



Animal Law Committee



SUCCESSFUL LAUNCH OF HUMANE EDUCATION PUBLIC SERVICE PROJECT

By: Meena Alagappan

“In the end, we will conserve only what we love. We will love only what we understand. We will understand only what we are taught.” - Baba Dioum, Ecologist

The Animal Law Committee recently launched the Humane Education Project as a joint public service project of the TIPS’ Animal Law and Law in Public Service Committees; and Humane Education Advocates Reaching Teachers (HEART), a nonprofit public charity. The primary objective of the Humane Education Project is to cultivate compassion and empathy in our youth toward animals and foster respect for the environment.

In March 2009, we began piloting this program in Washington, DC and New York City, where interested volunteers were trained by two of HEART’s teachers, Kimberly Korona and Casey Sullivan, to offer a four-lesson humane education program for fourth and fifth grade students. As part of the project, the Animal Law Committee (the Committee) and HEART published a comprehensive Humane Education Training Manual including detailed lesson plans, teaching tips, classroom

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ALC is grateful to Robert Biasotti and his firm of Carlton Fields (Insurance Practice Group, the Appellate Practice Group and the St. Petersburg Office), Tribler Orpett & Meyer, P.C., the Mac Kay Fund and the TIPS Enterprise Fund for their financial support. The program was dedicated to Sonia Schroeder 

NO KILL CONFERENCE 2009

The first national No Kill Conference, co-sponsored by the George Washington University (GWU) Animal Law Program and the No Kill Advocacy Center, brought together leaders in the animal sheltering and legal fields who are promoting no kill strategies to save the lives of millions of companion animals from death in our shelters. Some 380 individuals, representing 38 states and 6 countries, descended on the GWU campus in Washington DC, on May 2-3, 2009 to attend this ground-breaking event. The presenters discussed no-kill strategies designed to prevent animal surrenders; implement cost-effective behavior and medical rehabilitation programs; establish positive relationships with government, private groups, and veterinarians; create feral cat Trap-Neuter-Return/Release programs; increase animal adoptions; improve public relations; reform animal control; and utilize legislative and litigative options to help secure these strategies.

Three Committee members, Michelle Welch, Ledy VanKavage, and Joan Schaffner, presented at the Conference. Michelle discussed legislative and litigative efforts to end puppy mills, Ledy presented strategies for protecting free-roaming cats and their caregivers, and Joan shared her experiences combining her legal skills with her passion for animals. 

Committee News

LITIGATING ANIMAL LAW DISPUTES: A COMPLETE GUIDE FOR LAWYERS

SUCCESSFUL LAUNCH...

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communication strategies, school outreach guidelines, state humane education laws, and related articles. The curriculum addresses a wide range of animal-related issues such as responsible companion animal care, animal cruelty laws, dog and cat population and homelessness, puppy mills, dog fighting, the violence link, factory farming, endangered species, habitat destruction, pollution, and global warming. Most importantly,

The Committee's second book is now available through ABA publishing and other venues. This comprehensive guide is for lawyers who may be unfamiliar with the various laws in the field of animal law and require a basic guide to handling these cases. The book covers every major aspect of private civil and criminal litigation of animal law disputes in the areas of tort, contract, property, insurance, and criminal law. In the fifteen chapters of this book you'll find valuable information and cases dealing with topics like personal injury and negligence; disputes over animal possession; wills and trusts involving animals; veterinary malpractice; insurance litigation; federal cases and Constitutional rights; animal ownership and land use rights; criminal cases; and more. There is even a chapter covering practical matters for lawyers handling animal cases, including fee agreements, discovery techniques, preparing your client, settlements and collecting judgments. The book also provides sample litigation documents, such as pleadings, discovery materials, expert information, and more. It's the complete resource for any lawyer who, sooner or later, will deal with a case of animal law. 

ALC ON FACEBOOK

The Committee now has a page on Facebook to facilitate communication among members and outreach to others who may be interested in joining the Committee. Please become a fan of the Committee's page and/or visit at: <http://www.facebook.com/home.php#/pages/Animal-Law-Committee-of-the-ABA-Tort-Trial-and-Insurance-Practice-Section/81318181919?ref=nf> 

ABA/TIPS ANIMAL BLAWG

The Committee will soon be hosting a blog. Stay tuned to Facebook for updates. 

the program invites students to become problem-solvers, engaged young citizens, and conscious choice-makers, so that their lives become part of the solution to persistent challenges.

TIPS solicited lawyer and law student volunteers from the ABA membership, and from the membership of state or local bar associations, to work on implementing humane education programs in their local schools. Special thanks to Joan Schaffner, our Chair Elect, who was instrumental in coordinating the workshops at George Washington University Law School

and Jane Hoffman from the Mayor's Alliance for NYC's Animals for providing the venue for the NYC training. We were pleased with the diversity of registrants in both cities, including not only our own Committee members and students at local law schools, but also members of the NYC, Maryland, and DC Bar Associations working at large and small law firms, non-profit organizations, government agencies, corporations, and law schools.

Despite their diverse affiliations, the participants all shared a passion for this work and we received excellent evaluations from the training sessions. One of the volunteers teaching in NY, Amy Trakinski from the animal law firm Egert & Trakinski, said "Taking part in the ABA Humane Education Project has been a great experience. HEART makes sure all volunteers go through a thorough training and provides terrific teaching materials and support." All the participants completed evaluations and their average rating was 3.9 on a scale of 1 (lowest) to 4 (highest) for how helpful different components of the workshop were with respect to classroom communication and management, and coverage of the content of the four lessons. Indicative of their enthusiasm, in their open ended responses, many participants even encouraged extending the half day training to a full day.

Humane Education classes in public schools in DC and NYC have begun and we are reaching approximately 200 fourth and fifth grade students through this public service project. We have already received a lot of positive feedback on classroom experiences. Several of our volunteers were pleasantly surprised that they were so readily welcomed by the students. Beverly Jones, Associate General Counsel of the Vera Institute of Justice in NY said, "We were particularly touched by the kids during our first class. Much of the first lesson centers on teaching kids to embrace and understand concepts like empathy and compassion—one of the ways this is done is by talking about a 'Circle of Compassion,' in which the kids identify who they care about. Ordinarily, kids will identify their parents, friends, companion animals, and the like. When our class was asked whom they would want to include in their circles, one boy said 'you guys!' It was a really gratifying experience." The schoolteachers have been very receptive as well. In one program evaluation form, a fourth grade classroom teacher wrote, "The videos, images and simulations were meaningful for the students . . . and the questioning was great, scaffolding students' thinking. I really hope to work with you again

next year." Another schoolteacher said, "I loved the way each lesson correlated to the previous one. Let's do it again next year."

I am impressed that our volunteers have so quickly started affecting students on cognitive, emotional, and behavioral levels and are successfully promoting critical thinking skills. One of our DC volunteers, Tessa Hale, a management consultant, noted: "The students were very engaged and able to really think through the impact of their actions, the actions of others and connect it all to the bigger picture of compassion and the earth. Each discussion was lively with students offering input and seeking additional information. When we returned for subsequent lessons, the students had new questions for us and it was apparent they had been thinking about what we had discussed the previous week." Another DC volunteer shared, "The curriculum does a great job of getting students to think critically and reach their own conclusions instead of presenting one viewpoint as a foregone conclusion. The curriculum also furthers the objectives of core classes, as it draws upon students' knowledge of government, social science, earth science, geography, ecology, and even mathematics."

The Committee will expand the Humane Education Project within DC and NYC by holding additional training sessions for volunteers and implementing the program at additional public schools. I thank all of you who participated in the public service project and encourage others to consider getting involved as well. We are looking forward to extending the geographical reach of the Project in the coming years. You are all so well poised to be humane educators. Your background as lawyers committed to the humane treatment of animals provides an excellent model for children on how they too can better the lives of one of our world's most underserved populations. I hope more of our youth can benefit from your instruction. Currently, only 13 states have statutes mandating or authorizing humane education in schools and the development of humane education legislation is an ongoing process. As ABA members with experience teaching a coordinated curriculum in this area, witnessing the positive results for the participating schools, you will be in the vanguard of lawyers capable of effecting further legislative change toward a more humane society.

In closing, I want to acknowledge that this Humane Education Project would not have been possible without the late Sonia Schroeder, who was the ABA-TIPS' Committees Administrator. She inspired this

Project, facilitated our collaboration with the Law in Public Service Committee, and was an ardent supporter of the effort at every stage. Sonia will be missed by many of us. She was a big animal lover and the ABA has asked those who wish to donate to a charity in Sonia's name to consider the South Suburban Humane Society (<http://www.sshspets.org/donate.asp>) where

she recently adopted her two dogs. Thank you for being such a great friend to our Committee, Sonia. ⚖️

Meena Alagappan is Chair of the ABA-TIPS Animal Law Committee and is Executive Director of HEART (www.teachhumane.org), a 501(c) (3) humane education organization based in New York. She can be reached at alagappan.meena@gmail.com.

2009-2010 TIPS CALENDAR

July/August

July 30-August 4

ABA Annual Meeting

Contact: Felisha A. Stewart – 312/988-5672

Speaker Contact: Donald Quarles - 312/988-5708

**Marriott Hotel
Chicago, IL**

October

6-11 TIPS Section Fall Meeting

Contact: Felisha A. Stewart – 312/988-5672

**Hotel Del Coronado
San Diego, CA**

22-23 Aviation and Space Law Litigation

Contact: Donald Quarles – 312/988-5708

**Ritz Carlton Hotel
Washington, DC**

28-30 FSLC Fall Program

Contact: Donald Quarles – 312/988-5708

**Four Seasons Hotel
Philadelphia, PA**

November

5-6 Premises Liability National Program

Contact: Debra Dotson – 312/988-5597

**Loews Don Cesar Beach & Resort
St. Pete Beach, FL**

2010

January

14-17 Annual TIPS Midwinter Symposium on Insurance, Employment and Benefits

Contact: Debra D. Dotson – 312/988-5597

**Hyatt Regency Coconut
Point Resort and Spa
Bonita Springs, FL**