

Latham Letter

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SUMMER 2008

PROMOTING RESPECT FOR ALL LIFE THROUGH EDUCATION

SINGLE ISSUE PRICE: \$5.00

ADULTS ONLY:

Humane Education and Community Outreach for Mature Audiences



Articles by *Marsh Myers, Stacey Zeitlin, and Deborah White*

Pages 6, 8, and 11

January through April 2008

Community Outreach Calendar



PUPPIES!
PUPPIES!
PUPPIES...
PROGRAMS FOR THEM AND ABOUT THEM!

PLUS: New programs for kids and law enforcement officers!

From the Humane Society of Southern Arizona's Community Outreach Department



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the humane society of southern arizona

SPECIAL ISSUE



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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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Promotion of Humane Education*

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The Latham Letter

Volume XXIX, Number 3, Summer 2008

**BALANCED PERSPECTIVES ON
HUMANE ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES**



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The Latham Letter

Balanced perspectives on humane issues and activities

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“I’ll See It When I Believe It”



Hugh H. Tebault, III, President

The weekend started out with an early morning flight from San Francisco to Chicago. The weather was beautiful – what we could see of it. We boarded a second flight from O’Hare to Portland Maine. Though it was late, we had no concerns. However, after taxiing around the runway for 4 ½ hours, we suspected the worst - a cancelled flight. Trying again the next day, we successfully reached our destination. We found out later that the source of our grief was the rainstorms in the midwest.

Though I arrived late for my American Humane Board Meeting, I had the privilege of attending the National Town Meeting on the Link. What a weekend. The two-day town meeting was hosted by American Humane in conjunction with the Kenneth A. Scott Charitable Trust and Maine’s Linkage Project. Latham was pleased to be a contributor and to attend this conference that included so many organizations representing family services, animal services, judicial, educational and research groups. The focus of the weekend was to discuss how we can jointly succeed in creating a safer society by better understanding the Link between animal abuse, child abuse, domestic violence and elder abuse.

After the two-day conference, a smaller group of 38 participants attended an experts’ summit to review the presentations and discussions, distill them into categories, and rank them for priority. We discussed where we want to go, where we are now, and how we

will reach our goal. By the end of the day, this group had created the following draft vision statement of where we expect to see the Link movement in five years:

It is understood that there is a link between violence against humans and violence against animals. Through the recognition and integration of this understanding into policies and practices nationwide, people and animals are measurably safer.

As was pointed out by our facilitators, the Greenshoe Group, belief in a thing makes it happen. We are used to hearing “I’ll believe it when I see it,” but they suggested that we should rearrange that statement. Instead, we should say “I’ll see it when I believe it.”

With that in mind, you will be seeing more results of this event over the coming months as we put our beliefs into action. The energy and open cooperation between so many diverse people towards attaining such an important goal is inspiring. Knowing that so many people in different disciplines realize how important animals are to mankind and how much mankind is helped by the proper respect of animals gives me hope that this vision will be attained.



New from the Association of Professional Humane Educators (APHE)



Looking for a great new resource to help you gear up for the Service Learning and Community Service requests that you'll get this fall? The APHE Community Service and Service Learning Manual is now available. This 199-page CD manual is filled with information, tips, and activities to enhance or create Community Service and Service Learning programs. Order your copy at www.aphe.org. \$35 for APHE members; \$50 for non-members.

Important "Link" cross-training resource: *The Backup.com*

The Backup's computer-based training courses are now available, at NO COST, to any sworn law enforcement, military, or corrections personnel who act in a law enforcement capacity in the USA. Partnerships with several colleges provide the funding for the training. The only cost to the officer is a \$6 per course charge to cover shipping and processing fees.

Investigating Animal Cruelty

Nearly 2/3 of Americans have an animal that they consider the family pet. When a crime is directed towards these pets, it has a large impact on these individuals, as well as the whole community.

This course explains how to recognize animal cruelty and correctly respond to it. Also discussed is the link between animal abuse and other serious crimes.

(Brought to you by the ASPCA instructor: Joseph Pentangelo)

Remembering Tony Snow

Tony Snow, a columnist and television commentator who served for 17 months as President Bush's press secretary, died July 12th after a long battle with colon cancer. He was only 53, and by all reports, universally respected and liked.

Shortly after his death the *Wall Street Journal* reprinted a portion of a piece that he wrote for *The Jewish World Report* in 2005. (www.jewishworldreview.com)

"The art of being sick is not the same as the art of getting well. Some cancer patients recover; some don't. But the ordeal of facing your mortality and feeling your frailty sharpens your perspective about life. You appreciate little things more ferociously. You grasp the mystical power of love. You feel the gravitational pull of faith. And you realize you have received a unique gift — a field of vision others don't have about the power of hope and the limits of fear; a firm set of convictions about what really matters and what does not. You also feel obliged to share these insights — the most important of which is this: There are things far worse than illness — for instance, soullessness."

Back by Popular Demand

*Working with Families in Shelters,
a Practical Guide for Counselors
and Child Care Staff*

by Lynn Loar and John H. Weakland (1994)
is now an electronic file
available on Latham's website.

[http://www.latham.org/local/
WorkingWithFamiliesInShelters.pdf](http://www.latham.org/local/WorkingWithFamiliesInShelters.pdf)

ADULTS ONLY:

Creating Humane Education Programs for More Mature Audiences

*By Marsh Myers, Director of Community Outreach
Humane Society of Southern Arizona*



For humane educators, children's programs are our traditional bread and butter, but often our focus on accommodating kids causes us to overlook the adults who will ultimately have more influence of the child's humaneness, whether they be parents, grandparents, foster parents or extended family. Let's face it, long after our classroom presentations on animal overpopulation and cruelty prevention have faded from mind, it will be those adults who will reinforce the message day in and day out. That is, if they have the tools to do so.

Over the years, as I have had the good fortune to attend conferences and network with other humane educators across the country, it became clear to me that we often artificially restricted our audience. On some level, perhaps we thought that other adults were a lost cause and we had to pin all our hopes for a more humane world on the NEXT generation. But then it occurred to me that I have been an adult a lot longer than I was ever a child, and I still learn, still reconsider, still reevaluate, and yes, on occasion I even change my mind. In this light, suddenly our lack of adult-oriented programs appeared to be a great disservice. (It is important to note that by "adult programs" I am not referring to professional trainings, but rather educational opportunities for ordinary people who love their animals and have an interest in becoming better stewards.)

When the Humane Society of Southern Arizona began to build education programs for your average adult, they were not initially successful. But again, this appeared to be a matter of not appropriately gauging our audience. Rather than designing programs specifically for the 18+ crowd, we attempted to just upgrade our children's themes. Not surprisingly, adults seemed to eschew lectures about basic pet care and the benefits of spaying and neutering. For many, I think these topics were old or redundant; and for others they were simply boring. A few truths began to manifest themselves:

- Most adults had little time, little money and limited patience to spend on a learning opportunity they might see as being unsophisticated or preachy.
- Like children, adults are more engaged by any educational experience if its entertaining and enjoyable.
- Adults seemed to want information that was practical as well as fun.
- We needed to find new topics and rotate them often.

Over the last year, our humane society began to experiment with a wide variety of humane education efforts geared toward adults. While pet first aid classes remained a

solid winner for us, we began to branch out into topics that included day-to-day life with your animals. One of our most successful ventures was entitled PETS IN THE DESERT, a five-part lecture series with an emphasis on enjoying dogs and cats in the desert southwest. Although some of the installments were very practical in nature – like dealing with our unique urban wildlife – others were strictly fun. One of the most popular was entitled “Hiking with Your Dog” and was presented by a local author and expert who provided information on canine-friendly trails but also tips on how to protect your pet during this outdoor adventure. Whenever possible, we always included some hands-on or interactive features. The segment on urban wildlife, for example, included a visit from a live bobcat cared for by one of our local wildlife rehabilitators.

During my lecture on backyard safety for pets, another revelation occurred. I began my lecture with a short quiz for the audience to gauge their knowledge about our local laws and safety issues when it came to domesticated species. Before I knew it, the lecture topic was nearly forgotten and the session transformed into an open forum about animal law. I discovered another oversight. For years, we had run classes through our local court systems for adult offenders of our animal ordinances, but there was a huge audience of law-abiding and very humane people out there who wanted the same information simply so they could be better stewards. This fall, we will premiere our new adult class entitled “Animal Law for Lay People.” To make it more appealing to adults, our instructors will be experts in the field, including detectives and prosecutors attached to our animal cruelty task force.

We also found, by accident, that more esoteric topics were also intriguing to adults. Rather than giving a standard lecture on cat care, for example, spice things up with a presentation on the cat cult of ancient Egypt. This revelation, brought about by my own audience, culminated in several more rules I feel are important for adult humane education programs:

- Don't make the event any longer than an hour and a half or you'll lose people. Adults are busy after all.
- Keep the programs affordable. We charge between \$5 and \$10 per program.
- Provide flexibility in scheduling. Options such as

phone, email and internet reservations are always enticing.

- Consider creating programs that adults can attend with their children.
- Be creative and look for topics that are unique to your community.
- Many adults will take your topic and then want to learn more. Be cognizant of this and have appropriate resources prepared, including reading lists, handouts, pamphlets or contact information for your lecturers.
- Remember that it is human nature to judge a book by its cover, so give your presentation a catchy name and thoughtful promotion.
- If possible, provide food and refreshments ... a standard “hook” regardless of age.
- And finally, don't be afraid to experiment in content, approach and publicity.

Our humane society is now implementing a “shotgun” approach when it comes to creating and promoting adult programs. Instead of just offering one or two a quarter, we offer a wide variety and have found it's just as easy to promote six lectures as it is to promote one. (The difficulty is for the humane educator of course, who has to actually design those six programs!) What we've found is that adults are responding enthusiastically to the greater choice and often will sign up for multiple programs at the same time, will make a donation or take out a membership.

Truly, these adults have taught us an important lesson ... you can teach old dogs new tricks!



**Humane Society
of Southern
Arizona**

www.hssaz.org



See page Five for information
about the APHE Community Service
and Service learning Manual.

ADULTS ONLY

Adults Need Education Too!

*By Stacey Zeitlin,
Community Programs
Manager at the
San Diego Humane Society
and SPCA*



Doggie Café

Photo: Candice Eley



Pet First Aid Class

Photo: Stacey Zeitlin

When most of us think about humane education, we think about children, the next generation who will hopefully make better, more humane choices for pets in the future. However, those who make decisions about pets now are often left out of the equation. Shouldn't humane education target adults as well, hopefully enabling them to make better choices for pets today?

A number of organizations, including the San Diego Humane Society and SPCA, offer programs to adults to provide education to enhance the bond between people and their pets. The easiest way to start this type of program is to offer speaking presentations to adult and senior groups to share information about your facility's programs. Rotary, Lions, and workplace philanthropy groups are always looking for presenters. Speaking engagements are a great way to share information about responsible pet care and important pet issues, such as spaying and neutering, feral cat concerns,

micro-chipping, and adopting from shelters. Plus they can lead to a pool of volunteers, potential donors and adopters. If these groups arrange field trips, schedule a tour of your facility to better highlight your organization as a valuable community resource and to emphasize any areas of need that you currently have.

You can bring information about your facility to a wider audience through neighborhood fairs and business health expos. Setting up a table with information at fairs, community center events, and religious group festivals is a great way to showcase

adoptable animals, recruit volunteers and donors, highlight your programs and local pet issues, and foster relationships with other community organizations. Also look into groups that coordinate health and wellness expos for local corporations. Most event planners are eager for additional vendors and will often invite non-profit groups for reduced rates, if not free.

Another way to reach adults is to host monthly lectures on various pet topics. Find local experts who can share information about important pet topics, such as dogs and toddlers, pet vaccines, pet disaster preparedness, holistic pet options and more. Most of these experts will donate their time to support your programs. Generate speakers and topics based on your community's needs and interests.



Information booth at Walk for Animals

Photo: S.D. Humane Society

we shouldn't neglect the decision-makers of today in the process. Most programs for adults are relatively easy to start, inexpensive to maintain, and far-reaching in their positive outcomes for pets today.



Stacey Zeitlin is the Community Programs Manager at the San Diego Humane Society and SPCA, overseeing education programs for both adults and children. She is also a board member for the Association of Professional Humane Educators (APHE). To learn more about the San Diego Humane Society and SPCA visit www.sdhumane.org.

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Photo: Mary Anderson

Doggie Café

“Telepathic Communication with Animals” is always a popular one here in Southern California!

Supporting community members during the grief of losing a pet is a wonderful way to reach out to your community. By partnering with a local social worker, family therapist, or psychologist, you can create an environment of understanding in a society that often doesn't value animals the way many of us do. The facilitator can share techniques with the participants that will celebrate the lost pet, while enabling them to move past the pain and grief.

You can also connect with pet sitters, trainers, and regular pet parents by partnering with the American Red Cross to become a Pet First-Aid instructor. Initially, this can take some time, training, and money, however the pet lives potentially saved through these workshops makes it well worth it.

If your facility has a training department or a partnership with positive reinforcement trainers, there are so many additional ways you can reach pet parents. One fun way that truly enhances the human-animal bond is to offer a Doggie Café event. You can team up with a local coffee shop, bookstore, or utilize your own facility to set up a café setting where dogs and their people can mingle with each other. This type of setting allows pets to practice being better behaved in stimulating environments. Plus having positive reinforcement trainers “on-paw” to answer training questions and to model positive methods is a wonderful resource for both the people and the pets.

It is important to influence the decision-makers of tomorrow with humane education lessons; however,



Photo: Candice Eley

Doggie Café

10 Things Teens Can Do to Help Stop Animal Cruelty

Reprinted Courtesy of HSUS "First Strike" Campaign www.hsusfirststrike.org



Whether it's a case of neglect or a malicious act of cruelty, you can help protect animals. Why should you care? Because it's the right thing to do. Because cruelty to animals is illegal in all 50 states. And because people who harm animals may also harm people. Stopping cruelty to animals helps everyone.

- 4. Be a role model.** Let your actions be a guide. Be kind to animals and let others know that hurting animals is wrong. Speak up for animals and urge others to do the same.
- 5. Be a responsible pet owner.** Don't let your cats and dogs roam. Cats are safest indoors. When outdoors, dogs should be walked on a leash or supervised in a fenced yard. It's up to you to keep your pets safe.
- 6. Keep a lookout.** If you see a stray or injured animal, contact your local animal care and control agency or the police. Provide a description of the animal and the location.
- 7. Make the 'Net' work.** If you find an internet site that promotes animal abuse, urge the service provider that hosts the web site to remove it immediately. You can find the address of the web site's provider at www.networksolutions.org.
- 8. Stop cruelty before it begins.** Teach elementary school children in your community to be kind to animals via KIND News, a nine-times-a-year newspaper published expressly for kids. The prize-winning publication is produced by the youth service division of The HSUS.
- 9. Start a club.** Start an animal protection club at your school. Visit the HumaneTeen web site and click on "Start a Club" for tips and activity suggestions.
- 10. Join the HumaneTeen Network.** The HumaneTeen Network is a free online service that provides members with e-mail updates on the latest animal and environmental issues. To join, visit their web site and click on "Join the Network." For more information about animal cruelty, click on "Understanding Animal Cruelty."

What Can You Do?

- 1. Get help for the animal.** If you see someone hurting an animal or if you know of someone whose animal looks sick, injured, or deprived of adequate food, water, or shelter, get help. Call the police, your local animal shelter, or a trusted adult. Do not try to help the animal yourself – that could put you in danger.
- 2. Get the facts.** Write everything down. As a witness, you'll need to provide the date, time, location, and any other details you can remember, including a description of the animal, the type of cruelty, and the person who may be responsible for it.
- 3. Get the word out.** Educate your friends, family, and teachers about animal cruelty and its connection to human violence by sharing information and materials from The Humane Society of the United States's First Strike™ campaign. For more information, call 1-888-213-0956, or write to us at First Strike, The HSUS, 2100 L St., NW, Washington, DC 20037.

**If you have questions, call The HSUS
First Strike at 1-888-213-0956 or
e-mail us at firststrike@hsus.org.**



ADULTS ONLY

Humane Education Starts in the Field

By Debra J. White



A crossing guard tells Officer Deanne Snider at least 20 dogs chased elementary school children as they approached the campus earlier that morning. Snider counts nine dogs jostling good-naturedly with each other behind a secure fence. The man who opens the door denies ownership, so Snider says, “The owner has to keep these dogs confined. The school says they get out and chase kids. That’s not allowed.” Because some male dogs appear unaltered, Snider leaves information about the county’s low cost spay/neuter program. “Please give it to the owner,” she says. “Encourage him to read it.”

Animal control officers not only pick up strays and enforce leash laws but they are also humane educators. Working in the field is often thankless, sometimes dangerous, but animal control officers risk their lives every day to improve animal welfare and keep the public safe. Snider and 32 other officers patrol Maricopa County, Arizona every day.

Later in the morning, Snider picks up a stray dog that a business owner coaxed out of rush hour traffic. Since the dog wore current ID, Snider drives the dog home. She hands the owner a citation for dog at large but also discusses responsible pet ownership.

A call crackles on Snider’s radio about stray dogs near a school, one which bit the custodian. At the scene, Snider struggles to capture the dogs so she calls for back-up. Finally, the dogs are snared. “I hate to think what could’ve happened if your dogs got hold of a child,” Snider says to the dogs’ owner who shows up during the confusion. “Your fence is broken and can’t keep your dogs in. That’s not good near a school.”

Officer Diane Brady, who works for the city of Mesa, agrees with Snider. “Communicating with the public is an important part of my job.” Out in the field, Brady explains

the leash law, county law regarding rabies vaccinations, proper pet care, and sterilization. “I teach children about the

best way to handle pets,” Brady says. “That often cuts down on bites.” Brady offers solutions to owners about pesky situations such as barking so that the dog doesn’t end up in a shelter. “Communication and education prevent future violations as well as abuse and neglect.”

Sgt. Matt Summers of the Maricopa County Sheriff’s Department concurs with his colleagues. The Sheriff’s Department receives about 4,000 calls annually. In 2007, for example, only 500 animals were seized. Many involved cases with multiple animals. “The Sheriff’s Department investigates each call but our officers spend a lot of time educating people. We pass out information about low cost spay/neuter and vaccination clinics,” says Summers. Cases are usually not criminal. Instead, officers talk to dog owners about the need for shade and water during the long scorching Phoenix summers. They might discuss hoof care with a horse owner. “If the pet owner hasn’t made sufficient changes on a follow up visit, then we might open a case,” Summers says. Otherwise, a dose of education is usually enough.

Humane education in the classroom can never be replaced. Talking to children about kindness and compassion to animals is a valuable tool to create a more compassionate society. Animal control officers complement classroom humane education so animals are treated with respect, children are safe, and the community understands their role in responsible pet care. Working in tandem makes a difference.



The writer spent a day riding around with Officer Deanne Snider on 5/15/08 for an article for the NACA News (National Animal Control Association).

RED CROSS HONORS EXTRAORDINARY EFFORTS



Kris Crawford and “the ladies” Cheyenne, Tahoe and Dakota (center) with this year’s Red Cross Real Heroes

In May the Santa Clara Valley Chapter of the American Red Cross hosted its second annual Real Heroes Breakfast honoring individuals in the community who took action in a crisis or who live their lives in a way that shows they care for those around them. These heroes saved a life, prevented a tragedy, or gave of themselves for the greater good.

Latham Letter and *Pit Bull Paradox* contributor Kris Crawford received the Education Hero Award because after successfully training pit bulls for search and rescue work, she developed dog bite prevention classes to help protect children from injuries. She also teaches responsible dog ownership through her nonprofit organization, For Pits’ Sake, www.forpits sake.org.

In their years as a search and rescue team, Kris and her dogs responded to more than 200 search missions for lost children, missing Alzheimer’s patients, and high profile cases including the Space Shuttle Columbia disaster and the search for Laci Peterson. Tragically, Ms. Crawford lost the use of her right hand in an accident that prevented her from continuing in search and rescue. But not one to quit, a characteristic she learned from her pit bull dogs, she changed her focus and concentrated on her life-saving educational projects.

The For Kids’ Sake Project is her dog bite prevention program. Based on the latest child safety strategies and research by dog trainers/behaviorists and educators, she created colorful and animated materials, presentations, and lesson plans based on her own dogs, Deputy Dakota, Trooper Tahoe and Sergeant Cheyenne of the For Kids’ Sake Safety Squadron.

“Lost in the Woods - Hug a Tree” is a program through which Kris and her dogs teach kids how not to get lost in the wilderness and how to stay safe and get found more quickly if they do get lost.

Most recently Kris created an anti dog fighting program, “Knock Out Dog Fighting,” featuring world champion Mixed Martial Arts fighters who help her teach kids that dog fighting is not a symbol of strength, power or greatness.

Kris also works with disabled and abused children. Her dogs serve as role models showing the children that despite overwhelming obstacles it is still possible to succeed.

Another Hero that our readers will be glad to know about is Maya, a 5-year-old pit bull mix who rescued her owner, Angela Marcelino, from an attack in her San Jose home. The blood on Maya’s muzzle was swabbed and ended up identifying the attacker through DNA testing, which led to an arrest.



Experts Gather at Historic “Town Meeting” in Portland, Maine to Strategize the Link between Animal Abuse and Societal Violence



(left to right) Mark Kumpf, President, National Animal Control Association; Randall Lockwood, Sr. Vice President, ASPCA; Bernard Unti, Sr. Policy Advisor, HSUS; Alli Phillips, Director of Public Policy, American Humane; Hugh Tebault, President, Latham Foundation

Participants enjoyed beautiful summer weather and a glimpse of rare ‘sea smoke’ off Portland, Maine. For additional information, see Hugh Tebault’s editorial on page four, The Linkage Project www.linkageproject.org, American Humane www.americanhumane.org, and the Kenneth A Scott Charitable Trust of Cleveland, Ohio.



Portland, Maine Lighthouse

Photo: Judy Johns



Linda Jariz, The Linkage Project Coordinator



Phil Arkow, Interim Director for Human-Animal Bond Programs at American Humane and one of the conference coordinators

ASPCA Honors Henry Bergh Children’s Book Award Winners at American Library Association Conference, June 30, Anaheim, California

The annual awards recognize books based on their exemplary handling of subject matter pertaining to animals and the environment.



Winners of the 2007 Henry Bergh Children’s Book Awards. Please visit the Pressroom section at www.asPCA.org for information on all of this year’s winning books.

Beth Finke (center) winner in the Non-fiction Companion Animals category for *Hanni and Beth: Safe and Sound*, reviewed in the Spring 2008 *Latham Letter*

Exploring the Links:

Firearms, Family Violence and Animal Abuse in Rural Communities

By Drs. Deborah Doherty and Jennie Hornosty, New Brunswick, Canada

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Despite the growing body of literature on family violence, there are few studies which deal specifically with family violence in a rural context. None have examined extensively the social and cultural context of firearms in rural homes and the impact this may have on women dealing with abuse. Yet we know from our previous research¹ that the availability of firearms in rural homes is a perceived threat by abused rural women (see Doherty, Hornosty & McCallum, 1997; Hornosty & Doherty, 2004; Doherty & Hornosty, 2004; Hornosty & Doherty, 2003). We also know that threats often extend to family pets and farm animals.

The current study, which was funded by the Canada Firearms Centre, examines family violence, firearms, and pet abuse within a rural context where firearms are positively valued. The research was by conducted by Drs. Doherty and Hornosty, as part of a research team, Family Violence on the Farm and in Rural Communities, at the University of New Brunswick. The research partners in the study included all the transition houses in New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island, Victim Services in Prince Edward Island, the Chief Firearms Officers in both provinces, Victim Services of the Fredericton City Police and Codiac RCMP in New Brunswick, and the RCMP “J” Division. The major goal of the study was to examine, from a broad regional perspective, the various dimensions or forms in which firearms serve as instruments of control, intimidation and abuse in family violence situations with a view to expanding the information base and gaining a better understanding of the risk factors that lead to, or escalate, firearms victimization of women and children in rural homes. The research documents the experiences of abused rural women and explores service providers’/crisis workers’ perceptions of domestic firearms abuse and its influence on safety planning and intervention strategies. It also sheds light on rural perceptions, norms and values on the relationships between firearms, family violence and animal abuse.

The research was carried out in New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island in 2005-2007, over an 18 month period. We used both surveys (quantitative data) and semi-structured interviews and focus groups (qualitative data). The research instruments were available in both official languages. We conducted a review of the literature on firearms misuse, family violence, and animal abuse as a backdrop to the research. In addition, a media content analysis of newspaper articles on selected family violence issues helped us to understand public perceptions, particularly in association with firearms. Finally, an analysis of court cases in Atlantic Canada over the past several years relating to family violence provided insights into the justice system’s response to family violence, particularly when it involved firearms victimization and/or abuse of pets.

Quantitative Data – Survey Participants

The survey questionnaire contained two parts – A and B. Transition house staff and victim services personnel invited abused women to participate and administered the survey. Part A was demographic information such as woman’s age, the community of residence, her employment status, number of children, types of abuse experienced and relationship to the abuser. Part B asked specific questions that participants answered about the presence and types of firearms, the presence of pets, whether the presence of firearms made her more fearful or made her more reluctant to seek help, and whether her partner had deliberately threatened to harm the pets or farm animals.

In total, we received 391 surveys; 283 women had answered Parts A and B, while 108 surveys contained information only for Part A. A comparison of the two

The study examines family violence, firearms, and pet abuse within a rural context where firearms are positively valued.

Exploring the Links

data sets shows no significant difference in the demographic characteristics of these sub-groups. Here is a profile of the women in the survey:

- 20% of the surveys were from Prince Edward Island; 80% from New Brunswick;
- Women ranged in age from 16 to 75 years of age;
- 33% of all participants used the services of French-speaking transition houses in New Brunswick;
- 75% of the women lived in rural communities with populations of 10,000 or less;
- Over 70% of the women in the survey were unemployed - the majority of them (58%) were receiving social assistance, while 27% had no income at all;
- 54% of the women who went to a transition house were accompanied by children;
- 64% of New Brunswick women who were abused in their current relationship were abused by a common-law partner; in Prince Edward Island, the percentage was 56% (Common-law relationships comprise less than 16% of intimate partner relationships in Canada);
- Over 80% percent of the women had experienced two or more types of abuse.

With respect to firearms, we learned that:

- 25% of the women who answered this question had firearms in their household;
- Of these, 72% had long guns. 18% had both long guns and hand guns present;
- Nearly 40% said partners did not have a license to own firearms; 44% of firearms were not registered; 50% were not kept locked, and 11% indicated the guns were kept loaded;
- 66% of the women who indicated there were firearms in their home

said knowing about the firearms made them more fearful for their safety and well-being;

- 70% said it had an affect on their decisions to tell others or seek help;
- Women were more likely to express concern for their safety when the firearms were not licensed, registered or locked;
- 83% of the women who knew the guns were loaded were fearful;
- The presence of firearms increased a woman's fear when her partner used drugs and alcohol or was threatening suicide, or there were concerns that the partner would harm her, the children, family, or property.

Survey questions about the abuse of pets and farm animals revealed that:

- 70% of households had a pet or farm animal (based on the 273 women who answered the question concerning pets);
- 57% of the households with pets also had children;
- 45% said their partner deliberately threatened to harm their pets or farm animal, and, of those, 41% said their partner had deliberately harmed or killed the pet;
- 64% of women in homes with firearms thought firearms were used to harm the animal;
- 27% of the women who owned pets said they were more reluctant to get help for fear the abuser would harm their animal if they left;
- 60% said they were reluctant to disclose even when an animal had been harmed;
- 24% of women with children said that their child was aware that an animal had been harmed or threatened with abuse.

We believe that the study makes a significant contribution to family violence research by demonstrating that cultural factors play a critical role in understanding the nature of, and response to, firearms victimization.

Qualitative Data – Interviews and Focus Groups

The qualitative research was structured to provide a strong and poignant voice for New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island women who had recently experienced family violence in a rural context, as well as the service providers, crisis workers, police, social workers, child protection workers and many others, who daily come into contact with victims of abuse. In total, we conducted 14 interviews; 11 with abused women and 3 with service providers. We conducted seven focus groups with 58 people. In total, we heard the views of 72 participants. These participants talked about their perceptions of rural life and rural values, the prevalence and status of firearms, experiences with domestic firearms victimization and its impact on women's decision-making, and whether threats to harm animals affected women's decision-making. They also discussed the sorts of barriers rural women face when disclosing or leaving an abusive relationship. In light of the survey findings, it is not surprising

Exploring the Links

that we heard numerous heart-wrenching stories of firearms victimization of women, children, and pets. Some common and recurring themes that emerged include:

- Traditional family values, a submissive role for women, and stigmatizing women who report abuse are still common features of rural communities;
- Rural women face other unique and significant barriers and challenges to leaving abuse, including social and geographic isolation, poverty, a paucity of social services, inadequate transportation, and a lack of privacy;
- Firearms, mostly long guns, are thought to be readily available in most rural homes; a significant portion of which are unregistered;
- The attitude to firearms is influenced by the “hunting” or “gun culture” which places a strong, positive value on gun ownership for hunting and other peaceful pursuits. This fosters a cavalier attitude to proper firearms storage and lack of attention to the potential increased risk of lethality in homes which are experiencing family violence and other problems;
- Women who are experiencing firearms victimization tend not to tell the police or others about their experiences for a variety of reasons;
- While abuse sometimes involves having a firearm pointed at them, the very presence of firearms serves to silence women, even when the threats are indirect;
- The fear of firearms misuse can become a community concern affecting family, neighbours and service providers who are scared to call the police when they witness abuse for fear of retaliation;
- Women are concerned about police response times in rural areas and the widespread use of scanners. They generally distrust police and the justice system to take them seriously or protect them if they disclose. And when abused women do disclose firearms misuse to service providers, often, there is no follow-up;
- Police response to family violence situations is not standardized and unless an “incident” specifically involves a firearm, police may not search for and seize the firearms in the home;
- Other factors that heighten women’s fear of harm, particularly when associated with firearms misuse by their partners, include their partner’s mental health problems, threats to commit suicide, and drinking or drug use;
- Pets and/or farm animal are often threatened, harmed or neglected as a means of controlling an abused woman, and it is common for women to delay seeking help out of fear for their animals. Generally, there is no safe haven for these animals.

While we recognize that these interviews and focus groups looked at the experiences of relatively small sample of rural women and service providers, and because the sample was not randomly chosen, we make no attempt to generalize our findings to the entire population. However, our analysis confirms much of what we

“45% of the responders said their partner deliberately threatened to harm their pets or farm animal, and, of those, 41% said their partner had deliberately harmed or killed the pet.”

“Rural women face unique and significant barriers and challenges to leaving abuse, including social and geographic isolation, poverty, a paucity of social services, inadequate transportation, and a lack of privacy.”

learned in the quantitative research, and our earlier research. We are confident the views expressed by the women, service providers and other participants are shared by many.

Recommendations

Since this study was conducted as participatory action research, we encouraged participants to reflect on the solutions to family violence and firearms victimization – the policies, programs and community responses that might help other rural women experiencing abuse. Suggested solutions varied. Our recommendations incorporate the different views expressed, but we take sole responsibility for the following recommended suggestions:

- Ensure that risk assessment tools include questions about the misuse and abuse of firearms, as well as pet/animal abuse
- Support a series of gun safety commercials targetted at rural communities /provinces
- Publicize the family violence provisions of the Firearms Act
- Create pro-removal and pro-confiscation firearms policies in domestic violence cases similar to pro-arrest and pro-charge policies

Exploring the Links

- Confiscate firearms for unsafe storage violations
- Educate police, justice officials, and service providers on the nature and extent of firearms victimization in rural homes
- Encourage abused women to think about personal safety issues – explain risk
- Restrict firearms access on stay-away and no-contact orders, and peace bonds in all domestic cases
- Ensure follow up and support for victims following a charge and better enforcement of protective orders
- Enact legislation to compel certain professionals (mental health and doctors) to report concerns about the stability of a gun owner

Specific recommendations relating to the abuse of pets and farm animals include:

- Create a public awareness education campaign about pet abuse and the risks associated with family violence and firearms
- Ensure that questions about pet-farm animal abuse are included on in-take forms and risk assessments
- Develop a safe haven program for pets and farm animals
- Provide stronger legal protections for the animals of victims of family violence
- Link animal abuse to other forms of abuse such as child abuse and senior abuse

Our general recommendations include the need for a public education initiative about the different faces of family violence, a need for a diversity of safe environments where women feel confident to disclose abuse and the importance of coordinating services and improving communication among all service providers. As well, we point to the necessity of coordinating risk assessment tools that take into account evidence-based risks such as pet abuse, and indirect fears of firearms.

Pets and/or farm animal are often threatened, harmed or neglected as a means of controlling an abused woman, and it is common for women to delay seeking help out of fear for their animals. Generally, there is no safe haven for these animals.

Conclusion

The research findings help us to understand better the ways in which firearms may and do serve as instruments of control, intimidation and abuse in family violence situations. They show that the normalization of firearms in rural homes in New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island has led to the minimization of firearms misuse generally, including desensitization to firearms abuse in instances where women, children and pets/farm animals are the victims. The qualitative findings have complemented and enhanced the quantitative data. We not only know more about the prevalence of firearms in rural homes and their association with various aspects of family violence, we can now situate firearms misuse within the social and cultural context that shapes experiences and responses, and as a result, we can offer insights into potential strategies for addressing it.

In conclusion, we believe that the study makes a significant contribution to family violence research by demonstrating that cultural factors play a critical role in understanding the nature of, and response to, firearms victimization. The research and findings provide much needed information about the nature of family violence in rural communities and fill a gap in our understanding of how the presence and status of firearms influence women's decision-making. Dissemination of the findings will be a critical component of the success of this study.



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Footnote:

¹ This previous research was conducted by the research team, *Family Violence on the Farm and in Rural Communities*. The team was comprised of academic researchers, community researchers, a farmwoman, RCMP, and social service providers. The published articles reflect the analysis of Drs Doherty and Hornosty. The "Rural Research Team" is a team of the Muriel McQueen Fergusson Centre on Family Violence Research, established in 1994 to engage in participatory action research to end violence against women.

Can you provide a good home



for this dog?

By Michelle A. Rivera

My cousin Tara is a lovely woman with two lovely children, a lovely husband, and a lovely suburban home. She is also a stay-at-home mom.

And did you get the impression that this is a lovely, upper-middle class family? The reason this is important is because I want you to understand the person of whom I am about to write. She is a person very much like you or me.

So when it came time to get a canine companion for her family, Tara wanted to do the right thing. No pet stores for her, no way. She wanted to set the right example for her children, and wanted to rescue a homeless dog. They didn't mind if the dog was a little older, and they weren't set on a specific breed, though they did want a small dog and if that dog had some Cavalier King Charles Spaniel in him, so much the better. So I recommended Petfinder.Org, and off they went to find their new family member.

Except that the story does not end there. The dog they fell in love with on Petfinder.Org (where you can find purebred, cross-bred and multi-bred dogs of all ages and genders) was currently in a foster home connected with an organization that rescues a

particular breed of small dog. The dog in question was a four-year-old Maltese/Poodle mix. Tara and her family made the decision to adopt this dog and make him a part of the family. Happily, they called the number on Petfinder.

But there was a problem. The person in charge of the rescue organization didn't feel that this particular dog was right for a family that included two small children. Though Tara argued that her children were highly respectful around animals, (I can attest that this is unquestionably true) and that she was at home all day to care for the dog and keep a watchful eye out, the rescuer was not convinced.

And Tara ran into this problem again and again. So, they went to visit an Orlando breeder of Cavalier King Charles Spaniels and brought home a lovely little purebred puppy.

End of story. We all wish there had been a different outcome, but, well, here we are and little Lucy is now a beloved member of our family.

So here's the thing: when someone such as Tara, or someone you may know who is a person who can be trusted to do the right thing, wants

to adopt a puppy, but the rescuer is reluctant to relinquish the puppy, we have a "situation".

Isn't the whole point of rescue to get homeless dogs into loving homes?

Well, yes, and no. When Tara called me to ask why she was running into all these brick walls, I explained to her that sometimes the rescuers know the dog better than anyone, and it's possible that these particular dogs were not good with children. Maybe they had a history of nipping at kids. Or maybe, with all the baggage rescued animals carry, the dog had an incident where a child was cruel, so any child sends the dog into a dither. And even though it's important that the dog gets a good home, it's also important that the home be a good one from the dog's point of view.

There is a good reason why some rescuers are a little too careful when selecting the right family for the dog. Many rescued animals already have strikes against them.

Unfortunately, people still want purebred puppies. As a dog trainer, I meet hundreds of dog owners every year. And I can tell you that the truth about pet stores – Oprah not withstanding – has still not reached a

good portion of the population.

So a rescued dog has two strikes against him before we even get started on *his* particular problems or needs. He's probably not a puppy, and he may not be a purebred.

Strikes one and two.

He may have bitten a person who was cruel to him, strike three.

He may have trouble with housebreaking, strike four.

He may have mange, worms, heartworm, giardia or a host of other common medical problems, strike five.

So now, the poor fellow is adopted into the wrong home. He ends up coming back to the shelter or rescue agency. So, he's been returned after an unsuccessful adoption, strike six.

And each return is another strike.

So it becomes clear why some rescue organizations are a little too particular. Many of them have the attitude that the animal is already rescued; they have him in a safe home for now. Can you provide a better home than the one he is in? Are you sure? How sure?

The animal rescue movement is filled with lovely people, doing lovely things to help animals. Their intentions are pure, their challenges many. But we can understand how a person who is just trying to do a good thing, the right thing, give a homeless dog a home, can give up and look elsewhere.

The debate continues.....



Michelle A. Rivera is a free-lance writer, dog-trainer and author of several books on dogs. Her new book, *Do Dogs Have Belly Buttons?* is in stores now. We reviewed it in the Winter 2008 Latham Letter.

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Experiential Learning in Humane Education: *Involve Me and I Will Understand*

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For registration information go to www.Greenchimneys.org or
contact mkaufmann@greenchimneys.org



Media Reviews and Announcements

The International Handbook of Animal Abuse and Cruelty: Theory, Research, and Application

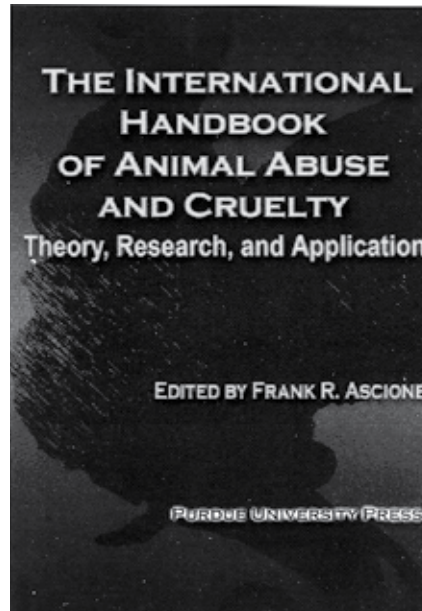
Edited by Frank R. Ascione

Reviewed by Philip Tedeschi

The International Handbook of Animal Abuse and Cruelty signals an important new and compelling discussion to improve our understanding of abusive behavior toward animals. For many years, Dr. Ascione has brought critical attention to the link between animal maltreatment and family violence. In this new work, Dr. Ascione and his contributors to this far-reaching multi-national review significantly expand the inquiry, especially in regard to clinical insights.

As a clinical faculty at the Graduate School of Social Work, at the University of Denver, I teach courses in both the inclusion of animals to support therapeutic and human health efforts, as well as forensic social work practice models. An important element of that curriculum requires understanding and recognizing animal abuse, and we have been waiting for such a well-supported and foundational review as found in this book. We certainly will be including this volume in our graduate students' required readings.

The academic value of this book is unquestionable, but it is the clinical focus of the book that will inspire



and improve the accuracy of the professional clinician. In my work as a forensic social worker, I am responsible for making public safety decisions requiring performing risk and violence assessment on many high-risk individuals. This book will be an invaluable resource, as it provides a clinical overview of factors associated with animal abuse encountered as considerations in the assessment and intervention of individuals engaging in sexual, physical and emotional abusive behavior.

One of the most compelling theories that seems to emerge out of this important work is the relevance of animals, their care and our relational capacity with them as a measure of human health. By careful examination of Dr. Ascione's book, we begin to understand the human-animal bond and it's potential consequences. Healthy connection with animals can be used to enhance protective factors that can build resilience against the risk factors many young people face.

This may include the role animals play in the normative developmental factors in children and the powerful effect animal cruelty may have on the early onset and progression of disruptive behavior disorders.

The contributions to this book examine these dynamic factors from multiple perspectives. Although each contributor's chapter is well supported and highly informative, I was especially appreciative of the inclusion of a chapter by Andrea Beetz, as the issues of sexually abusive behavior toward animals have long needed discussion and attention as well as Dr. Gary Patronik illumination of the serious problem and curious human behaviors associated with animal hoarding.

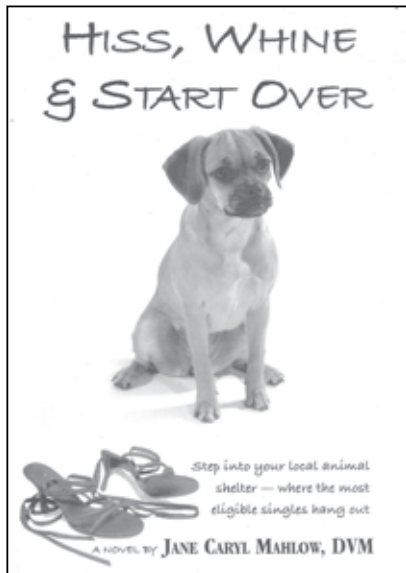
Diagnostic and clinical theory, sociological perspective, research agendas, law enforcement approaches, policy and legislative considerations are explored in this astounding compilation. Of special note, multicultural perspectives are provided allowing for strong certainty that the issue of animal abuse and cruelty is a shared concern and not just as a unique measure of our families and communities.

Once again Dr. Ascione has given his time and talent to bring understanding to this complex topic and provide a voice to those who cannot speak for themselves.

Purdue University Press
ISBN: 978-155753-463-7
448 pages; \$149.95
1-800-247-6553 or
www.thepress.purdue.edu

Hiss, Whine & Start Over

By Jane Caryl Mahlow, DVM



Bill Brothers, President of Animal Care Equipment & Services, Inc. (ACES), says, “How do I describe a book that had me alternately crying and laughing when I first dived into it? Dr. Mahlow, a former shelter vet and a terrific writer, has succeeded in writing a wonderfully readable novel that manages to deal with all the tough issues we face in animal welfare work. This is the perfect book to explain what we do and why we do it.

It is absolutely a must read for shelter staff, volunteers, board members, donors, community leaders, veterinarians, and anyone who wants to understand animal welfare work.

It’s a gripping story you won’t want to put down. And I’ll bet you recognize yourself in it.”

Hiss, Whine & Start Over is the perfect book for anyone working in or volunteering with animal welfare organizations, and for animal lovers everywhere. Tender and whimsical, it’s cracking smiles and pulling heartstrings everywhere.

Hiss, Whine & Start Over

Author: Jane Caryl Mahlow, DVM

ISBN 0-9776456-1-4

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Mutts' Shelter Stories: Love, Guaranteed

By Patrick McDonnell

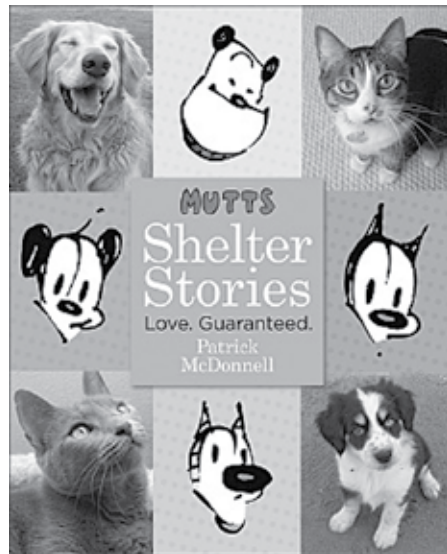
Reviewed by Michelle A. Rivera

A while ago I received an email from someone who clearly didn’t “get it.” She wanted everyone on her list to write an angry letter blasting the creator of the MUTTS comic strip, taking him to task for drawing a dog with a chain around his neck. “Write him and tell him that dogs should never be tied up; kids read comics and they will see this. He needs to be educated,” she explained.

HE needs to be educated?

This is why the geniuses at Microsoft created the delete key!

The irony here, of course, is that Patrick McDonnell has done more to raise awareness of the plight of chained dogs and shelter animals than a single e-mailer can accomplish in ten lifetimes. His comic strip, MUTTS, regularly features hapless dogs and cats hoping for a better life. Once in a while, he even throws in a guinea



pig or rabbit! They chat each other up, telling one another that ‘tomorrow’ they will get a home; they are special! After all, nobody could pass up such a nice kitty. Anthropomorphizing? Sure, but so what? Of course shelter dogs and cats hope for a better life and if they could verbalize those thoughts, Patrick McDonnell would be right there to write them down.

Well, now he has. In a unique new book that juxtaposes his comic characters with real-life dogs and cats, McDonnell has given voice to shelter

animals who never had one. I loved this book. I read it in one sitting! Offered for your “edutainment” are vintage, real comic strips where shelter pets lament their lot in life. But right alongside those comics are photographs of real pets who found a second chance at love. The creativity of this project will delight everyone. Kids will enjoy the beautiful colorful photography, and most will be able to read the comic strips, even if they miss the “bigger picture.” But even kids will understand that Patrick McDonnell is the biggest animal advocate to come along in a while, and the animals can use all the friends they can get.

Also included is an authoritative reference section with an Adoption Guide and resourceful links that encourage readers to, as McDonnell writes, “Adopt some love today.” Author’s web site, www.muttscomics.com.

Mutts' Shelter Stories: Love, Guaranteed
Andrews McMeel Publishing, LLC, 2008

U.S.: \$16.99 Canada: \$18.99

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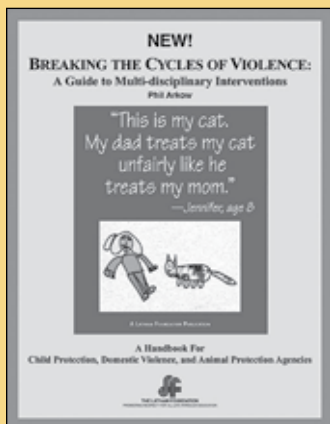
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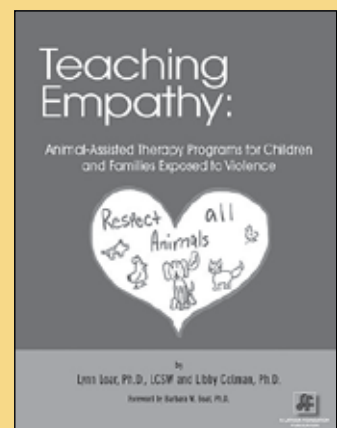
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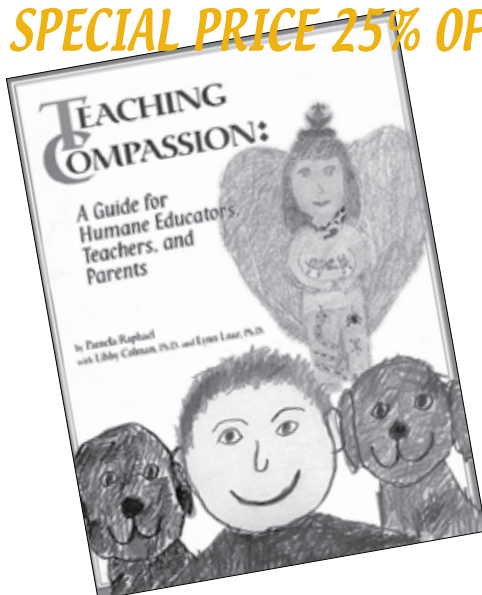
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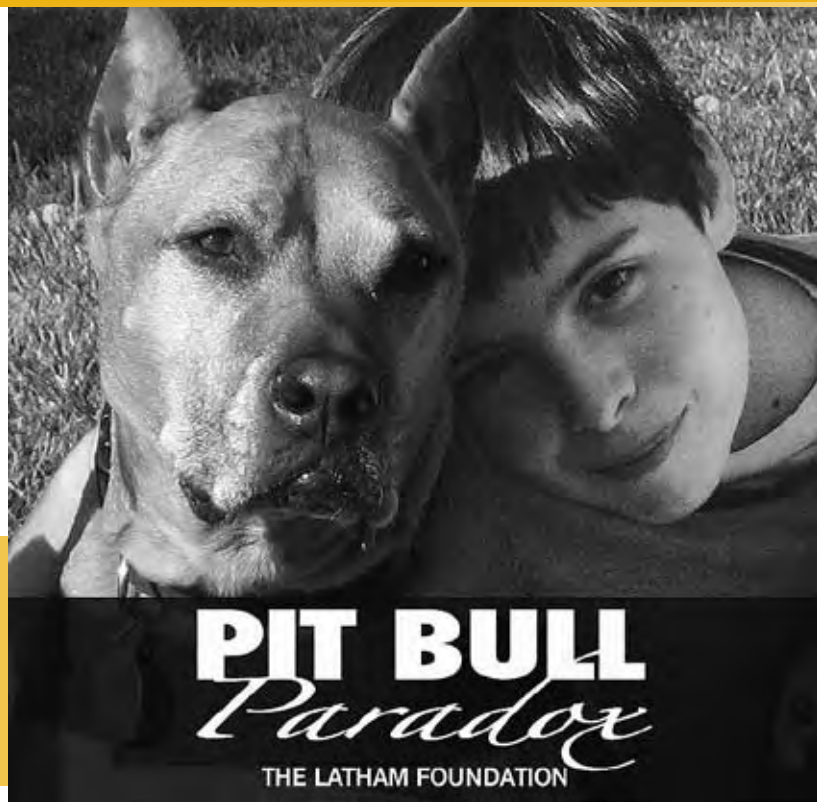
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Written and Directed by Tula Asselanis

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*" Mindfulness and heart!
I've been waiting for a video like this ... it will be a great tool to help educate potential adopters."*

Elana Rose Blum, Pasadena Humane Society and SPCA

It's a tragic sign of our times that in some communities shelters euthanize all Pit Bulls and in others many who would make wonderful additions to a home and family wait in vain for adoption.

Pit Bull Paradox puts the breed in historical and contemporary perspective and shows Pit Bulls in a variety of scenarios. It also examines some of the complications that people who choose to share their lives with a Pit Bull may encounter such as fear, prejudice, misunderstanding, and regulations affecting housing, insurance, and licensing.

The *Pit Bull Paradox* offers sound advice from breed experts for successful, rewarding adoptions. It emphasizes the need to consider one's lifestyle and personality, and the dog's need for daily, hard exercise, and thoughtful, consistent training and management.

True, Pit Bulls are not for everyone. Yet as Katie Dinneen of the Peninsula Humane Society reminds us in the film, "There are far more Pit Bulls living happily in people's homes as average companion animals than most people ever suspect."

Latham applauds this fact and honors the many people and organizations who work to help Pit Bulls – and *all* dogs – find loving homes. Hopefully, *Pit Bull Paradox* will contribute to this effort.

The DVD package includes a list of additional resources that purchasers can copy and distribute.

" Pit Bulls are just dogs. Four legs, two eyes, one heart. Aggressiveness toward humans, severe shyness, and fearfulness are not characteristic of Pit Bulls and are undesirable in any dog."

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