

December 16, 2019

Shannon Criss
Superintendent
Harney Education Service District Region XVII

Via e-mail: [REDACTED]

Dear Ms. Criss,

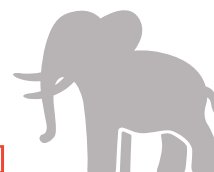
I'm writing from TeachKind—PETA's humane education division, which works with thousands of educators nationwide to bring compassion into the classroom—after having seen [disturbing reports](#) that a Riley teenager was arrested after he was seen on video apparently climbing onto the back of an exhausted and distressed mule deer and riding him while the animal, who was trapped inside a fenced area, grunted, bleated, and attempted to escape. In light of this incident, we'd like to offer educators in your school system TeachKind's free resources to help ensure that a violent incident like this one never occurs again in your community.

As mental-health and law-enforcement experts well know, people who demonstrate a blatant lack of empathy and disregard for life by committing violent acts such as this one may be on a dangerous path that could lead to further violence, including toward humans. Violence targeting vulnerable individuals is rarely limited to a single incident. For example, the shooter in the attack on Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Florida was reportedly known to have abused animals— such as frogs, chickens, and pigs—before moving on to killing and injuring his classmates.

In light of this disturbing alleged incident in Harney County, we'd like to work with you to implement humane education in your schools and urge students in your community to report cruelty to animals when they see it. A trauma-informed approach to education should include humane education, which will equip staff with resources to help prevent further violence.

Given the current focus on addressing the national epidemic of bullying and its often tragic results, it's vital and timely that a standard of respect be set and that students understand that harming any sentient being is wrong. The prevention of violence should be a priority in the classroom, especially considering that, according to [Oregon law](#), "in public schools special emphasis shall be given to instruction in" the "[h]umane treatment of animals." Incorporating humane education into your schools' curriculum would give you the opportunity to reach kids before they potentially start to engage in violent behavior.

TeachKind is here to help—and we're sending you free ["Share the World"](#) curriculum kits for the elementary schools in Harney Education Service District. They're perfect tools for teaching young students



The logo for TeachKind, featuring the word "TeachKind" in a white, sans-serif font on a red rectangular background.

TeachKind

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the Golden Rule and the importance of compassion and empathy. We'd also like to offer you free [anti-violence posters](#) from our youth division for the middle and high schools in your district. Our staff is always available to send additional materials, suggest lesson plans from [TeachKind.org](#), and even host teacher training workshops—all free of charge. We want your efforts to teach kindness to be successful.

On behalf of PETA's more than 6.5 million members and supporters worldwide, including many who proudly reside in Oregon, thank you for your consideration. I hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely,

Lisbet Chiriboga, M.S. Ed.
Program Manager

[*PETA's Humane-Education Division*]

