilities, developmental disorders and parent-child relations. He has been in the field of Animal-Assisted Therapy (AAT) for more than thirty years. He is the editor of *The Handbook on Animal-Assisted Therapy*, which is now in its third edition, and he serves on numerous boards and advisory committees related to human-animal interactions.

Our Faithful Companions, which is published by Alpine Publications with an official release date of June 25, 2014, will be available from booksellers or direct from www.alpinepub.com.

256 pages • Color and b&w photographs
6x9 trade paperback
ISBN: 978-1-57779-162-1 \$19.95

“ Dogs are not our whole life, but they make our lives whole. ”

– Roger Caras

HelpMeHelpYou

A series of films that examine 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

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**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.

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Chimneys,
Blue
Skies**



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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.

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