

Giving Animals a Future



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augustus
CLUB

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Great Investors

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When **Children**
Believe in
Animal Rights



When Children Believe in Animal Rights, Everyone Benefits

Teaching children to have compassion for the most vulnerable among us—namely, animals—benefits society in a whole host of ways. Children who develop empathy for animals become compassionate toward *anyone* who is perceived as different. And they grow into adults who will be more likely than previous generations to consider the effects that their actions have on others.

Empathy Is Elementary

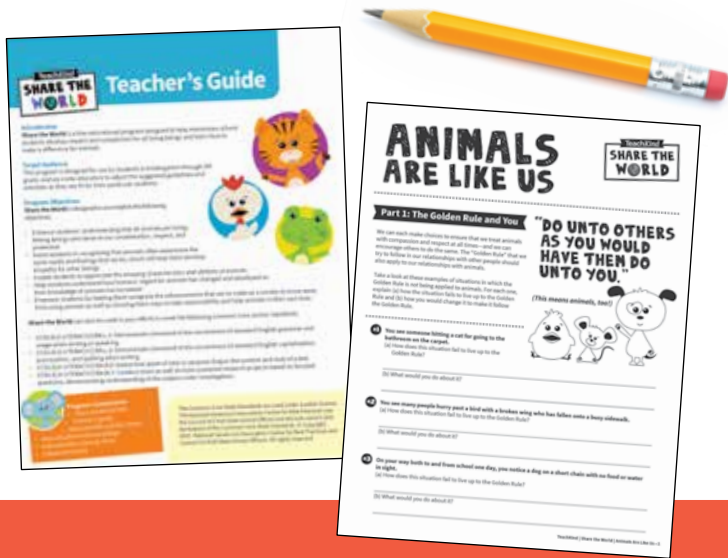
Most children have an innate connection to animals. But if we take that for granted and do nothing to protect and strengthen it as children grow, it can easily turn to apathy or become subsumed by other priorities. That’s where TeachKind comes in.

TeachKind is PETA’s initiative to help thousands of educators across North America convey the message to students in grades K–12 that animals and the way we treat them matter. In addition to giving one-on-one guidance to teachers, the program offers a plethora of free teaching materials.

A major resource is Share the World, an interdisciplinary curriculum that includes a video, worksheets, and lesson plans that help elementary school students consider the point of view of others (such as calves torn away from their mothers by the dairy industry), see that the Golden Rule doesn’t exclude our interactions with animals, and learn how to help animals in their own lives.

With the support of our Augustus Club members, PETA has distributed this kit for free to every elementary school in the U.S.

TeachKind



Violence Prevention

Because empathy for animals fosters empathy for *everyone*, education experts consider Share the World a valuable tool in violence prevention of all kinds.

For example, after the tragic school shooting in Parkland, Florida, which is in Broward County, the school district—the sixth largest in the country—accepted PETA’s offer to conduct an anti-bullying, violence-prevention training program for educators. PETA’s TeachKind strategist gave a presentation to 130 counselors and other Broward County school district staff on the use of Share the World in the classroom.

PETA’s Share the World video will soon be offered via streaming by Discovery Education, the global leader in standards-based digital content for grades K–12, found in half the classrooms in the U.S. and in more than 50 countries.



Pencil: © iStock.com/hayatikhayhan

The district loved the program so much that it ordered 1,000 of our teaching kits, added our materials to its website's list of violence prevention resources, and

is partnering with us to teach students to be sensitive to individuals of all races, religions, and species.

Cutting Out Dissection

TeachKind is determined to make classroom dissection a thing of the past, and we're making great progress.

Our many years of campaigning have helped get dissection-choice laws passed in 22 states. These laws allow students to opt out of animal dissection exercises and instead be given humane alternatives, such as virtual-dissection software, which is a better teaching tool.

Dissection desensitizes students by teaching them that animals are simply classroom objects to be cut up and discarded, and studies show that students who are forced to dissect may lose interest in science.

And, of course, dissection is harmful to animals. For example, our recent eyewitness investigation into dissection specimen supplier Bio Corporation revealed that pigeons were drowned, turtles were frozen to death, and crayfish were injected with latex while still fully conscious.



TeachKind has helped countless schools replace animal dissection with virtual-dissection software, which helps students learn about anatomy more effectively than mushy, chemically treated organs do. And unlike animal corpses, computer software allows students to repeat steps if they need to. PETA has donated interactive dissection software to dozens of schools.



TeachKind informs students of their right to say no to dissection and gives presentations on the superiority of virtual dissection at science education conferences throughout North America.

Taking Every Opportunity to Promote Respect for Animals

Through its annual Teacher Appreciation Contest, TeachKind celebrates innovative educators who go the extra mile to encourage their students to respect the rights of animals.

We also empower teachers to get active for animals by helping them form animal rights clubs at their schools.

TeachKind supports dozens of these clubs across the country. A recent initiative is spotlighting the ways that 4-H harms animals and has a negative impact on young people—and the ways some of them are helping animals by resisting the program.

Other resources that TeachKind offers for free include a webinar for teachers, reading lists for students, book report assignments, and even lesson plans specifically created for English-language learners. Free debate kits are also available on thought-provoking topics, such as the ethics of eating animals, experimenting on them, and keeping them in captivity.

These materials go like hotcakes on TeachKind.org: In one year alone, an estimated 50,000 teachers downloaded free resources from the site.

“ Teaching a child not to step on a caterpillar is as valuable to the child as it is to the caterpillar. ”

—Bradley Miller

Straight From the Animal's Mouth

PETA also holds children in thrall with animatronic animal ambassadors. Ellie—our 6.5-foot-tall walking, talking, robotic elephant—made presentations at more than 360 elementary schools, summer camps, and YMCAs in 48 states. By sharing her story of being freed from a circus, she taught kids that they can help save elephants by never going to circuses that use them.



Our newest ambassador, Carly the cow, is voiced by actor Alicia Silverstone. Carly tells kids that cow's milk "is for baby cows, just like human milk is for baby *humans*! But on the dairy farm, my babies were taken away from me when they were just a day or two old so that my milk could be sold in stores instead of given to them. I still think about my babies every day, and I miss them so much." Then she makes it clear that kids can help these animals: "I'll bet most of you love mac 'n' cheese, pizza, and ice cream, right? Did you know that they are made with cow's milk? It's true. But guess what? You can still eat them without hurting cows! There are loads of milk-free versions, and let me tell you—they are delicious!"



Carly is a huge hit with students and educators alike, and so are the free samples of vegan ice cream and yogurt that are distributed after her presentations. Many kids say they like the nondairy, cow-friendly foods better than the dairy versions. After Carly appeared at a charter school in San Bernardino, California, its principal wrote that the school's students "loved every minute of the visit," and the school even put photos of the presentation on the homepage of its website.

With your generous commitment to PETA's work, we'll reach even more students and ensure that respect for animals increases with each generation. That's an exciting prospect—thank you for helping us bring it to fruition through your membership in the Augustus Club.



Are you a teacher, or do you know one?

Sign up at TeachKind.org to receive our e-mails, and be the first to know about new lesson plans, resources, and tips on bringing compassion for animals into the classroom.



Meet Colleen O'Brien, PETA's Vice President of Communications



Colleen O'Brien oversees PETA's advertising division, the distribution of our news releases, and pitches to media nationwide. She regularly speaks to television, print, and radio outlets and constantly comes up with more ways to get the animal rights message out to the public. Under her guidance, our activities and campaigns have made headlines in major newspapers and on television networks around the world.

Augustus Club: How did you become involved in animal rights?

Colleen O'Brien: During high school, I worked at a zoo. I did "shows" with animals, and one of them was a silkie chicken from China. One night, I was eating chicken for dinner, and it occurred to me that I was *holding* a chicken during the day and then *eating* a chicken at night. So I stopped eating meat when I was around 14.

Somehow, I ended up on PETA's mailing list. In its magazine, I saw an announcement for an upcoming animal rights symposium and an essay contest to win free admission. So I wrote an essay, won the contest, and went to the symposium. That was the first time I saw PETA President Ingrid Newkirk speak. It was so exciting.

AC: When did you start working for PETA?

CO: Immediately after I graduated from college, so 20 years ago.

AC: Describe a facet of your job that makes you especially happy.

CO: I love seeing all the media coverage we generate and knowing that we're bringing so much attention to important animal issues that people wouldn't otherwise think about, from dog-chaining to the abuse of sheep used for wool.

Many years ago, I remember hearing Ingrid say that before we can change laws, we have to change minds. I see us doing that every day.



AC: PETA is masterful at putting animal rights issues in the media spotlight. What makes it more successful than other organizations in this area?

CO: First, our philosophy is that it's better to try and fail than not try at all. So even if an issue or an event might not seem like something the media would cover, we pitch it to them anyway.

Second, we're not here to win a popularity contest—we're here to get people talking about animal issues. So if a conventional news pitch or campaign ad fails to attract attention to an issue, we'll push the envelope and put a cheeky or otherwise thought-provoking spin on it, even if we know it might be controversial.

Third, we think creatively and come up with multiple messaging strategies for all our campaigns. For example, we might get an issue covered by the "hard news" media, but in order to make sure we reach the widest audience possible, we'll also use a celebrity angle to get it covered by pop-culture reporters or maybe enlist a famous athlete to star in a campaign ad, which then attracts coverage by sports media. We want to make sure that whenever

someone turns on the TV, scrolls through their newsfeed, picks up a magazine, or sees a subway ad or a billboard, they're learning how they can help stop animal abuse.

AC: Is there one goal in particular that you think PETA will achieve in your lifetime?

CO: I think that I'll live to see SeaWorld stop imprisoning orcas and dolphins. I think we're also well on our way to a nationwide ban on the sale of dogs and cats by commercial breeders. And we've persuaded so many companies to stop sponsoring the Iditarod—in which dogs are beaten and chained and sometimes die on the trail—that I hope the end of that race is in sight.

AC: In your opinion, what makes PETA more effective than other animal rights groups and social-change organizations?

CO: Our drive—we're relentless. Also, we don't compromise in the push for animal rights. We're an abolitionist organization—we always have been—and we've never lost that guiding principle. We're not wishy-washy (e.g., we don't say some types of meat are cruel but other types are humane).

AC: Any funny or especially memorable moments from your career?

CO: There were so many oddball moments when I was on the road as a campaign coordinator. For the Premarin campaign—to stop the intensive confinement and constant impregnation of mares on urine farms—I organized demonstrations in dozens of cities. In each one, I had to find a life-sized horse replica. Many times I could get them from party-supply stores, but if not, I had to get them by hook or by crook. One time, I even called a restaurant with a horse replica out front and asked to borrow it (and they lent it to us at no charge)!

Another time, I was protesting the use of animals by the Big Apple Circus, and I had to dump 2 tons of rotten apples in front of the performance venue. I got a dump truck full, but because they didn't look so bad, I had to climb into the truck, and stomp on them. I felt like I was in that famous grape-stomping scene from *I Love Lucy*!

AC: After 20 years, there are, no doubt, many ways in which your job has had an impact on your personal life. Can you pick one to share?

CO: After Hurricane Katrina in 2005, we sent a rescue team to New Orleans and transported dozens of displaced dogs to our headquarters in Norfolk, Virginia. One of them was a tiny black poodle. We named her "Fancy" because she had pink nail polish on her toenails. We cross-posted all the dogs' photos on several rescue websites so that their guardians could track them down. I fostered Fancy and absolutely loved her. Three months later, her guardian contacted us, and I flew with her to her guardian's new home in Houston, Texas. Her guardian and I have remained friends ever since, and I've even been back to visit. Fostering Fancy (whose real name turned out to be Licorice) made me realize that I needed a dog in my life. I adopted one soon after that—and now my fiancé and I share our home with three dogs and three cats.

I am so grateful to our Augustus Club members for helping PETA rescue Licorice and for supporting our work to save all animals from dire circumstances.

Let the PETA Visa card spark discussions about animal rights with every swipe and serve as an effective voice in behalf of animals who are suffering in laboratories, on farms, in the clothing trade, in circuses, and everywhere else they're abused.

▶▶ Learn more at [PETA.org/Visa](https://peta.org/visa).



Self-Awareness and Why Vegans Make Great Investors



To the untrained eye, financial markets can appear to be a domain in which compassion has no place and only the most ruthless thrive. Headlines and dollar signs mix to create a fast-moving environment that can seem daunting to navigate. Investors constantly struggle to determine the optimal next move. Yet at second glance, one can recognize the parallels between stock markets and the broader world—including the benefits of approaching everything with a cruelty-free mindset.

Financial markets are a microcosm of human behavior—a grand stage on which our emotions rule and bad habits wreak havoc. Markets are dominated by feelings—there’s far less logic to the trajectory of a stock, success of an investment, or direction of an economy than we tend to assume. In fact, with a little perspective, we can recognize the emotion involved in every investment decision. Whether because of an innate cognitive bias or even because of someone’s mood on a particular day, decisions influenced by feelings are ubiquitous in markets—and this deprives us of any actual control over the results.

Just as controlling the thoughts and emotions of other people is impossible, so, too, is trying to predict or outmaneuver markets. Despite our deepest desires and greatest efforts, we’re altogether powerless to control the emotion-fueled financial sector. So the wise investor looks inward, recognizing that power resides solely in understanding oneself better. As in other aspects of life, in finance, the only thing that we can control is our own behavior. We can’t influence whether a stock goes up or a market crashes, but we can certainly determine our reaction to these events. When we really think about it, we realize that our own behavior is all that matters and that self-awareness is the pathway to better performance.

Interestingly, this very advantageous skill is one that vegans cultivate daily. Following a cruelty-free lifestyle necessitates self-awareness. We can’t reduce our negative impact on other sentient beings without an acute consciousness of the consequences of our actions. Whether it’s compassionately choosing the food we eat, the clothing we wear, or the shops we patronize, in order to do no harm, vegans practice self-

awareness at every step. And this mindfulness is an essential practice in the financial world, too.

Buying low and selling high are foundational principles of investing but counterintuitive, and adhering to them requires a tremendous sense of purpose and commitment. Implementing a plan of diversification is imperative, but it’s difficult to do amidst the allure of profit—again, remarkable self-control is required. Staying the course is critical, but it’s terribly challenging when faced with a market correction and, again, means being highly self-aware. Behaving logically in an environment fraught with emotion requires the very skill that vegans apply in every moment of their lives. That’s not to say that all vegans are fully self-aware or that this is a trait possessed only by vegans. But the ability to be mindful of our own behavior is essential to maintaining a vegan lifestyle, and it’s a skill that’s priceless in the profit-driven world of finance.

The importance of self-awareness might be a radical idea to investors who favor the familiarity of their habits and prefer to indulge their emotions. But it wasn’t that long ago that being vegan was considered radical. Because of a deep desire to live cruelty-free, vegans focused on their own behavior in order to create change in themselves and beyond. The same thing could easily happen in the world of finance. By focusing on our own behavior when investing in markets, we can transform the way we approach the practice and, eventually, the way others do, too. We can improve the performance of our investments just as we improve the lives of all living, feeling beings—simply by being more self-aware.

This article was adapted from an article written by PETA Vanguard Society member Jonathan Citrin and originally published on the PETA Prime blog. Jonathan is an author and speaker on real-world lessons in mindfulness, self-awareness, and performance. To read more and to subscribe to PETA Prime E-News, visit Prime.PETA.org.