

Detroit Zoological Society

**Madeleine Berman
Academy for Humane Education**

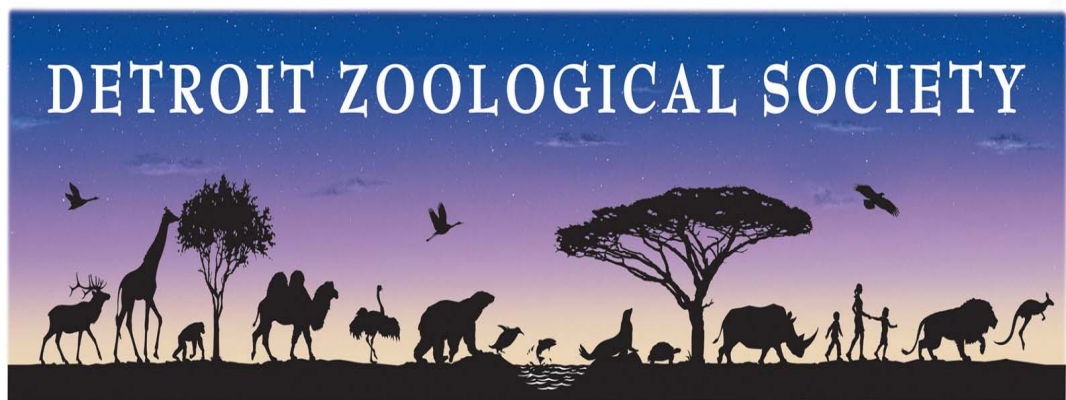


M a d e l e i n e B e r m a n

**Academy for
Humane Education**

helping people help animals

*Our efforts are helping both individual animals and entire species.
Walk softly and treat the Earth's creatures gently.*



DETROIT ZOO ♦ BELLE ISLE NATURE ZOO

July 2008

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Madeleine Berman Academy for Humane Education

History

What is the Madeleine Berman Academy for Humane Education?

The Detroit Zoological Society traces its origins to a collection of animals abandoned by a bankrupt circus in 1883. Citizens responded to these desperate creatures and generously gave food and money to provide for their care. The Society was created on this foundation of helping animals in need. The naturalistic habitats that were developed demonstrate a desire to share the beauty of wild places and their inhabitants.

Over 100 years later, the Madeleine Berman Academy for Humane Education was formed. A series of humane education initiatives were launched in 2002 and in 2005 the Academy settled into its permanent home in the Ford Education Center. The Academy offers a broad range of programs designed to meet the needs of our diverse audiences. Unique and engaging programs utilize a variety of instructional strategies – including traditional instruction, storytelling, role-playing, theater, and virtual technology – to match the various learning styles of the community. Through participation in formal and informal experiences, audiences understand the need to treat other living creatures with respect, responsibility, and compassion. The Madeleine Berman Academy for Humane Education was created to *help people help animals*.

Mission

The Madeline Berman Academy for Humane Education provides programs and funding each year to educate the public about the interrelationships of humans and animals. The academy strives to foster a sense of understanding and appreciation of our environment and our responsibility to care for all of its inhabitants in a humane manner.

Core Beliefs

Humane Education Begins with Understanding

All life is connected.

No one is alone. We are constantly interacting with our environment and our environment is interacting with us.

Everyone needs a home.

All living creatures share similar basic needs – food, water, shelter, and appropriate social and physical environments. A home, or habitat, provides these basic needs. Humane Education helps us to appreciate the amazing natural world around us and motivates us to ensure that all animals (human and non-human) have an appropriate habitat.

The natural world is at threat.

Nature is fragile and many living creatures are at constant risk. Through humane education and appropriate practices, we can help to protect our planet and all its inhabitants.

Goals

To promote a curriculum for the ongoing education of teachers, families, adults and children, designed to foster a commitment to the understanding and protection of animals.

To introduce the concept of “walking softly on the earth” and to teach participants about the delicate balance that exists in nature.

To explore the intricate connections between animals and humans, as well as factors that are destroying the web of life

Objectives

1. Provide funds to create engaging, hands-on humane education information via lessons, presentations, the arts and literature.
2. Facilitate the understanding and awareness of man’s responsibility to care for each other and the environment in a humane manner through theatre, films, classes and presentations.
3. Develop and implement community outreach initiatives to pre K-12 schools, educators, universities, senior citizens, faith-based organizations to increase public awareness of humane education, animal welfare and animal/environmental conservation.
4. Provide professional development opportunities to staff to ensure accurate and updated information on humane education, animal/environmental conservation and animal welfare.
5. Develop partnerships and networking with national and international organizations on humane education, animal/environmental conservation and animal welfare.

Key Concepts

All animals are important. They should be treated with respect, responsibility, and compassion.

- All life is interconnected.
- All creatures have similar basic needs – food, water, shelter, and appropriate social and physical environments.
- Everyone needs a home. In most instances, humans are responsible for the loss of animal habitats.

Animals have feelings. This is an important aspect to consider, especially when contemplating an animal’s well-being.

- They may experience emotions and pain.
- Animals have cognitive abilities and emotional qualities.

All animals deserve consideration and respect for their physical and emotional well-being and should not be exploited. Circuses, roadside menageries, rodeos, and some forms of media are among the many facets of animal entertainment that are detrimental to animals and to humans' understanding of them.

- Animals in these conditions have inappropriate living conditions and are subjected to significant stress.
- Animals' basic needs, both physical and psychological, are not met.
- Animal training in these situations is often inhumane.

Pet owners have a responsibility to meet their companion animal's needs. Pets rely on us for their needs, throughout their entire lives.

- Exotic animals should not be pets.
- People need to provide for the appropriate physical and psychological needs of their pets.

Choices can be made that collectively benefit oneself, people, animals, and the environment. Our choices can have far-reaching effects. It is important to recognize the impact individuals and communities have on the Earth and its inhabitants.

We have a responsibility to consciously consider, respect, care for, and protect all creatures and the environment. Our daily activities can benefit the Earth and its inhabitants if the effort is made to consciously think through our actions.

An individual has the power to make a positive difference for other creatures. Our personal choices can make a difference.

- We need to protect and care for the animals that share our Earth.
- People should intervene if they see an animal in trouble.

Why is Humane Education Important?

Several issues demonstrate the need for a concerted Humane Education effort: exotic animals as pets, habitat destruction, lack of spending time in nature to understand and appreciate it, the pet overpopulation crisis, and the cycle of animal abuse and domestic violence.

Exotic Animals as Pets

Domestic animals – such as dogs and cats – are the best pets. Unfortunately, millions of exotic animals become victims of the pet trade each year. Well-meaning individuals often purchase exotic animals with good intentions. Tragically, they do not understand the specialized physical and psychological needs of these creatures. Animals suffer and many stories are reported about the dangerous and frequently deadly outcomes when people keep exotic animals as pets.

Habitat Destruction

As the Earth's population grows, the loss of native habitats for animals becomes increasingly greater. Many animals and their habitats are affected by the choices that we make. Understanding our impact on the Earth can result in the lessening of our ecological footprint and healthier habitats for all.

Lack of Spending Time in Nature

In a world of ever evolving technology, today's children are increasingly disconnected from the natural world. Spending time in nature helps to instill respect, responsibility, and compassion for the Earth's creatures.

The Pet Overpopulation Crisis

Many people share a very special bond with their pets. Sadly, not all people develop and maintain these bonds. Animals are lost, stolen, surrendered to animal shelters, or worse yet, neglected, abandoned, or abused. Each year an estimated 3-4 million cats and dogs are euthanized in animal shelters. Pet overpopulation is a significant and serious problem.

Cycle of Animal Abuse and Domestic Violence

Studies have demonstrated a correlation between animal cruelty and domestic violence. For a number of reasons, individuals may act out frustrations or anger toward animals, as a means to demonstrate power, to repeat behaviors that happened to them, or as a way to act against someone that has hurt them by hurting an animal they care about. These individuals develop a pattern of behavior that sometimes transfers into their interactions with other people.

Components of the Madeleine Berman Academy for Humane Education

Outreach Initiatives

Classroom Outreach

The Outreach Team delivers presentations on a variety of themes. Docents and staff integrate specific humane education messages in all outreach programs. The messages are framed in the concept that there are exciting animals all around the world, including in our own homes and backyards. Docents and staff convey the message that all living creatures – human and non-human – have similar basic needs. The care and responsibility of our environment as well as animal welfare, animal and environmental conservation are also stressed. The Society's school programs use a variety of teaching strategies, including audio-visual presentations, storytelling, and puppets.

The Society participates in the Detroit Public Library's Summer Reading program, an opportunity that serves hundreds of children in the Detroit Metropolitan area.

Local and Regional Community Events

The Society participates in many community events throughout the year, including Festival of the Arts, Concert of Colors Diversity Festival, Mayor's Time, and several neighborhood events. Banners featuring the Academy logo help attract attention to exhibits.

An integral part of the traveling programs, the Madeleine Berman Academy for Humane Education display often features a Backyards Safari Scavenger Hunt that promotes awareness of the animals that share our neighborhoods as well as numerous hands-on activities.

City Critters

City Critters enables children to develop an awareness of the animals that share their neighborhoods. Learning about these creatures enables children to better understand and appreciate them. Children are encouraged to study and enjoy wildlife from a distance. This program teaches strategies to peacefully co-exist or simply avoid disturbing certain types of wildlife.

City Critters also includes a discussion on responsible pet care. Children are taught that their pets rely upon them to provide for all of their needs, including food, fresh water, exercise and love. The importance of always having proper identification on their pet is also emphasized.

The City Critters outreach program is offered to agencies including Children's Hospital and public libraries throughout the year.

City Critters Goals

- To promote an ethic of gentleness for other living creatures
- To create better awareness and empathy of wildlife that share our environments
- To promote appropriate pet choice and care (along with our colleagues at MHS)

City Critters Key Concepts

- All animals are remarkable
- Humans have changed the natural environment. Some animals have adapted to this changed environment and reside in urban areas
- Wild animals are different than domestic animals
- Wild animals should be enjoyed from a distance so as not to disturb them
- Wild animals can harbor and transmit disease
- All animals (including humans) have similar needs – food, water, shelter and appropriate social and physical environments
- Our pets rely upon us to provide for all of their needs

Kids for Critters Clubs

Children participate in activities at their school throughout the school year. A year-end recognition ceremony at the Zoo is in development to honor Kids for Critters participants. Children learn that one individual can make a difference, and working together we can change the world.

This program is especially important because the members of the club become agents of change within their schools. Kids listen to other kids. The Kids for Critters model presents being kind to animals as fun and "cool."

Staff lead activities at Kids for Critters Clubs, providing direction and motivation to the kids as they complete activities related to animal issues. Kids have been involved in making posters to hang in their schools to promote proper pet care, collecting used towels and blankets for the Michigan Humane Society, making and selling dog biscuits and kitty herb pots, and preparing for *National Tag Day* and *Be Kind to Animals Week*. Individual schools have done an assortment of other activities including creating Pet Care brochures, writing skits, and making presentations to younger children in their schools.

The Kids for Critters club engages children in three areas:

- Personal Choices – making choices for a softer footprint.
- Helping our Community – improving our community for all living creatures.
- Helping the World – Celebrating and saving our earth's biodiversity.

Kids for Critters have several different messages to impart on others:

- Pet Care – Kids for Critters teach what it means to be a responsible pet owner, including providing proper care and love for an animal's entire life.
- Humans and Other Animals – Kids can encourage other kids to investigate and question how animals are used in entertainment, including circuses, rodeos, and television. These activities may be fun for some people, but they are definitely not fun for the animals.
- We Can Make A Difference – Children get involved in activities to help animals – not only in their homes, but also in their communities. Kids can help animal shelters with activities such as collecting towels, creating cat toys, or making dog biscuits. They can also help animals at home by creating backyards for wildlife.

Kids for Critters sessions include City Critters, Zoo to the Rescue, Four-Legged Family Members, and Helping People Help Animals.

Animal Peace Corps

An adult group of volunteers is being developed to provide the manpower for projects that assist animals. These projects may include building flight cages for rehabilitating birds, restoration of native habitats, or assisting wildlife sanctuaries. The Animal Peace Corps helps animals while providing individuals within our community a meaningful way to get involved. There are efforts in development both locally and abroad.

Teacher Initiatives

Teacher Workshops

Humane messages are an integral part of all teacher workshops offered by Zoo staff. All education lessons are aligned with the Michigan Standards in the Grade Level Concept Expectations for each content area. The Education Division participates at a variety of professional development opportunities for teachers. The importance of humane education is integrated into all programs.

Several important issues are discussed with teachers so they understand and can have an impact with their students, including:

- The far-reaching effects our daily choices can have on the Earth and its inhabitants
- The opportunities for dissection alternatives in the classroom
- The problem of animal exploitation in entertainment, including circuses, rodeos, and television
- The importance of responsible pet choice and care
- The documented cycle of violence

A number of Humane Partners are working with the Society. Additionally, many other teachers have been presented the issues on conservation and humane education and have been provided with background resources to utilize in their classrooms.

Head Start

The Head Start connection enables us to reach an important underserved audience. Teachers work with both children and their parents to dispel myths and misconceptions about animals as well as encourage positive attitudes towards the animals that share our planet.

The Head Start pet care kit includes both a dog and cat puppet and the items that they need for proper care: collar, leash, bowls, brush, and toy. The kit also has a Pet Care checklist for use when children have their turn to “take the classroom pet” home.

On-Site Initiatives

Wild Adventure Ride

In today's world, technology plays a powerful role in education. The Wild Adventure Ride is the country's first animal-based virtual reality voyage. The action-packed simulator is an exciting 30-seat cabin that offers a variety of thrilling educational productions, blending theatre and technology. The three-stage immersion experience begins with the Pre-Show and allows audiences to experience a variety of themed environments. Stage two is the Story Theater, where the audience enters a multi-media presentation featuring panoramic video-wall technology and surround-sound. After these experiences, the audience boards the Simulator cabin, for a 1.7-G full-motion ride. The Wild Adventure Ride is a unique "you are there" experience that connects visitors to the world of nature as they "see the world through the eyes of animals." *Wilderness Adventure* addresses the issues and importance of animal welfare, and instills empathy for the stories of our fellow living creatures.

Humane Science Lab

One of several interpretive studios in the Ford Education Center, the Humane Science Lab will be the hub of many of the Academy's programs. The Lab will provide an opportunity for students to learn utilizing humane methods of study like dissection models and simulations. Additionally, students, teachers, and visitors will experience other programs that model gentle ways of teaching and learning science.

Backyards for Wildlife Site

The Backyards for Wildlife site shows visitors ways they can create desirable habitats for indigenous animals and plants. This area demonstrates that helping animals begins in your own backyard. Interpretive graphics emphasize the need and benefit of this type of backyard program.

MOSAIC Theater Production

The nationally acclaimed MOSAIC Youth Theater was contracted to create a humane education production, *Zoomanity*. Working with Society staff, this talented group of youth produced a piece that promotes a better understanding of how we affect the world of animals, including the ones that live with humans – our pets. This production instills a strong sense of empathy for our pets, promotes responsible pet choice and care, and motivates audiences to treat animals with respect and kindness.

Humane Medley

Mosaic Youth Theater was contracted to create a humane education medley. This medley is appealing to youngsters and has been used in a wide variety of programs. The Society's visitors vary in their learning styles and aural learners are particularly receptive to song.

Docents

Docents, or volunteer educators, have contact with thousands of Zoo visitors each year at both facilities, through guided tours and informal learning experiences. They promote a humane ethic when interacting with audiences of all ages and backgrounds. Annual

Recertification for docents includes a section on humane education. This presentation discusses humane education issues and the stories of the many rescued animals at the Society in order to better share humane education concepts with tour participants and guests.

Humane Education Film

The Society has produced a film by Academy Award winner Sue Marx. *"From Animal Showboat to Animal Lifeboat"* illustrates the many ways animals in entertainment are exploited and suggests a different course for the future. This film won an Emmy and was co-written and co-produced by Society Director Ron Kagan.

Zoo Movies

There are nine Society commissioned films that run continually in the theater of the Wildlife Interpretive Gallery and are also available at area libraries and public schools. The movies were created by Academy Award winner Sue Marx and Society Director Ron Kagan to highlight aspects of the relationships between humans and animals.

Humane Recognition

A reception honoring individuals that have made significant humane education achievements will be held once a year to recognize their accomplishments (this program is in development). This will initiate the Detroit Zoological Society's Humane Education Honor Roll which will be housed in the Ford Education Center.

Media and Signage

The Society's frequent press releases about issues involving animal protection and substantial on-site signage about rescue animals create visibility for the problems associated with keeping exotic animals, animals in entertainment and other welfare topics. They also encourage people to become animal advocates.

Web Site Development

A major section of the Detroit Zoo's web site is being developed to incorporate humane education content, activities, and recognition. This humane education section will be launched with feature stories and pictures of the Society's rescued animals. Other topics in this section of the web site will include "walking softly activities," "Kids Did It," and links to other animal welfare related web sites.

Community Opportunities

Special Events

Community special events such as Earth Day and Wild Winter provide a forum for sharing and teaching humane messages.

The Society hosts Meet Your Best Friend at the Zoo, a major pet adoption event (held two times per year) at which hundreds of dogs, cats and other domestic animals find new homes.

Conferences and Meetings

The Detroit Zoological Society was honored to be selected by the American Zoo and Aquarium Association to host its 2001 Central Workshop Conference in recognition of the Society's position at the forefront of humane animal care. The conference theme "*Animal Welfare 911*" brought together a wide variety of organizations and individuals concerned with animal welfare and animal rights issues, providing a professional forum for critical conversations.

Members of the DZS Education Department regularly give humane education presentations throughout the community. Recent presentations were given at the 2007 National Science Teachers Association Annual Conference, 2007 Association of Zoos and Aquariums Docents Annual Conference, 2008 Michigan Recreation and Park Association Annual Conference, the 2008 Michigan Science Teachers Association Annual Conference, the Green Street Fair in Plymouth, and the Royal Oak Public Library Think Green Series.

Future assemblies are in development inviting animal welfare experts to participate in providing professional development and public lectures.

Humane Collaborations

We are working towards establishing relationships with other humane organizations locally, nationally and internationally to verify program agenda and content and to discuss partnership opportunities. The Michigan Humane Society meets with us on a regular basis to discuss humane education programming and opportunities.

Legislation

The Society works diligently to decrease the number of animals being kept in inhumane conditions. Through the Society's ongoing efforts, stricter regulations are now in place governing exotic pet ownership in Michigan and elsewhere.