



## **Animal Therapy and Education for Tribal Victims of Violence and At-Risk Youth**

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*If we listen, the animals will talk to us  
and lead us back to health and wisdom.*

**Basil Johnston, Anishinaabe Elder**

## **Three Powerful Way Animals Can Heal Our Communities**

1. Connect Us to Our Traditions
2. Teach Us Their Wisdom
3. Heal Us with Their  
Unconditional Love

## **Connect Us to Our Traditions**

- Many tribes have traditionally held all life including animals as sacred.
- Animals were regarded as are our relatives, neighbors, and cotenants of the Earth.
- Animals are indispensable to humans.

## Heal with Their Unconditional Love

- Animals teach us unconditional love
- They teach us patience, acceptance, and empathy towards others
- We can feel safe and begin to trust again

## Teach Us Their Wisdom

- Animals have given us knowledge that humans would not otherwise have.
- We learn from their habits, character, and works.
- We learn to be responsible and that we all have roles in the world

## Animals Connect Us with Our Traditions and Values



Respect. Responsibility. Protection. Compassion

## If we heal our animals, we heal ourselves



**“It is easier to build strong children  
than to repair broken men”**

Frederick Douglass



**The healing power of pet  
visitation programs**



## What exactly is a pet visitation program?

Animal Assisted Activities (**AAA**)

Vs.

Animal Assisted Therapy (**AAT**)

***Proven benefits*** – lowered blood pressure, increased memory recall, improved fine motor skills, promotes healing, increased self esteem, decreased anxiety....and so much more!

## Potential benefits for victims of crime

- Provide **safe**, non-threatening touch
- **Honest** & direct interactions/ no manipulation
- **Ease anxiety** and resistance to the process
- Environment with **no judgment**
- Provide **non-threatening** & safe channel for communication
- **Empowerment** of client



## Potential benefits for at-risk youth

- **No judgment** or parameters put on affection
- **Affection** offered without need for explanation
- Reduction of stress, sadness and frustration
- Opportunity to be recognized for **positive behavior**
- Exploration of experiences through **transference**
- Increased **empathy** with shared experiences
- **Positive relationship** with AAA/AAT providers
- Less isolation & increased **social interactions** with peers

## Where to reach out

*At their home...*

*A treatment facility...*

*A neutral location....*

Safety of the client & therapy team is top priority

- Assess the environment before going in
- Always use the “buddy system”
- Make sure insurance coverage & liability agreements are in place

## What animals to use



All animals must be tested for both behavior and health. This is a partnership and only animals that love the work should be utilized.

*Many of our animals are rescues and may have pasts filled with abandonment, abuse, neglect and then find a home, safety and love. Share your animal's stories and inspire your clients to heal.*

## The other side of the team – the handler

You need to consider:

- Background checks
- Screening & training
- Gender sensitivity
- Cultural sensitivity
- Paid staff vs. volunteers  
(Insurance concerns for both)

*Both tribal members and non-tribal members should be considered when looking for handlers. Both can offer unique benefits to the client.*



## How to get started.....

*(It only takes one great dog to launch a program!)*

National groups to partner with:

- ❖ Pet Partner's, Bellevue, WA – [www.petpartners.org](http://www.petpartners.org)
- ❖ Therapy Dogs International, Flanders, NJ – [www.tdi-dog.org](http://www.tdi-dog.org)
- ❖ Path International, Denver, Co - [www.pathintl.org](http://www.pathintl.org)

Local programs to partner with:

- ❖ Ask your local Humane Society
- ❖ Ask your local hospital if they have a program

*Or start your own!*

## Creating a Compassionate World with Humane Education



## What is Humane Education?

- Providing accurate **INFORMATION** about issues
- Fostering the 3C's: **CURIOSITY, CREATIVITY, and CRITICAL THINKING**
- Instilling the 3R's: **REVERENCE, RESPECT, and RESPONSIBILITY**
- Offering **POSITIVE CHOICES** and tools for problem solving



## Why Does It Matter?

Ongoing scientific studies have illustrated the many psychological, social, emotional, and physical

### **BENEFITS OF HUMANE EDUCATION.**

Some of the benefits include:

- Building *Stronger Character*
- Empowering for *Positive Change*
- *Reducing Violence*



## Teaching Humane Education

Learning happens when your audience is...

- **ENGAGED** enough to care
- **ENTERTAINED** enough to listen
- **ENCOURAGED** to try something new
- **EMPOWERED** to use their knowledge



## Curriculum for At-Risk Youth

### COMPASSIONATE HUMANS

is a program designed to prevent violence in at-risk youth.

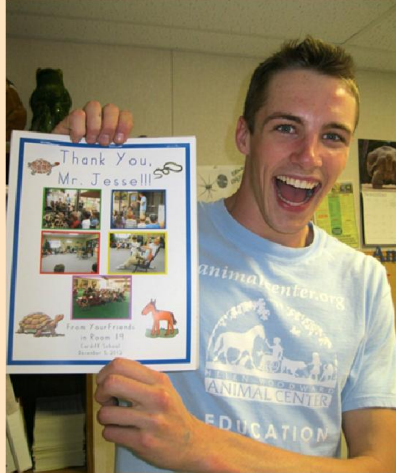


#### Daily themes include:

- Be the Voice for Those Without One
- Becoming a Pet Guardian is a Big Responsibility
- Habitats and Extinction
- Safety, Behavior, and Training
- People Helping Animals, Animals Helping People



## Getting Started



**3 BASIC REQUIREMENTS**  
for a successful  
*Humane Education Program:*

**Staff**  
**Animals**  
**Curriculum**

## THANK YOU!

We can be a tremendous resource for you.  
Please feel free to ask questions,  
contact us and ask for help.

**We're all in this together!**

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