HEART Wins 2018 Excellence Award from Humane Education Coalition

We are excited to share that HEART is the recipient of the 2018 Excellence in Humane Education Award, which recognizes the outstanding commitment and achievements of our entire team in “advancing humane education in innovative and extraordinary ways.” The Award was announced on September 5, 2018 by the Humane Education Coalition, an international alliance which bestows the annual award to “honor a distinguished organization that has made a significant contribution to the field of humane education.” It is especially rewarding to receive this honor from an organization that we respect and admire for their own exceptional commitment in the field of humane education.

New Educational Resource Guide

HEART and Peace Learning Center published the Justice for All resource guide for secondary school educators to teach youth about social responsibility. This 18 lesson guide will help educators, in both traditional and non-traditional settings, empower youth to gain a deeper understanding of pressing contemporary issues that impact us and confront them using empathy, critical thought, and innovation.

Our previous K-5 Justice for All guide, with 31 lessons, and our K-12 Humane Education resource guide, with 40 animal protection lessons, have now been viewed by over 30,000 educators in more than 30 countries and over 40 states. Download all three guides for free today from our website. Check out all our resources at teachheart.org/library

Our next resource guide project will focus on farm animal agriculture. There is a void in available educational resources that teach about its impact on animals, our environment, and human health in an age-appropriate way for elementary school students. This project will fill that need and give teachers a valuable tool for educating youth about the realities of our current food system as it relates to animal agriculture.
Nine New Lessons to be Added to Nearpod

Last year we teamed up with Nearpod to provide digital classroom tools that enable teachers to engage students in learning with standards-aligned, interactive lessons. Nearpod is a popular student-facing platform with a user base of over 100,000 teachers in 10,000 schools nationwide. We have been adapting our lessons for this presentation platform where the teacher’s screen is mirrored on the student’s screen. The presentations contain polls, videos, images, drawing boards, web content and more, allowing youth to interact with the media during this process. HEART’s Nearpod units feature a variety of animal protection, social justice, and environmental conservation topics. We have published 5 lessons with over 16,000 views. In a major expansion of this partnership, we are in the process of adding 9 new lessons and, with the combined listing of 14 lessons, teachers will have access to a broad array of topics covered in our programs.

NYC Compassionate Communities Award

HEART completed a successful year-long Compassionate Communities Award Contest in collaboration with the NYC Mayor’s Office and the NYC Department of Education. The competition engaged all of the elementary schools in Bronx District 8 in an innovative program designed to share humane education practices and resources that inspire respect, empathy, and social action. HEART served as a resource, providing support to these schools as they incorporated humane education into their classes, after school programs, parent engagement projects, and schoolwide initiatives. The goal of this project was to demonstrate how we could take a district-wide approach to inspiring schools to infuse humane education into their school culture and effectively reach a large number of students. The contest engaged 21 elementary schools with a total of 14,380 students in PreK-5.

Five finalists presented their activities and accomplishments in a celebration and awards ceremony at City Hall in June. An esteemed panel of judges, including leaders from the Mayor’s office and NYC DOE, presented the winning school with a $10,000 award from HEART. The other 4 finalists received $500. Two of our finalists had the goal of creating community gardens on their properties, another focused on the needs of companion animals and conducted a very successful drive that raised money for a local animal shelter support organization, and a fourth finalist incorporated the Tribes social-emotional development curriculum. The winning school, PS 333, presented to the judges a range of learning experiences that engaged students from many grades, focusing on fostering social-emotional skills through empathy for our animal neighbors. The prize money will help fund projects that align with the school’s goals in the competition and address meaningful needs in their wider community.

We’re planning to take our experience with this pilot program and extend our circle of compassionate communities to other schools and districts, starting with Long Island in 2019!
Launch of HEART Network

In January 2019 we are launching a free network of support to animal protection organizations, shelters, animal adoption centers, rescue groups, and sanctuaries for their community outreach and education programs. The HEART Network will provide effective and engaging tools, tips, and activities to deliver high-quality humane education programs for youth of all ages. Benefits will include:

- Access to customized resources from our library of more than 100 free lessons, activities, games and videos created by our experienced team of professional humane educators
- A monthly bulletin with special themes, tips, tools, ideas and inspiration to support outreach programs
- Online training and e-learning modules available on-demand and tailored to the needs of Network members

Join our Network at teachheart.org/network

Classroom Snapshots

1. Over 100 students in HEART’s summer and after school programs in Chicago learned about the problem of animal homelessness. They made toys and kitty forts for animals living at local shelters.

2. Summer campers took part in a unit about farm animals, learning about the conditions on factory farms and the emotional lives of cows, pigs, and chickens. Middle school students wrote open letters explaining their opinions about a possible change to animal protection laws in California and elementary students made enrichment toys for rescued chickens.

3. Over 400 students in HEART’s in-school programs wrote letters to politicians about oppressive child labor. Students at one school even received personally addressed responses from Chicago’s Mayor Rahm Emanuel.

4. At Climate Camp 2018, we spent two weeks learning, exploring, and connecting with youth from all over the state of Indiana. Highlights included taking public transportation, meeting local sustainability experts, and eating delicious local and plant-based foods to learn and experience ways to mitigate climate change. Campers also strategized additional meaningful solutions to our climate crisis. It culminated with a youth-led rally, attended by Mayor Joe Hogsett, showcasing the importance of this issue.

5. Students in Sun Prairie, WI worked on a service learning project called A HEART that CARES Fair, performing in-depth research on a humane education topic of their choosing and creating multi-media and oral presentations of their work for parents, peers, siblings, teachers, and members of the community.
HEART has a mission to develop a generation of compassionate youth who create positive change for animals, people, and the natural world. HEART’s Senior Program Director, Kim Korona, will be a speaker at Veganfest!

HEART relies on the generosity of individuals like YOU

Please support our work by making an online contribution at teachheart.org/donate, or mail your donation to HEART, P.O. Box 738, Mamaroneck, NY 10543. All gifts are enormously appreciated! For more information on HEART, contact Meena Alagappan, Executive Director, at meena@teachheart.org, 212-744-2504, or Kim Korona, Senior Program Director, at kim@teachheart.org, 313-282-7597.

Speaker & Vendor Highlight

Kim Korona, HEART
Des Moines VeganFest 2018
March 24 11AM-5PM Valley Community Center

Teacher Training

We were fortunate to meet so many dedicated educators this past year. These were just some of our teacher training activities:

As a NYC Department of Education partner, we offered an online 36-hour professional development course: Promoting Success in Science and Literacy through Humane Education. This credit-bearing course qualified participating NYC teachers toward a salary differential.

In Chicago we conducted credit-bearing professional development workshops through WITS (Working in the Schools) and the Rochelle Lee Teacher Award Summer Institute on Increasing Engagement by Teaching About Animals and Environmental Education Tools for Teachers.

At the Iowa Veganfest in Des Moines, we presented on using effective humane education strategies to create a more just, compassionate, and sustainable food system.

We offered a credit-bearing workshop, Improving Literacy through Humane Education, at Western Kentucky University in Bowling Green that was promoted by the Kentucky Department of Education.

We expanded our public service project with the American Bar Association to Nashville, training attorneys to teach an animal protection curriculum to elementary students.

Webinar Series

We continued offering our bimonthly webinars and we now have a robust library of free webinars archived on our website, allowing users access to these professional development resources at their own convenience. Some of our recent topics include: A Holistic Approach to Teaching, Fostering Empathy for Animal Companions, The Role of the Adult in Youth-Led Action, Digital Resources to Teach Compassion and Critical Thinking, and Promoting Social Responsibility for Middle and High School Students.

Transformative Learning Alliance

We recently formed the “Transformative Learning Alliance” in partnership with Peace Learning Center and Tribes Learning Community. This alliance is currently working on an innovative collaborative project called Everyday Circles, developing a deck of humane education and Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) activity cards for each day of the school year. The circle, which is a gathering of students for intentional community building and problem solving, becomes part of a short daily practice in the classroom. Most of these activities are student-led and provide a wonderful opportunity for youth to find and use their voices in positive ways. HEART sees great potential to add animal protection content to SEL programs.