Speak Up For Animals!

An Action Guide for Kids Who Care

The Humane Society of the United States
At The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), I work with a team of people dedicated to protecting all animals. Together, we celebrate the bond between humans and animals. Together, we fight animal cruelty and abuse in all of its forms.

When people imagine helping animals, their first thoughts are usually about their pets or backyard birds. But millions of animals in other situations need a hand, too. Life is tough on tigers and elephants in circuses. It is hard on cows, pigs and chickens in big, factory-style farms. The HSUS’s mission is to protect animals in every corner of the world.

Over the years, we’ve had huge victories for animals. Some of them are because of the work of young people like you. For example, kids played a major role in passing a federal law to protect wild horses and burros and in the campaign to save dolphins from tuna nets in the 1990s.

While we’re proud of what we’ve accomplished, there is still more work to do. We hope you’ll help us be a voice for animals. This booklet will guide you. You’ll learn how to get other young people interested in helping animals. You’ll also learn the basics of spreading the word in your community, raising funds for animals, and lobbying (asking lawmakers to give their support.)

If you haven’t already, I invite you to join our Mission: Humane program at www.kindnews.org. As a member, you’ll be part of a nationwide group of kids working to help all animals—from hounds to hens—where they need it most. We know that one child can make a difference for animals. Imagine how many young people working together will do!

Sincerely,

Wayne Pacelle
President & Chief Executive Officer of The Humane Society of the United States

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One person can do a lot for animals. So why start a club? That's simple. When people work as a team, they can accomplish more. Here's why:

- A group has more people to make calls, write letters and hand out fliers.

- Trying to solve problems by yourself can be hard. When you're part of a club, you get support from other club members.

- A group of people gets more attention than a single person. People notice when a group comes together to support an important cause. School officials, lawmakers, and other leaders are more likely to listen to the voice of a group.

- Members of a club have different skills and talents. If you love art, you could design animal protection posters. One member who likes to write could send letters to newspapers. Other club members might be good speakers, researchers, or organizers.
There may be young people at your school or in your neighborhood who want to help animals too. Schools, churches, and community centers are great places to form clubs.

Follow these steps to get your club off and running!

**Step 1: Talk to Your Friends**
Tell them your ideas for club goals. Do you want to raise money to help homeless pets? Work to stop animal cruelty in your community? Maybe you want to get the word out about the suffering of animals in factory farms.

Remember, some kids may not know as much about animals as you do. Or they may not share your point of view. Listen to what others have to say.

**Step 2: Find an Advisor**
An adult advisor can help you organize and run your club. Discuss your club’s goals and share this guide with an adult interested in helping. Your teacher(s) are a good place to start. If you don’t have luck getting a club started at school, don’t give up. Ask a parent, church leader, or other trusted adult in your community. Call your local animal organization(s) to see if they have a youth club. If they don't, tell staff members that you are interested in starting one. There may be someone who can work with you.

**Step 3: It’s All in the Details**
Your advisor will find a place where you can hold club meetings. You
can help decide on a time, date and what you’ll cover at your club’s first meeting. Make sure you have an agenda or plan for your meeting. A good way to start is to introduce members to one another and discuss the goals of the group.

**Step 4: Help Spread the Word**

Make fliers advertising the club’s first meeting. Include a photo or artwork to grab people’s attention. Make sure the flier includes the date, time, and location of the meeting. Include some of the goals that your club hopes to accomplish. (Visit www.kindnews.org to make a flier online.) Then help post the fliers in your community. Good spots are at school, libraries, community centers, and supermarkets. Just make sure you
have permission before putting up a flier. You can also ask your local newspaper to include an announcement in their community events section. Call the newspaper or go on their Web site. Be prepared to give the information outlined in your flier.

If your club will meet at school, ask to use your school's P.A. or closed-circuit television system to make announcements. Write down what you want to say so you won't forget important details. Speak slowly and clearly. Keep your tone upbeat and inviting. Be sure to say that everyone is welcome to join.

**Step 5: Your First Meeting**
Your club's first meeting will be exciting. Everyone who attends will have something in common—a love of animals. This is a chance for you and your advisor to welcome members.

- **Animal Allies.** Have your advisor explain why you decided to form the club and what you hope to accomplish. Discuss a few problems facing animals and why they need help. Your advisor can explain some of these issues. Good sources of information are [www.kindnews.org](http://www.kindnews.org), [www.humaneteen.org](http://www.humaneteen.org), and [www.humanesociety.org](http://www.humanesociety.org).

- **Keep a List.** Collect the names of everyone at your meeting. It will become your club's membership list. Include space for club members to write their name, e-mail address and other contact info, and an area of interest (for example, art, homeless pets).

- **The Name Game.** Choosing a name for your club is a fun first task. Ask members for suggestions—then vote on it.

- **Logos are Lovely.** Your club may decide to have a logo—a picture or design to go with your club name. If so, your advisor may ask members to put their ideas on paper and bring
them to your next meeting.

**Operation: Organization.**
Your advisor may decide it will help to have club officers—a president, vice president, treasurer, and/or secretary. These are club members who help lead the group and organize activities. The second meeting is a good time for members to vote for club officers. Your advisor might also ask a different officer to lead each meeting so all can play an active role.

**Decide How Often You Will Meet.** Keep in mind that members will be busy with other activities during the school year. If your group schedules meetings too often, there may only be a small turnout at each one. If you don't schedule enough meetings, members may lose interest.

**Step 6: Take Action**
There are a lot of things your new club can do to help animals. You will have the greatest effect when you work on one at a time. Consider joining the *Mission: Humane* program. It includes step-by-step projects to help animals where they need it most. The next sections of this guide will help you complete them. When you do, we'll send you fun stuff as a reward! Visit [www.kindnews.org](http://www.kindnews.org) to sign up and get going!

**Step 7: Recruit**
As your club moves forward, you'll gain and lose members. In all that you do, think about getting new members. Bring sign-up sheets to all events and keep getting the word out about your meetings with fliers.
Pass it on

One of the most important things your club can do is teach others about the problems facing animals. When you're sharing information, remember to be friendly and give ideas for how others can help. Here are a few ways you can spread the word:

- **Fliers are Your Friends.** Hand out fliers or brochures on different animal protection issues during lunch or other free time. Request materials or make a flier online at [www.kindnews.org](http://www.kindnews.org). Create a bulletin board display with this information. Make sure you have school permission.

  You can also post fliers at stores, veterinary clinics, libraries, community centers, and other public places. You may even want to hand out information or set up a display table in a shopping area, library, or community center, or at an event such as a concert or fair. Your advisor can help you get the permission you need. When you go out into the community, be sure to do so with a trusted adult for safety.

- **Ask the Experts.** Ask your teacher or principal to invite someone from a local humane society or other animal group to speak at a school assembly.

- **Write on!** If your school has a newspaper, write articles on the animal topics that are important to you. Suggest ways others can get involved.

- **A Day to Remember.** Organize an animal protection awareness day at your school. Ask your principal or cafeteria manager to serve vegetarian food that day. Even if it is for one day, it will get students thinking!
Petition, Please. A petition (a list of signatures of people who support something) is a great way to spread the word and get help from others. Ask classmates to sign a petition to have a vegetarian meal served every day.

Be a Party Animal! Throw an animal awareness party at your school, community center, or other public place. Think about showing an educational video. (The HSUS offers videos on a variety of issues—visit www.humanesociety.org and type “video” and other key words in the search box.) You might also serve vegetarian refreshments.

Get Hopping! Host an Easter egg hunt and inside plastic eggs, place tips to help animals. Need some suggestions? Try “Only chocolate bunnies belong in an Easter basket,” or “Save millions of lives—spay and neuter.”


Letters to the Editor
Writing to the editor of your local newspaper is a great way to get the word out in your community on issues that concern you. Here are some tips for letter writing:

Do Your Homework. Before writing, find out your newspaper’s rules on submitting a letter. These can often be found on the newspaper’s Web site, usually under the opinion section.

Start off on the Right Foot. The first sentence sets the tone. So open your letter with a strong statement.
Kids in Action!

Tim Eisemann was in sixth grade when he babysat eggs for his classroom’s bird-hatching project. When the eggs finally cracked open, he marveled as four tiny ducklings wobbled out and made their way into the world. When the project ended, Tim asked his teacher what would become of their classroom ducklings. He and his friends were shocked to learn that the birds would not live out their lives on a farm. Instead, they would be killed and turned into animal feed and fertilizer.

Determined not to let that happen, Tim sent thousands of e-mails pleading for help. He got 100 phone calls—and an offer he couldn’t refuse. An animal shelter agreed to give the birds a good home. Tim showed up at Angel’s Gate not with four ducklings, but 22. “He called every class at school that had hatched chicks,” said shelter director Susan Marino. “He wanted to save them all.” Now, his school in Babylon, N.Y.—and three other New York school districts—no longer hatch ducklings.
**Keep it Short.** Some newspapers restrict the length of the letter they will consider for publication, so aim for 250 words or less.

**Don't Wait.** If an article on an animal issue appears in your newspaper, respond fast! It’s best to submit your letter the same day the article runs (this can be done through e-mail).

**Be Nice.** It is fine to disagree with something you’ve read in the paper. But always be polite about it. Be sure to include the title of the article you’re disagreeing with and the date it appeared. This will help readers who may not have read it.

**Get the Facts.** It’s helpful to include numbers and other facts about the issue at hand. Make sure you double check them before submitting your letter. (Example: 28,000 animals instead of 2,800.)

**Get a Second Opinion.** Have an adult read your letter before you submit it. By doing this, you can make sure your letter is clear and makes sense.

**Sign off.** Be sure to include your name, address, and phone number. Editors will often call to make sure that you—and not someone else—wrote the letter.
Kids in Action!

Ten-year-old Autumn Faucher was watching TV when she caught the heartbreaking story of Beau. A Masai giraffe at Massachusetts’ Franklin Park Zoo, Beau was dying. He had an incurable disease that was causing him to starve. Already he was 300 pounds underweight. To survive, Beau would need 50 pounds of leaves, branches, and veggies a day. In the winter, food would have to be shipped to Massachusetts from warm climates. Beau’s diet would cost a whopping $50,000 a year. Autumn thought hard—and fast—about how she could save the ailing giant’s life. During recess, Autumn collected empty soda cans and coins. She set aside birthday money and Christmas checks. She stuck a donation can on the counter at her parents’ convenience store and organized a carnival to benefit Beau. Before long, she raised $6,000 to pay for his food.
Space out Your Letters. If you’ve recently had a letter published, wait before sending another. For most papers, the rule is one published letter per month. Check with your paper to find out its policy.

Don’t Give Up. Not every letter you write will be printed. If your letter is not published, don't be discouraged—try again.

Want even more tips for writing to newspapers? Go online to www.humanesociety.org and type “Tips for letters to the editor” in the search box.

Have Fun, Raise Funds

You or your club can accomplish a great deal with little money. But you may decide that an animal protection charity you want to help is in need of funds. Or, you may find that money is needed to support one of your club’s own activities. If so, try one of the ideas below. Ask a club advisor or other adult for help in organizing your fund-raiser.

Pick a product to sell. Gift wrap, spring bulbs, and chocolate bars are popular fund-raising items. Ask your advisor if he or she knows of any companies that sell fund-raising items.
Kids in Action!

Francesca Lanfranchi began volunteering at her local animal shelter when she was seven years old. But as a fifth grader, she decided it was time to do more. She created a fund-raiser to raise money for the shelter in New Jersey. Francesca’s “Strut for Mutts” event raised $5,873 for animals!
Host a car wash, dog wash, bottle drive, or tag sale.

If you love dogs, consider starting a dog walking service in your neighborhood. Serve only trusted neighbors and work with a friend or family member.

Hold a raffle at school or with a local animal organization.

Ask a local store to donate prizes. Any money raised can go to your club!

Create an “Animal Lovers Quilt.” Have your advisor ask a local craft store if they could donate fabric. Your advisor can cut the fabric into squares. Club members can decorate the squares with ways to be kind to animals. Then the squares can be sewn together into a quilt. Raffle the quilt off.

Organize a sports event, such as a walk or run for animals or a student/faculty softball or basketball game. Athletes can find sponsors willing to donate a certain amount of money per mile covered or points scored.

Hold a “Coins for Critters” or “Pennies for Pets” collection. Decorate collection canisters and ask students to donate their spare change. You can also place canisters at local businesses to encourage community support.

Host a *Mardi-Paw* bake sale. Ask friends and family to donate baked treats—for people and dogs. Sell them on Mardi Gras in February at your school or community event. Is February too far away? Consider hosting a *Barkery*—a bakery just for dogs!
Kids in Action!

Students at Joseph Caruso School in Keansburg, New Jersey decided to host a barkery. All the money raised would go to help shelter animals. The kids asked their parents to donate ingredients to make homebaked goods. The class whipped up the goodies and sold them at school. The money they raised went to the Monmouth County SPCA. But that’s not all. The kids decided to open a restaurant to serve lunch to staff members at the school. Another success! In total, they raised nearly $400 for the animals!

Have a read-a-thon. Ask friends and family to donate money for each animal-related book a student reads. This is a great idea for summer break!

Ask your advisor to help your club sponsor an art contest with an animal theme. Your advisor can contact a local art gallery in your community. They may donate space. Ask students and community artists to enter photos, paintings and other artwork at a certain dollar amount per entry. Ask the artists if they would be willing to sell their work and donate the money to help animals.

Ask club members and your advisor to go caroling during the holiday season. Have one person hold a sign that asks for tips that will go to your cause.
Hold an event to raise awareness and funds by charging admission. (Your advisor may need to get special permission). Here are some ideas to get you started:

- Host a vegetarian or vegan supper for students, parents, and faculty in your school's cafeteria.

- Throw a costume ball or a “Howl-o-ween” event for animals.

- Ask your advisor how your club can sponsor a student-teacher talent show. You might be surprised by talents you didn’t know existed!
Kids in Action!

Michael Valdez was 8 years old when he started Protect Police K-9. His idea? That every police dog be protected with bullet-proof vests. He held fundraisers, wrote letters and made speeches asking for donations. After a year and a half of hard work, he raised enough money to buy bullet-proof vests for every police dog in his hometown of Tucson, Arizona. But he didn’t stop there! Michael raised money so all police dogs in Arizona would be protected, too. He’s also working with Arizona state lawmakers to pass a law for tougher penalties for harming or killing police dogs.
Love Your Lawmakers

Decisions affecting animals are made all the time by our elected officials. Senators and representatives pass laws that protect pets, wildlife, farm animals, and animals used in research. The job of these officials is to be a voice for the people they represent.

To get your lawmakers to vote in favor of animals, you must tell them what you think. This section will help you get your opinions across. Your voice counts!

Contacting an elected official may seem scary. But it’s their job to be there for the public. Keep these tips in mind when you make contact:

- **Introduce Yourself.** Give your full name. If you are part of a club or other organization, include that as well.

- **Be Clear.** If you are asking an official to support or oppose a bill (an idea before it becomes a law), give the number and title of the bill. Ask him or her to support or oppose it.

- **Personalize it.** Explain why the issue is important to you, your family, and your community. This has more impact than saying, “I oppose this because it’s wrong.” Knowing as much as you can about animal issues will always help.

Kids in Action!

Jenifer Graham was just a kid when she proposed a bill that became a law in her state. Jenifer thought it was unfair that frogs were killed so that high-school students could learn about frog’s bodies. Her law allows California students to choose science projects that don’t harm animals.
We hope this booklet has inspired you to help animals. If you have any questions or need more information, we’re here for you! We also want to hear about what you have done—we may feature you in KIND News or at www.kindnews.org! Just e-mail us at kids@humanesociety.org or call us at (860) 434-8666.

Curious about what animals are represented throughout our guide? Take a closer look at the feathers, fur and skin and write your guess in the blanks. One is already filled in for you.

Visit www.kindnews.org to see if you guessed right!

The Dirt on Dissection
Do you have a problem with dissecting animals at school? The HSUS's Humane Education Loan Program (HELP) offers models, computer programs, and other alternatives. Learn more at www.humanesociety.org/dissection_alternatives or by e-mailing arl@hsus.org today!

Also, Student Choice Law allows students access to alternatives without being punished in class. Want to learn more and find out if your state has this law? Log on to www.humanesociety.org and type in “Student Choice in Your State” in the search box.

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