

THE

# Latham Letter

VOLUME XLVII, NUMBER 2

Spring 2026

PROMOTING RESPECT FOR ALL LIFE THROUGH EDUCATION



## 2026 LATHAM GRANTS NEWS

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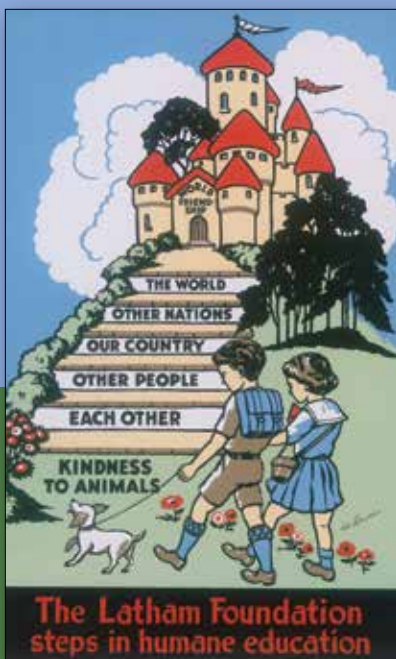
# MANDATE

## Edith Latham's **MANDATE:**

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



Brother Buzz, star of Latham's  
Brother Buzz films and our former  
Spokesbee, marks the end of articles.



### Corrections

In the previous issue of The Latham Letter, we identified a few typographical errors:

Incorrect edition number — corrected to Volume XLVII, Number 1

On page 3 - Mary Tebault was incorrectly listed as a Proof Reader

On page 3 - The Members of the Board of Directors incorrectly listed Mary Tebault and omitted Susan Helmink

On page 15, second to last paragraph included a misspelled word "asting" - Corrected to "lasting"

We regret the errors and appreciate our readers' understanding.

### The Latham Letter

Balanced perspectives on humane issues and activities

Search the Latham Letter archives by topic and learn more about all of our resources and grants at [www.Latham.org](http://www.Latham.org) or call 510-521-0920.



The Latham Foundation for the  
Promotion of Humane Education

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# The Latham Letter

Volume XLVII, Number 2, Spring 2026

## BALANCED PERSPECTIVES ON HUMANE ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES



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### ABOUT THE LATHAM FOUNDATION:

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

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*Stacey Zeitlin, President  
The Latham Foundation*

# THE HEART OF LEARNING: HOW HUMANE EDUCATION TRANSFORMS US ALL

What if education could change not just how people think — but how they feel, how they act and how they treat every living being around

them? That is the promise of humane education. And it is a promise The Latham Foundation has been committed to keeping for over a century. Humane education goes beyond facts and figures. It cultivates empathy, compassion and a deep sense of responsibility — toward other people, toward animals and toward the planet we share. It asks individuals not just what they know, but who they are becoming.

At its core, humane education teaches young people to see the world through the eyes of others — including the animals who share our communities, our classrooms and our lives. Research consistently shows that when students engage meaningfully with animals, they develop stronger emotional intelligence and a greater capacity for kindness. Animal-assisted activities offer a uniquely powerful pathway into this learning.

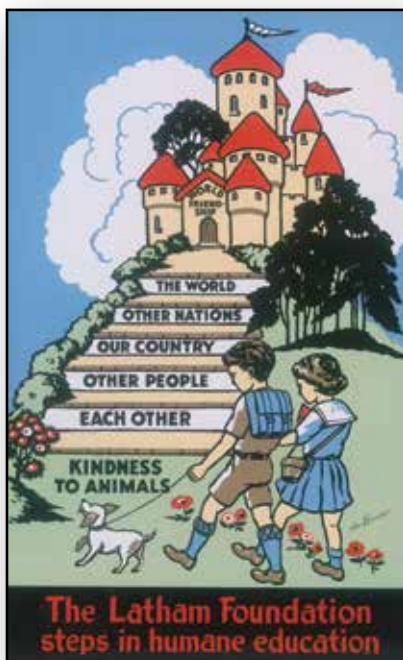
When a student reads aloud to a therapy dog or cares for a classroom rabbit, or when a volunteer works alongside animals in a shelter, something remarkable happens. Barriers come down. Curiosity opens up. Empathy takes root. And critically — both the person and the animal benefit. This is not one-sided learning. It is a relationship of mutual care. But humane values cannot live only inside a classroom. They must be practiced in the world. That is where service learning comes in. Service-Learning is the bridge between knowing and doing. It invites people to apply what

they have learned: their compassion, their skills, their sense of justice — directly in their communities. When humane education and service learning are combined, the result is transformative: the participants become active agents of change, not just passive recipients of knowledge.

This is the vision The Latham Foundation is advancing through this year's grant program. We are proud to invite nonprofit organizations to apply for grants that support humane education through animal-assisted activities — programs where both animals and people benefit, and where Service-Learning is at the heart of the experience. We are looking for programs that are thoughtful, ethical and built on genuine relationships between people and animals. Programs that move people from the learning environment to the doing environment. Programs that ask people to serve — and in doing so, to grow.

If you are an educator or program leader who believes in the power of compassion-centered learning, we want to hear from you. The application window opens June 22nd and closes June 26th, 2026. Visit The Latham Foundation website to learn more about eligibility requirements and how to apply. The world needs more people who lead with empathy. Who see the dignity in every living being. Who understand that service to others — human and animal alike — is not just an act of kindness, but an act of education. Help us build that world. Apply today.

*In addition to serving as President for The Latham Foundation, Stacey Zeitlin is the Vice President of Community Impact at San Diego Humane Society and serves as a board advisor to the Association of Professional Humane Educators.*





# APPLY FOR LATHAM GRANTS JUNE 22-26, 2026

## 2026 ELIGIBILITY:

This year we are seeking humane education programs that have an emphasis on [Service-Learning](#). Applications are welcome from organizations serving children, youth, adults, and seniors alike. All are encouraged to apply.

- Programs may serve a single age group or span multiple generations.
- There is no age restrictions on program participants.
- Applicants must be U.S. organizations with domestic programs.
- Organizations must have attained 501(c)(3) status.

Grants may not be used for the following:

- Capital projects and equipment
- Publications
- Employee training
- Funds for salaries
- Conference registration or travel

Website General Information:

[latham.org/grants/general-information/](https://www.latham.org/grants/general-information/)

A downloadable page detailing the 2026 Grant Program is here:

[https://www.latham.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/Final\\_2026-Grant-Guidelines-2.pdf](https://www.latham.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/Final_2026-Grant-Guidelines-2.pdf)

Website Deadlines and How To Apply:

[latham.org/grants/deadlines-how-to-apply/](https://www.latham.org/grants/deadlines-how-to-apply/)

NOTE: Applications will only be accepted **June 22nd to 26th** and the online application will only work during those dates:

[latham.org/grants/application/](https://www.latham.org/grants/application/)

You can sign up at [www.Latham.org](https://www.Latham.org) to receive all the latest news from Latham.

Please share this opportunity with your colleagues.



SPOTLIGHT WEDNESDAY: LATHAM HISTORY

# A LITTLE LATHAM HISTORY AND THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

The Latham Square Fountain was an inspiration from the Latham family to encourage kind treatment for not just the then current mode of transportation - horses use but for all kinds of creatures. The fountain had water troughs for thirsty equines as they traveled through downtown Oakland in the 1910s, as well as lower bowls for wayward dogs, drinking fountains for humans, and a higher basin for birds. And it was lovely to look at as all the creatures enjoyed its water flow.

It was erected in 1913 as a memorial for the parents of Edith and Milton Latham, along with the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) for whom they worked.

The inscription reads: *“Erected to the memory of James H. Latham and Henrietta Marshall Latham as a tribute to their humanity.”*

*Presented to the city of which they were earliest residents by their children under the auspices of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Erected March 1913.”*

Created by French sculptor Raphael Charles Peyre, it depicts several scenes, including a cherub restraining a man from beating a donkey. Five years later, Edith and Milton Latham were again inspired to create The Latham Foundation for the Promotion of Humane Education.

Located at the intersection of Telegraph and Broadway in front of the Cathedral Building, The Latham Square Fountain was designated an Oakland Landmark in 1984.



The Lathams and their Foundation have been proponents for preventing cruelty to animals for over 100 years. Our leadership and location may have changed, but our mission remains the same. 🐾





# 2026 APHE CONFERENCE

The Latham Foundation is proud to be a sponsor of the very successful conference “Rooted in Empathy,” hosted by the Association of Professional Humane Educators (#APHE) in our beautiful city Oakland, California!

There were so many inspiring speakers, detailed workshops, and some fun games and creative outlets - all to help make better Humane Educators. Many members attending have received #LathamGrants and provide outstanding articles and information to our on-line publication - *The Latham Letter*.

Thanks to all members of APHE for your hard work and dedication, and letting us join you in the joy of learning and to further our insights into Humane Education.

Check out their Facebook page or website: [www.aphe.org/](http://www.aphe.org/)



## NEW HUMAN-ANIMAL CONNECTION PODCAST EPISODE

# THE WISDOM OF WORMS

## HOW THEY UNDERSTAND US BETTER THAN WE UNDERSTAND OURSELVES

It’s laugh-out-loud funny to hear what worms have to say about humans!

In this Human-Animal Connection podcast episode, listen to a direct, intimate soul-level, intuitive conversation with worms through world-renowned channeler Stephanie Banks.

Working gently beneath the surface, they transform decay into nourishment. In this jaw-dropping communication, they offer us, humans, a powerful reflection on purpose, humility, and the unseen contributions that hold our world together.

The Human-Animal Connection on Pet Life Radio  
[Episode 87 - Stephanie Banks – Worms: The Hidden Healers Beneath Our Feet](#)





## THE POWER OF HUMANE EDUCATION IN ACTION

*by Miriam Steinberg, Grants and Foundation Relations, Lollypop Farm*

Lollypop Farm, the Humane Society of Greater Rochester (NY), has been a safe haven and resource center for pets and people in Western New York for more than 152 years. They provide all-encompassing services for pet owners, including humane education programming, adoptions, animal cruelty investigations, veterinary services, a pet food pantry, animal behavior support,

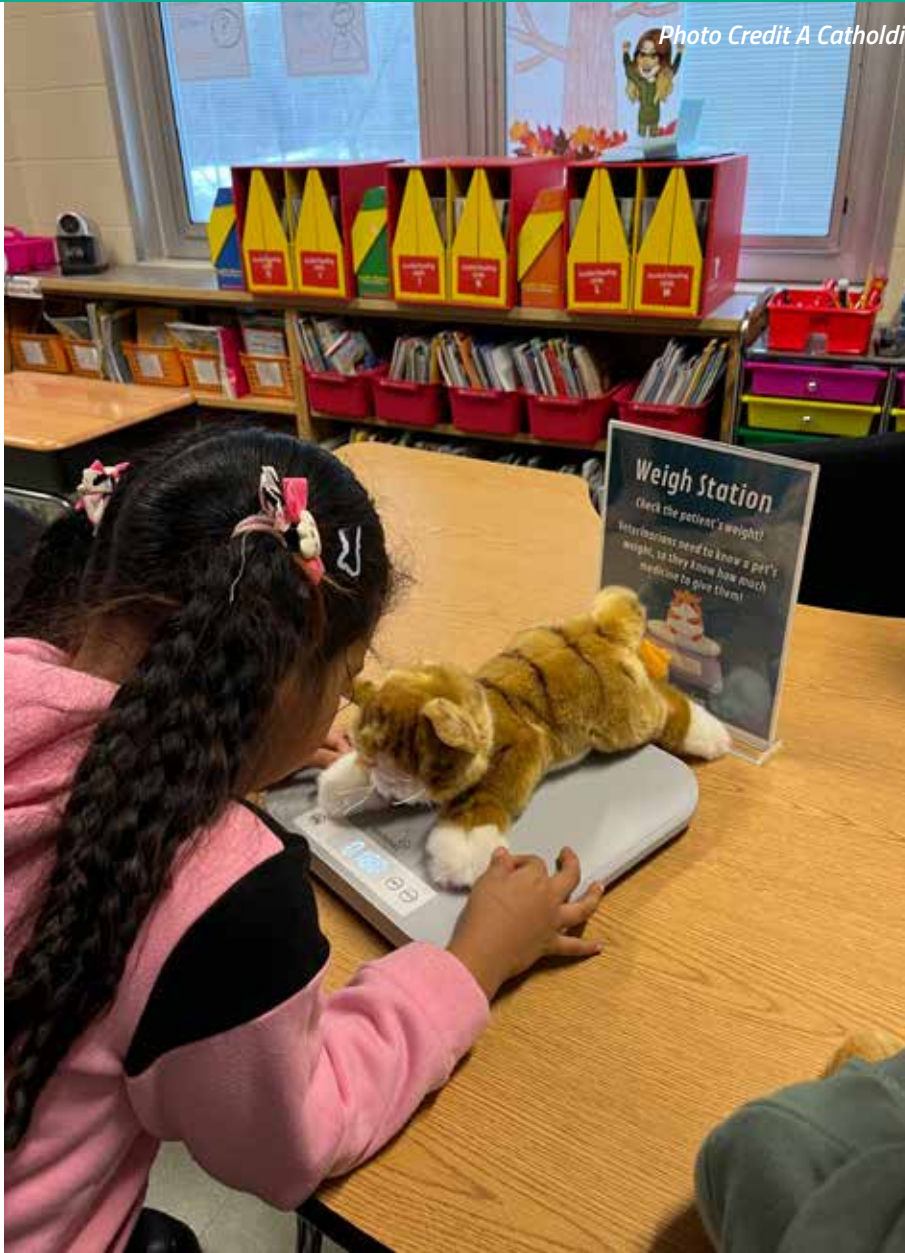
temporary boarding for pets whose families are in crisis, and much more.

As one of the oldest nonprofits in Monroe County, NY, Lollypop Farm is a cornerstone of the Rochester community, providing critical care to approximately 10,000 homeless, abused, and neglected animals while directly impacting thousands more through education, outreach, and prevention initiatives. Our Mission

statement is: “Together with our community, we better the lives of animals through justice, prevention, and life-saving care,” and our Vision is “A just and compassionate world for all animals.”

Through its mission-based programming, humane education is at the heart of our vision for long-term change. By teaching empathy, responsibility, and respect for all

*Continued on next page*



***Future Vets Program at School 12 with Lollypop Farm.***

living beings, we not only improve the lives of animals but also foster social-emotional growth in people of all ages. In partnership with the Rochester City School District (RCSD) and other community organizations, our educators deliver classroom programs, summer camps, and youth leadership opportunities that reach thousands of students annually in the Greater Rochester region, many from underserved neighborhoods where

access to out-of-school enrichment is limited.

Lollypop Farm's Humane Education Department harnesses young people's natural fascination with and affinity for animals as a foundation for strengthening academic engagement and increasing the prosocial behavior of students. On average, we reach more than 3,000 youth (and adults) annually through classes and services,

including hundreds of Summer Camp participants and RCSD second grade students through our School Partnership Program. We also have a 25-year partnership with the Monroe One Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) at the Foreman Center in Fairport, NY, which offers education programming for differently abled students. The generous support of the Latham Foundation has enabled us to expand our program offerings, and we are proud to highlight these initiatives and more below.

**Lollypop Farm's School Partnership Program** is now in its third academic year with the RCSD. Our School Partnership Program is an exciting addition to our Humane Education offerings and includes weekly in-school sessions that bring Lollypop Farm humane educators to several urban elementary schools. While there, they deliver animal-themed literacy lessons based on the core values of respect, compassion, and empathy. The classroom visits follow the RedRover Readers curriculum, a story-based classroom program which aligns with NYS Common Core ELA standards and SEL (Social Emotional Learning) protocols.

**BOCES Multi-Occupational/ FOCUS Program** offers a "Small Animal Care & Handling" course of study on site at Lollypop Farm during the school year. It provides 25-30 high school students with learning disabilities and mental health challenges the opportunity to gain basic work experience through the lens of humane education. The program supports these

*Continued on next page*



*School 12 Reading Lesson Smartboard Storytime with Lollypop Farm.*

animal-loving teenagers in their development of career skills while they learn directly in a shelter environment. One of our Lollypop-BOCES animal care graduates returned in the last school year as an assistant teacher with great success, further demonstrating the meaningful impact that this program has had.

**Homeschool Heroes** is a new pilot program designed specifically for homeschool students and their families. The program offers hands-on humane education experiences at both the shelter and the farm, emphasizing compassion, an understanding of animal needs, and responsible care. Developed in collaboration with Lollypop's Farm & Equine team, the pilot is intended

to serve as a foundation for expanded programming in 2026 and beyond.

**After School at the Boys & Girls Club of Rochester** involves monthly humane education sessions integrated into the Club's existing enrichment and literacy programming. We offer animal-themed "read-alouds" with discussions about empathy and safe animal interactions.

*Lollypop Farm book giveaway at School 19 for Parent Open House.*



Ambassador animals or therapy dogs may join us as a motivational and calming element.

**Animal Tales Storytime at Lollypop Farm and Tilly's Place** is an early literacy story time focused on kindness, empathy, and understanding animals. We provide simple reading engagement and follow-up activities for young children. At Tilly's Place, children may also read to therapy dogs, which builds confidence in a quiet environment and extends humane education into a community partner space.

**Veterans Outreach Center Partnership** features small-group sessions for veterans that include humane education and interaction with ambassador animals. Our educators emphasize reading animal body language, calm handling, and building mutual trust. Staff have observed reduced stress, increased engagement, and positive moods among participants.

**Shelter Helpers** is a service-learning program for youth. Participants assist with shelter tasks (enrichment items, adoption materials, light support work) and structured animal interactions. It is designed to reinforce responsibility, empathy, teamwork, and an understanding of shelter operations.

**Scout Programs** are longstanding humane education sessions tailored to badge requirements and various troop age levels. We may include lessons

*Continued on next page*

Photo Credit A. Catholdi



*School 12 Reading Lesson with Lollypop Farm.*


in pet care, safe animal interactions, and advocacy, as well as shelter tours for the scouts. These are often paired with small service projects that support the animals in Lollypop's care.

**Be Kind to Animals Week – In Collaboration with Foodlink (Rochester food pantry)** is a new community outreach event in the planning stages that will combine Foodlink's services with humane education activities. Lollypop will provide take-home materials with kindness-to-animals themes, and an ambassador animal may also be involved. We aim to reach families where they already are seeking services and highlight how caring for people and animals is connected.

**B.A.R.K. – Be Aware Responsible and Kind** is typically offered upon request by community members. It is a dog safety and empathy program centered on recognizing canine body language and teaching how to interpret signs of stress, fear, and comfort in dogs. These sessions emphasize respectful and safe interactions to prevent bites and build understanding.

**ACIP-Animal Crimes Intervention Program (ACIP)** is in collaboration with the Monroe County Office of Probation and with the support of the Monroe County District Attorney's Office. The program was developed by the Animals & Society Institute (ASI) and is designed to make communities safer for animals and

people alike. The program takes place over a ten-week period and focuses on accountability and factors that motivated animal abuse or neglect, including attitudes, beliefs, and other risk factors. ACIP is an intervention tool to prevent future crimes against people and animals. The program requires a group of probationers, who were charged with animal crimes or assigned as part of a plea deal, to attend the in-person group sessions facilitated by a social worker and Lollypop Farm's Humane Education team.

For more info on all of Lollypop Farm's Humane Education programs, check out this link to our website: [www.lollypop.org/programs](http://www.lollypop.org/programs). 

## SHELTER EXTOLS VALUE OF PETS AS EMOTIONAL ANCHORS FOR SURVIVORS



“For many individuals experiencing domestic violence or homelessness, a companion animal is far more than a pet—they are family, comfort, safety, and hope. In moments of crisis, when stability, trust, and security have been shattered, companion animals often provide something profoundly steady: unconditional love.”

That was the advice given by Sandra Solorzano, Director of Safehouse Programs at Empower Yolo, a pet-friendly domestic violence shelter in Woodland, Yolo County, Calif., in a February 26 blog that described

the incredible attachments that survivors of domestic violence and homelessness have with their pets — and how those bonds are weaponized by abusers.

For people experiencing the traumas of domestic violence and the instability that accompanies homelessness, pets can be “emotional anchors,” offering a nonjudgmental presence when

stigma and shame feel overwhelming, the blog continued. Pets’ emotional security is especially important when the survivor’s sense of trust has been deeply damaged.

**“When shelters provide pet-friendly options, barriers fall.”**

— Christine Toedebusch,  
*Empower Yolo*



The blog cited ASPCA, RedRover and Animal Welfare Institute statistics about the barriers that pet ownership can create for domestic violence and homelessness survivors.

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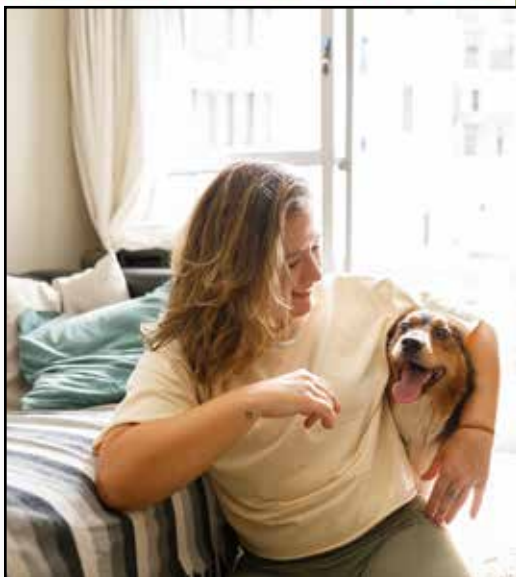
But “when shelters and service organizations provide pet-friendly options or foster partnerships, something powerful happens—barriers fall. Survivors are more likely to seek safety sooner, and families can begin to heal without the added trauma of separation,” added Empower Yolo board member Christine Toedebusch.

Empower Yolo became a pet-friendly shelter in 2018; in 2025, 40 pets stayed with their families in the shelter. The organization also coordinates community pet clinics that reduce other barriers to care.

“Companion animals are not just pets—they are family. And when everything else feels uncertain, that bond offers unconditional love—a powerful source of strength, healing, and hope that helps families move forward together,” the blog concluded. 🐾



Promoting Safe, Healthy & Resilient Communities



## RESOURCE LIST:

Several national organizations publish online resource lists to help provide safety for the pet victims of domestic violence. These include:

- **Sheltering Animals and Families Together (SAF-T)®** —a list of 300 shelters in the U.S. that accept family pets. (Note: all shelters are required to accept Service Animals). It also includes pet-friendly shelters in other countries.
- **DomesticShelters.org** — Enter a ZIP Code or city to locate local shelters, hotlines and assistance organizations. Shelters with both onsite and offsite pet programs are included.
- **Safe Havens for Pets**—The Animal Welfare Institute’s searchable directory of resources for domestic violence survivors and people experiencing homelessness with pets. Agencies listed include those providing pet sheltering, or have a relationship with an entity that does, or that provide referrals to such facilities.
- **BestyBnB** — helps individuals to become pet caregivers who can provide foster care for animals surviving domestic violence.
- **Don’t Forget the Pets** — partners with RedRover to provide training, coaching and construction assistance to help domestic violence and homeless shelters become pet-friendly.
- **The National Link Coalition’s National Directory of Abuse Investigation Agencies** — does not list pet-friendly shelters but maintains a list of who to call to report animal abuse, domestic violence, child abuse, and elder abuse in 6,500 cities and counties in the U.S.

## CHILDREN'S BOOK PRAISES THE COURAGE TO SPEAK UP ABOUT THE LINK

# THE COURAGE TO TELL

by Jacqueline Ford

What happens when one small voice finds the courage to speak? Because sometimes the smallest voice can make the biggest difference. And sometimes the bravest thing a child can do...is to tell their story.

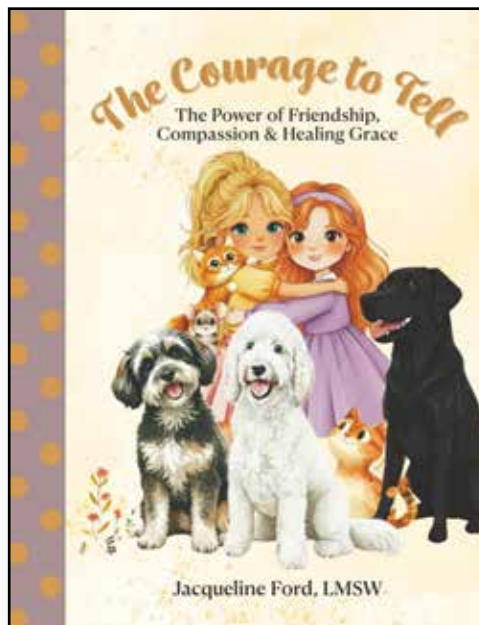
That's the message embedded in a new children's book describing two young girls navigating challenges within their homes, where both child and animal welfare are concerned. Through their friendship, one finds the courage to speak up, and together they reach a trusted adult. From there, compassionate community helpers step in, creating safety and support for both the child and the animal, and helping the family begin to heal.

*The Courage to Tell* is the story of the power of friendship, compassion & healing grace and was written and published by an authority in the field. Jacqueline Ford is an advocate for children, families and animals whose career has been dedicated to strengthening communities and supporting those in need. She holds a bachelor's degree in psychology from Quinnipiac University and a master's degree in social work from Southern Connecticut State University. In addition to her professional work supporting children and families, she serves as an adjunct professor, helping prepare the next generation of human service professionals.

Ford also is the recipient of two national honors for her leadership and advocacy: the 2024 Nexstar Remarkable Woman Award and the 2026 Ujima Award from the National Adoption Association.

"My hope is truly to provide a meaningful resource and help educate communities in a way that is accessible, compassionate, and impactful," Ford tells *The LINK-Letter*.

The book tells the story of Rebecca who loves animals and believes every creature deserves kindness. When a new neighbor named Addie moves in with her dog "Lily," Rebecca begins to notice things others might miss — a chain tied too tight, an empty water bowl, and a friend carrying worries too big for her heart.




As their friendship grows, Addie bravely shares the struggles happening inside her home. With compassion and courage, Rebecca helps her find the strength to tell someone who can help.

Soon, caring adults and community helpers step in, showing that speaking up can bring safety, healing, and hope—not only for Addie, but for Lily too.

*The Courage to Tell* is a tender and powerful story about friendship, bravery, and the caring adults who step forward when children need them most. Through the journey of two brave girls, this book gently reminds children that they are never alone and that telling a trusted adult can lead to help and hope.

Inspired by Ford's lifelong passion for protecting both children and animals, the story also highlights an important truth: when children are unsafe or hurting, animals in the home may be hurting too. By recognizing these connections, communities can respond with compassion and support.

Written with heart and purpose, *The Courage to Tell* is a story for children, families, educators, and community professionals who believe that courage, kindness, and caring adults can change lives. The book is available on Amazon. 



## HOW A GREEK PUPPY SURVIVED NINE DAYS ON A FROZEN MOUNTAIN PEAK

*By Tasos Kokkinidis.*

Reprinted with Permission by *The Greek Reporter*

*Lakmos (Peristeri) mountain, Epirus, Greece*

A young nine-month-old dog named Asproulis (meaning “Whitey”) recently made headlines after surviving a nine-day ordeal in the Greek mountains. The pup, who lives with his owner Christos Zacharis in the village of Haliki, Epirus, vanished after impulsively following a group of French ski mountaineers up the slopes.

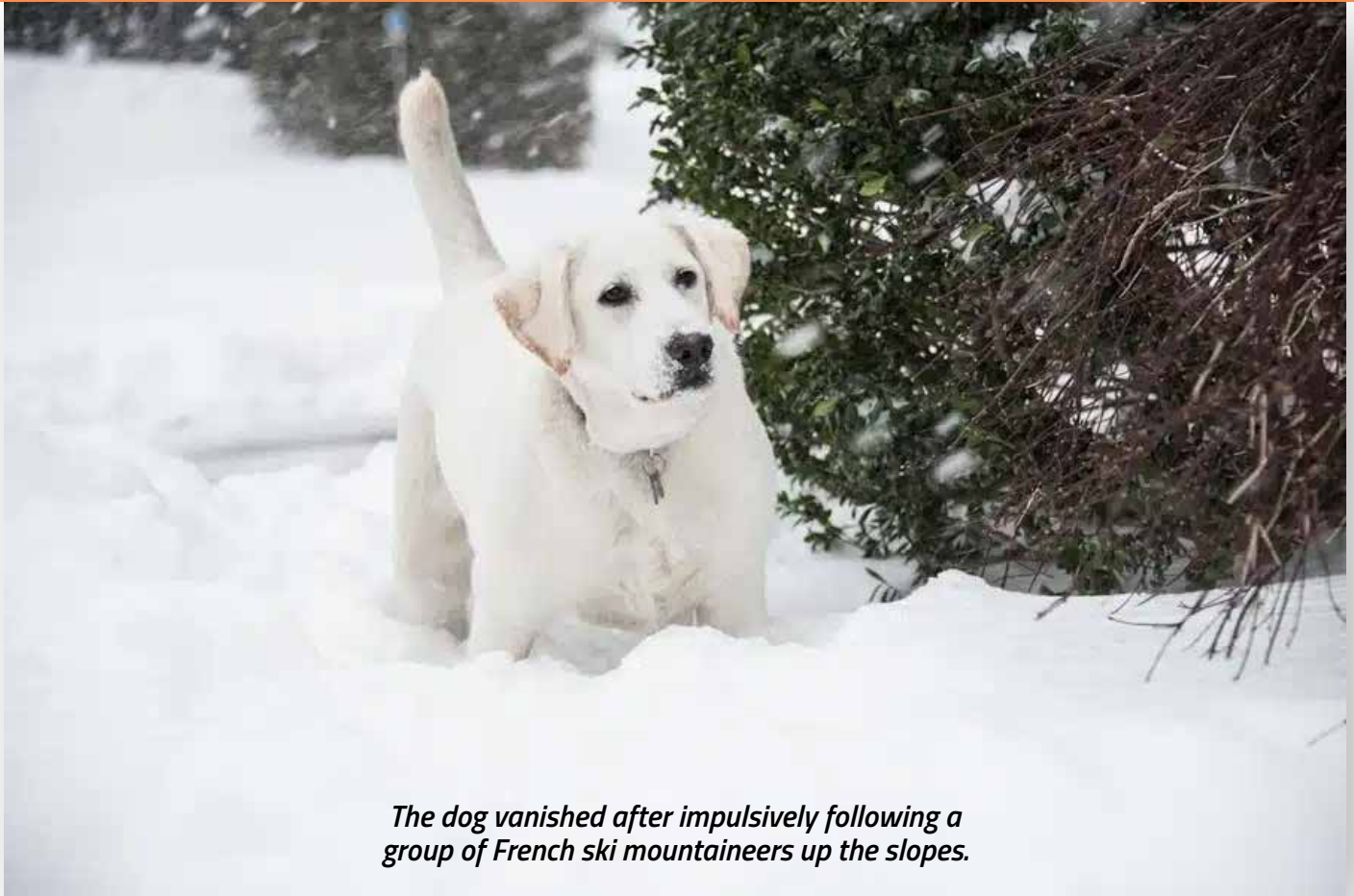
While he managed to follow them to the summit, the dangerous, icy terrain at 1,900 meters (6,200 feet) eventually trapped him, leaving him unable to find his way home.

The search ended in a miracle when a group of Greek climbers heading toward Tsoukarela peak

heard faint cries. Because of his white fur, Asproulis was practically invisible against the snowy backdrop, but his persistent barking led rescuers to him. The team split up, with the most experienced climbers navigating the treacherous terrain to reach the starving animal.

“We were climbing to reach the summit and as we were

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*The dog vanished after impulsively following a group of French ski mountaineers up the slopes.*

going up, we heard some cries. The little dog must have noticed us and seen us first. We hadn't seen him because he's white and blended into the snow, but he was calling for help," Marina Koraki, a member of the climbing team that rescued Asproulis, told Proto Thema (a Greek newspaper).

**DOG THANKS RESCUERS FOR SAVING HIM FROM GREEK MOUNTAINS**

By the time he was found, Asproulis was so emaciated that his collar hung loosely around his neck. After being fed and safely escorted down the mountain—a journey that took several hours—the dog was reunited with a grateful Zacharis. The rescuers noted that the pup seemed to thank

each of them individually before returning home to finally rest on his favorite sofa.

"When the dog came down with us, he went to each one of us as if to say thank you. He was almost crying," said Koraki.



*Aspropotamos valley, a start for a path up to the Tsoukarela peak*

Zacharis explained that the distance from where Asproulis was found takes about 3.5 hours to get to, and the highest peak there is approximately 2,200 meters (over

7,200 ft). Behind the peak, there is a cliff which must have spooked the pup, Zacharis added. 🐶



[\*Click to play actual YouTube footage.\*](#)

# SHARE YOUR KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCES



## THE LATHAM LETTER AUTHOR GUIDELINES

The Latham Foundation for the Promotion of Humane Education has proudly published *The Latham Letter* for more than 40 years. We welcome thoughtful, engaging submissions that advance humane education, discuss current animal issues, and explore the human-animal bond.

### What We're Looking For

Articles that will appeal to *The Latham Letter's* diverse readership:

- Animal welfare and humane educators.
- Those interested in the human-animal bond.
- Veterinarians, vet-techs and caregivers.
- University students and researchers.
- Doctors and providers of animal-assisted activities or therapeutics.
- Social service professionals and those interested in the connection between animal abuse and other forms of violence (The LINK).

### Submission Requirements

- Submissions should be approximately 500 to 2,000 words.
- E-mail with an attached .PDF or .docx file
- A cover letter should include the author's name, address, phone number, and e-mail addresses for the corresponding (submitting) author.
- Published authors will be expected to sign a release form giving permission to allow The Latham Foundation to digitally publish and promote their manuscript and provided photos and/or artwork in *The Latham Letter*.
- *The Latham Letters* appear in their entirety as .PDF files on the Foundation's website: [www.latham.org/latham-letters/](http://www.latham.org/latham-letters/)

### Images and Graphics

- Photographs, tables, charts, and other related graphics such as an organization's logo should be in high resolution .jpg format.
- Along with photographs, please include credit and captions.
- Indicate that you have permission for all third party's material that you submit, including photography, appearance releases, as well as child guardian permissions.

### Author Bio

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

### Review and Editing Process

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

### Extras

- An exemplary submission: "The Animal Connection" By César Díaz [Winter Issue 2026, Page 9](#).
- To subscribe, sign up on our website: [www.latham.org](http://www.latham.org).

Send queries or manuscripts to:

Tula Asselanis, Co-Editor and Creative Director  
of *The Latham Letter* [editor@latham.org](mailto:editor@latham.org)

# BACKSIDE: THE UNSEEN HANDS OF HORSERACING

*A COMPELLING DOCUMENTARY ON THE HUMAN-ANIMAL BOND BEAUTIFULLY TOLD BY THE RACE HORSES AND THE LATINX WORKERS WHO TAKE CARE OF THEM ON THE BACKSIDE OF THE RACE TRACKS*

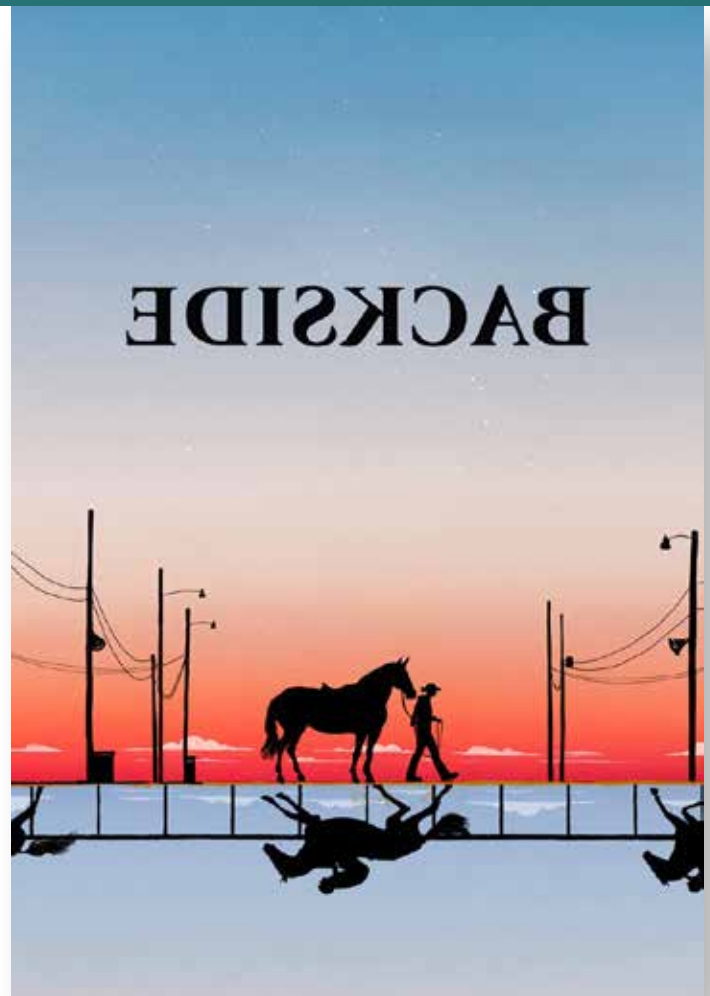
At his dining room table, an older man eats breakfast at two in the morning before heading to work as his wife looks on. Outside, thunder beckons the arrival of a storm that will envelop the Churchill Downs barns in Louisville, Kentucky. Churchill Downs is known as the site of the renowned Kentucky Derby, but for a migrant community of Latine workers, it's first and foremost their place of employment where they look after the prized racehorses seven days a week. Their hours grooming, feeding and calming rambunctious horses are long but



throughout it all, they foster a deep connection with the treasured animals that they care for. Their

work in the stables runs parallel with their hopes and aspirations for their future life in America.

Raúl O. Paz Pastrana's *Backside* is a beautifully crafted choral portrait of the unsung and unseen migrant workers who demonstrate quiet strength in their hard-earned, resilient labor. Over the span of a racing season, Pastrana's sensorial and inquisitive filmmaking scrutinizes the palpable social divisions in this environment, all while foregrounding the dignity and dedication of the workers and the interdependence between human and animal labor.—Jose Rodriguez



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Premiered on Independent Lens April 13, 2026

Directed by Raúl O. Paz-Pastrana

Behind the Kentucky Derby's glamour, unseen workers keep racing's biggest stage running.

Tribeca 2026 Film Festival June 3 - 14

Backside

Feature | United States | 85 MINUTES | English, Spanish | English subtitles Documentary, Latinx/Latin American 🇺🇸



## FAMOUS PETS

### HOW MANY DOGS HAVE A HIT SONG NAMED AFTER THEM?

Martha was Paul McCartney's beloved Old English Sheepdog, acquired in 1966 shortly after he moved to his Cavendish Avenue home. She was his first pet and served as a calming, affectionate companion during the peak of Beatlemania.

Martha was a constant presence during the late 60s, often appearing in photos with Paul during the recording of the White Album. She lived for 15 years,

passing away in 1981 at his Scottish farm. Martha inspired the 1968 Beatles song "*Martha My Dear*".

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zM8Qz77cnbU> 



## THE LATHAM STEPS

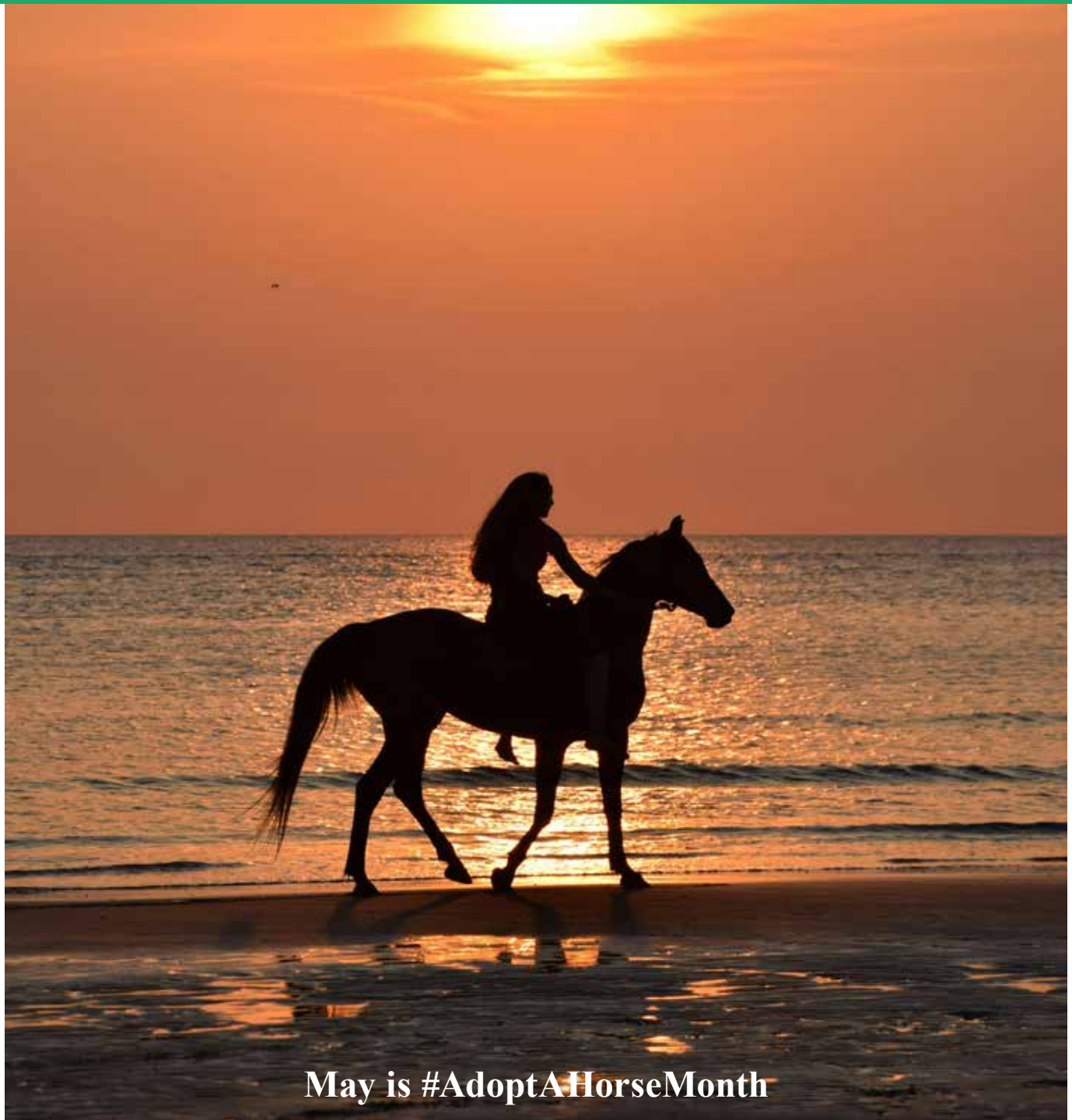
We would love to know your thoughts on this issue's articles. If you would like to share your own anecdote, story, photo, or artwork relating to one of the Latham Steps to Humane Education, we would love to see it (and possibly publish it in *The Latham Letter!*) [Editor@latham.org](mailto:Editor@latham.org)



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May is #AdoptAHorseMonth



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