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, and we fight animal cruelty and abuse in all of its forms.

Over the years, we’ve had great success for animals. Some of that success has been a result of the efforts of young people like you. For example, young people played a major role in the passage of a federal law to protect America’s wild horses and burros and in a campaign to protect dolphins from being caught in tuna fishing nets. While we’re proud of our successes, there is still much work to do. We hope you’ll come aboard and help us be a voice for animals.

I joined the animal protection movement at a young age myself. In my freshman year at Yale University, I spoke out about the cruelty involved in the fur industry, hunting, and animal research. By my sophomore year, I decided to go vegetarian after I learned about the cruelty associated with factory farms. I’m proud to say I was even able to get vegan meals offered in Yale dining halls. I also formed the Student Animal Rights Coalition, a group of concerned students who protested the fur industry, sport hunting, and needless experiments on animals.

If you’re interested in helping to make this a better world for animals, this booklet will guide you. You’ll learn the basics of starting an animal protection club as well as raising public awareness and funds. You’ll also learn about lobbying – one of the most effective ways of making change for animals.

If you haven’t already, I invite you to join our Mission: Humane program at humanesociety.org/teens. As a member, you’ll be part of a nationwide group of teens working to help animals where they need it most. By working together, we have one strong voice. Let’s make it heard, loud and clear!

Sincerely,

Wayne Pacelle

Wayne Pacelle
President & Chief Executive Officer of
The Humane Society of the United States
One person can do a lot for animals. So what’s the point of starting 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, hand out fliers and get the word out on important issues.

Trying to solve problems by yourself can be difficult and frustrating. But when you’re part of a club, you get support and encouragement from other club members.

A group of people speaking with one voice often has more influence than a single person. People sit up and take notice when many people come together to support an important cause. Lawmakers, school officials, and other leaders and decision-makers are more likely to listen to the collective voice of a group.

A club taps the wide range of skills and talents of its members. If you love art, you could design animal protection posters. If a member has a way with words, he or she could write public service announcements or letters to newspaper editors. Other club members might be good speakers, researchers or organizers. Your projects will be successful because of the efforts, experiences and creativity of all your club’s members.
There may be people in your school or neighborhood who want to help animals, too. Schools, churches, and community centers are great places to form clubs. Here are the 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 get the word out about factory farming? Maybe you want to fund-raise to help local animals in need. Or you might want to help lobby for animal-friendly legislation.

Remember, some people may not know as much about animal protection issues as you do. Or they may not share your point of view. Be receptive and open-minded about what others have to say.

**Step 2: Find an Advisor**

An adult advisor will have experience and connections in the community to help your group take off. Most schools require that student clubs have an advisor — usually a school faculty member. Do you know a teacher who’s interested in animal protection? New teachers may also be willing to take on a new group.

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 if she or he would be willing to help. Call your local animal organizations to see if they have youth clubs in place. If they don’t, tell staff members that you are interested in forming one. There may be someone on staff who can help you.

Discuss your club’s goals and strategies with your potential advisor. He or she will want to get a general idea about your interests and plans.
Step 3: It’s All in the Details
Find a place where you can hold club meetings. Your advisor may be able to help you with this. Decide on a time and date for your club’s first meeting. Try to avoid days or time slots of other popular extracurriculars. Plan what you are going to cover in your first meeting. (See Step 5 for ideas for the agenda.)

Step 4: Spread the Word
Make fliers or put a notice in the school newspaper about the club’s first meeting. (You can make a flier online at humansociety.org/teens.) Include a photo or artwork to grab people’s attention. Make sure the flier or notice includes the date, time, and location of the meeting. List some of the goals your club hopes to accomplish.

Another way to get the word out about club meetings is to ask your local newspaper to include an announcement. Call the paper or visit their Web site. Ask or look for a community events section. Be prepared to share the information in your flier with them.

If your club will meet at school, ask to use your school’s P.A. or closed-
circuit television system to make announcements. Jot down a few notes so you won’t forget important details. When reading your announcement, speak slowly and clearly. Keep your tone upbeat and inviting, and emphasize that everyone is welcome to join. In addition, consider collecting e-mail addresses of interested students or making a MySpace.com page for your club. This is another way to keep everyone in the loop.

Step 5: Hold Your First Meeting

The first meeting will set the tone for future activities. This is a chance to welcome potential members and let them know how they can be involved. Tell your group that each member can play a role in the club’s projects and decision-making.

Creating an agenda will help you stay on track at your first meeting. Here’s a list of items you may want to include:

**Animal Allies.** Explain why you decided to form the club and what you hope to accomplish. Talk about current animal protection issues, why action is needed, and what your overall focus will be. Have the group brainstorm a list of issues they consider to be the most important. You may have to bring members up to date on the issues. Consider letting a video do it for you! There are plenty of videos you can use at humanesociety.org.

**Keep a List.** Collect the names of everyone who attends your meeting. It
will be a membership list for your club. Include columns for students to write their name, e-mail address and other contact info and an area of interest or talent.

**The Name Game.** Ask for club name suggestions from new members and jot them on a chalkboard or flipchart. The name should be catchy and reflect the club’s focus. Vote for the best one.

**Logos are Lovely.** If you decide you want a club logo, ask members to submit sample ideas at your next meeting. It should be an illustration that uses your group’s name or appears next to the name.

**Operation: Organization.** Decide how your club will be organized in terms of leadership. Do you want a president, vice president, treasurer, and secretary? If yes, take the time to vote for club officers during the second meeting. If you’d rather have a less formal structure, ask your advisor to take a more active role in managing the club and coordinating activities. You might want to have a different person lead each meeting so all members can play an active role. Depending on the number of people and interests, consider forming committees that work on certain issues.
Tempting Tip. You may want to offer vegetarian or vegan refreshments at the meetings as an incentive to get people to attend. If you do, be sure to mention it as you get the word out!

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 frequently, there may only be a small turnout at each one. If you don’t schedule enough meetings, members may lose enthusiasm for your group. Try to strike the perfect balance.

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 humanesociety.org/teens 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 events, advertise your meetings via fliers and try to grow your membership.
When you get involved in an activity to protect animals, people are going to ask you questions. Having the knowledge to respond to questions will bring respect to your group, and ultimately will make you more effective. So before you plunge into a project, get the facts! Here are some handy sources of animal protection information:

**humanesociety.org/teens.** Our study and activity guides offer a wealth of background information on the major animal protection issues. There’s also news on campaigns, legislation, and other hot topics. You’ll also find advice from other teens who are active for animals.

**The HumaneTeen Action Kit.** If you haven’t already, contact us to request a kit, which includes fact sheets on the major issues.

**HumaneSociety.org.** For even more in-depth information on the issues.

If you can’t find what you need, just ask us by e-mailing teens@humanesociety.org.

Knowing facts and arguments prepares you for any “curve balls” that may be thrown your way. If you are in a situation where you don’t know the answer, be honest. Say you will try to get the information and get back to them later.
You and/or your club will naturally be an animal protection resource for your school and community. One of the most important things you can do is teach others about the problems facing animals. When you’re sharing information, remember to be positive and tell others how they can help. Here are a few ways to spread the word:

**Fliers are Your Friends.** Hand out fliers or brochures on different animal protection issues during lunch or homeroom. (Order materials or make a flier online at [humanesociety.org/teens](http://humanesociety.org/teens).) Include a “How You Can Help” section in your fliers. You can create a bulletin board display with this information. Make sure you have 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 others for safety.
**write On!** Write articles for your school newspaper on topics that are important to you. Suggest ways others can get involved.

**Embrace E-mail.** Send regular announcements or a simple newsletter through e-mail to keep club members and/or interested classmates up-to-date on where action is needed and how they can help. Keep a sign-up sheet to collect e-mail addresses wherever you can.

**A Day to Remember.** Organize an animal-protection awareness day at your school. Encourage students to avoid cruelty and celebrate animals by wearing animal-friendly clothing and eating animal-friendly foods. Ask your principal or cafeteria manager to serve vegetarian/vegan food that day. Even if it is for one day, it will get everyone 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/vegan meal served every day.

**Be a Party Animal!** Throw a party at school, a community center, or other public place. Consider showing an educational video (The HSUS offers them on a variety of issues—visit [humanesociety.org](http://humanesociety.org)). You can also distribute printed information and offer vegan refreshments to tempt people who may not otherwise be interested in hearing about the issue.

**Ask the Experts.** Invite a representative from a local humane society, natural or organic food store, or other group to speak at a club meeting. Open it up to all students. Make sure you have school permission.

**Compassionate Creativity.** Hold a school-wide poster or T-shirt design contest with an animal protection theme.

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**Done with dissection?**

The HSUS’s Humane Education Loan Program (HELP) offers up-to-date alternatives to classroom animal dissection and live animal experimentation. You can borrow CD-ROMs, computer disks, models, videos, and other materials. Learn more at [humanesociety.org/dissection_alternatives](http://humanesociety.org/dissection_alternatives) or by e-mailing ari@humanesociety.org today!
**A Dazzling Display.** Ask the manager of a natural food store to provide you with samples of vegetarian foods along with household items and cosmetics that were not tested on animals. Use the samples to create a display in your school library or cafeteria. Include information about factory farming and animal testing alongside the alternative products. Your display may encourage others to become compassionate consumers.

**Recommended Reading.** Ask your librarian to get animal-friendly books in your library. See humanesociety.org/youth (“Best Books”) for a list. Help your librarian set up a display of the books.

**A Good Book.** Other people in your area may be looking to make compassionate choices while dining. Put together a guidebook of local restaurants that offer vegetarian alternatives. You may even find restaurants adding vegetarian alternatives to their menu so they can be included in your guidebook.

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**Teen Clubs in Action!**

**Who:** Youth Humane Society  
**Location:** James Logan High School, San Francisco, CA

This school-based club concentrated on getting healthy vegetarian and vegan options on the school menu. Club members created a petition asking for vegetarian options, which one-quarter of the student body signed. The club was granted a two-week trial period, and named their venture Smart Cart. They sold riblet burgers, tacos, fruit and garden salads, and more. The best part? They sold out every day! Thanks to its success, students have more animal-friendly options on school lunch menus!

But that’s not all. The Youth Humane Society also headed to the Chinese Consulate in San Francisco to protest China’s trade in dog and cat fur. What’s the benefit of being in a club? Club founder Seema Rupani says “It is a lot easier to achieve your goals with a group of people helping you rather than doing it all by yourself.”
Letters to the editor

Writing letters to the editor is a great way to get the word out in your community on issues that concern you. Editors are often looking for a new “voice” to appear in their letters section to generate other reader interest. Here are some tips for success 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 paper’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.

**Keep it Short.** Some newspapers restrict the length of the letter they will consider for publication, so aim for 250 words. Be sure to stay under the newspaper’s word limit – going over the suggested word count practically guarantees it will not run. Or, the editor may edit your letter down so it will fit. In this case, a point that you think was important may be eliminated due to space constraints.

**Stay on Point.** Your letter should stick to one or two points maximum in order for it to be effective. (Think of it
this way: If you wrote a letter on farm animals, you wouldn’t want to get side-tracked and start talking about the fur industry.)

**Don’t Wait.** Editors prefer to publish letters that are timely and those that respond to an article, editorial, or previous letter that appeared in the newspaper. 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.** A letter to the editor is a great way to give your opinion on a previous article or disagree with someone’s statement. In the beginning, be sure to mention the original letter or article including the title and date it appeared. And remember: Do not resort to personal attacks. There is an effective way to get your message out without putting down another reader or reporter.

**Get the Facts.** It’s helpful to include numbers and other facts on the issue at hand. Double check your facts before submitting your letter. You don’t want someone to write a response to your letter pointing out an error of fact that could have been caught with a simple proofread. (Example: 28,000 animals instead of 2,800.)

**Last Sentences Stay with Readers.** End your letter with a statement or fact that you want your audience to remember.

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

**Sign Off.** Newspapers will not run anonymous letters. Remember to include your name, address and phone number. You can even put your age. Editors will often call to verify that you – and not someone else – wrote the letter.

**Space Out Your Letters.** Newspapers often don’t reprint the same person’s (or organization’s) letter if they are sent within short periods of time from one another. For most papers the rule is one published letter per month, but check with your paper to find out.

**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 more tips? Visit humansociety.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 expense. You may decide, however, that you want to raise funds to contribute to an animal protection charity, to finance one of your club’s own activities, or to raise awareness in your community. If so, try one of these fund-raisers:

- **Pick a product to sell.** The old standards such as gift wrap, spring bulbs, and chocolate bars provide people with products they can use, and a good percentage of the money can be put to your cause. Search the Internet or ask your advisor if he or she knows of any companies that will participate.

- **Host a car wash, dog wash, bottle drive, tag sale or auction.**

- **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 in partnership with a local animal organization.**

  - Ask a local store or a cosmetics company that does not test on animals to donate prizes.

  - Make an animal-lover’s quilt as the centerpiece of the raffle. Ask your friends to decorate each fabric square with an animal protection message. Ask a local crafts store if they’d like to donate fabric.

- **Organize a sports event, such as a walk or run for animals, or a student/faculty softball or basketball game.** Have athletes find
sponsors to give a certain amount of money per mile covered or points scored.

Hold a “Coins for Critters” or “Pennies for Pets” coin collection. Decorate collection canisters. Visit different classrooms to explain what you’re doing and ask students to donate 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 humans and canines. Sell them on Mardi Gras in February. Is February too far away? Consider hosting a “Barkery” – a bakery for dogs!

Throw a read-a-thon. Ask friends and family to donate money for each animal-related book a student reads. This would work well over summer break.

Sponsor an art contest with an animal theme. See if a local art gallery in your community will donate space for the event. Ask students and community artists to enter pieces of 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 your cause.

Make a difference – simply by how you choose your next meal!

Nearly 10 billion land animals are raised and killed for food each year in the U.S. Most of them are not raised on Old MacDonald’s farm. They are crowded in massive facilities known as factory farms. But just like dogs and cats, chickens, pigs, turkeys, and cows have their own personalities and feel joy and pain.

Each one of us can make a major difference in the lives of farm animals. How? Follow the Three R’s:

Reduce
Every hour in the United States, one million animals are killed for food. If each one of us cuts back on our animal consumption by only 10%, approximately one billion animals would be spared a lifetime of suffering each year.

Refine
If you do continue to eat animal products, know that not all animal products are equal when it comes to animal welfare. For example, the chicken, egg, turkey, and pork industries tend to be far more abusive to animals than the beef industry. Choosing “cage-free” eggs – instead of those from hens kept in overcrowded cages – will help a lot of animals!

Replace
Each one of us can help prevent animals from suffering in factory farms simply by choosing vegetarian options.

For more information, visit humansociety.org/teens.
Go caroling during the holiday season with classmates, friends, family and/or club members. Have one person hold a sign that asks for tips/donations that will go to your cause.

Hold an event to raise awareness and funds by charging admission. (You may need to ask a teacher or club advisor to find out about special permission you might need for charging admission). Here are some ideas to get you started:

- Throw a costume ball or Howl-o-ween party for the animals.
- With a teacher or club advisor, put together a student-faculty talent show. You might be surprised by talents you didn’t know existed!
- Host a “Puppypalooza” at school or with a local animal group. (Be sure you have proper permission.) Invite classmates and their families to bring their dogs. Award prizes for various categories such as “Best Trick” and “Owner-Dog-Look-A-Like.” You may want to provide families with vegetarian food options and treats for dogs.
- See if an upcoming school dance can be devoted to animals. A local DJ or band may be willing to perform for free or at a discount if they know proceeds from the admission charge will go to help animals.
- Host a vegetarian/vegan supper for students, parents, and faculty.

**Teen Clubs in Action!**

**who:** Animal Associates  **Location:** Corfu, New York

This community-based club uses fund-raising to help animals. They’ve helped various animal organizations, including Paws of Gold Feline Rescue and Second Chance wildlife Rehabilitation Center.

Fund-raisers have included car washes and raffles featuring prizes donated by local businesses, such as gift cards and tickets to theme parks. In celebration of Be Kind to Animals week, Animal Associates placed boxes around their community to accept donations for the Wyoming County SPCA. They’ve already raised close to $4,000 over five years!

Animal Associates members also raised public awareness of animal issues by frequently writing letters to editors of local newspapers about such topics as animal cruelty and proper pet care.

Want to learn more about this and other clubs? Visit humanesociety.org/teens.
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 on humanesociety.org/teens! Just e-mail us at teens@humanesociety.org or call us at (860) 434-8666.

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