

“Open Heart = Open Mind” : Compassionate Animal Care Education Program

APNM’s innovative humane education program was successfully piloted last year at Valencia Elementary in Los Lunas. Students chose an animal from a variety of species and conducted research on the financial realities of properly caring for that animal and their ability to provide for the animal’s emotional, physical, and veterinary needs. After recording all the needs, costs, and local/state laws governing the animal, the students composed a five-paragraph formal paper in which they came to a conclusion as to whether their selected animal was a viable choice for them. The students followed up by giving creative presentations of their findings to an invited audience.

The unit incorporates math, computer technology, research, art, oral and written communication, and civics in alignment with the New Mexico Department of Public Education’s Benchmarks and Standards. Equally important, the program affects positive changes in attitude, self-esteem, empathy toward others and awareness of responsibilities to the community. Throughout the unit, guest speakers and registered therapy dogs provide interactive presentations.

Comments from last year’s students are very telling of the program’s success. When asked what they enjoyed most, responses included, “learning how to speak up against animal cruelty” and “working with my group to put the presentation together.” Suggestions for making the unit better included, “You need to stay longer and come more often” and “help stop all dog fighting. It is a bisness [sic] and no one cares about the dogs.”



Because APNM does “care about the dogs” and all other animals, five other area schools are being approached for delivering this highly successful program during the 2012-2013 school year.

Kind News is Good News for New Mexico’s Schools

It’s no secret that humane education and the lessons it imparts to children about kindness to others are wise investments that pay off when children treat animals and each other with respect and compassion. To help deliver those messages, Animal Protection of New Mexico provides paid subscriptions of the award-winning humane education magazine, **Kind News**, to elementary children in more than 200 classrooms in dozens of rural and urban New Mexican communities. For the 2012-2013 school year, students in Carlsbad, Las Cruces, Farmington, Peñasco, Grants, Crownpoint, Española, Roswell, Ribera, Church Rock, Deming, Seboyeta and many more are benefiting.

The magazine is filled with colorful articles, short features and fun activities that children and teachers love. **Kind News’** emphasis on treating animals with kindness and respect, the importance of proper animal care, and wildlife appreciation captures student interest and makes abstract values like compassion, citizenship, and responsibility come alive. It covers several content areas, including science, social studies, math, and language arts, and is aligned with state and national educational standards.

To help APNM extend these valuable lessons to more schools, donations can be sent to APNM with ‘Kind News’ noted on the gift. \$25 sponsors a classroom for one year.

