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Educators Awarded for Compassion & Excellence in Science



Jenkintown, PA (December 2022) –The past couple of years have been challenging for all of us, especially educators. With this in mind, Animalearn set out to find humane educators who embraced 2022 and succeeded in providing their students with a humane science education. This year, we are pleased to announce Briana Clarke, of Park Day School in Oakland, CA as Animalearn’s **2022 Humane Science Educator of the Year**.

Animalearn additionally recognized four educators with Honorable Mentions for the important work they are doing to bring compassion into their classrooms and programs. The exceptional educators are Dr. Kirstin Milks of Bloomington, IN; Domingo Castaneda of Las Vegas, NV; Dr. Jennie Warmouth of Lynnwood, WA; and Heather Grogan of Charleston, SC.

“We are proud to recognize all of these wonderful teachers for being change makers in the field of science education. Their compassion for both their students and animals is inspirational!” said Animalearn Director Nicole Green.

Briana Clarke was selected as Animalearn’s Humane Science Educator of the Year because she excels at bringing empathy, ethics, and social justice to the forefront of all her lessons. Briana addresses the issues of animal rights, animal testing, and animal dissection across her science curriculum. Not only are her 7th grade students using non-animal alternatives, they are also learning through art, discussion, research, and debate. Briana incorporates the educational philosophy that students “learn by doing” in a humane manner without harming animals.

“I do not simply teach science; but rather, I teach future citizens to make socially just decisions based on science. Whether it’s women’s reproductive rights, humans’ access to healthy food, or animals’ rights to live, social justice requires scientific analysis to make strong claims for change,” stated Clarke.

Animalearn’s four honorable mentions were also selected for teaching kindness and compassion towards animals in their respective teaching environments.

Dr. Kirstin Milks, AP Biology and Earth/Space Science Teacher at Bloomington High School has eliminated dissections from her curriculum. “I’m proud to join a growing number of science teachers and students who are standing up for humane, compassionate learning experiences that help highlight our deep connection to other living beings,” said Dr. Milks.

Domingo Castaneda, who is an educator at Spring Mountain Youth Camp, a juvenile facility for adjudicated young males, has pledged to never utilize harmful animal methods for his science education curriculum. Upon learning of his honorable mention, Castaneda stated, “Students need to develop compassion and care for our natural world. It’s imperative to teach this respect and compassion since it leads to the development of empathy for fellow human beings.”

Dr. Jennie Warmouth, a second-grade teacher at Spruce Elementary School and adjunct professor at the University of Washington has focused on how animals can impact children’s development of empathy for her classroom-based research and curricular development. “I am honored to be named Animalearn’s 2022 Honorable Mention Educator. As a general education classroom teacher and empathy researcher, the humane treatment of all animals is central to both my practice and philosophy. My approach to instruction draws connections between human rights, animal protection, and environmental sustainability with the goal of helping to inspire the next generation of informed and compassionate planetary stewards.”

Heather Grogan is the Director of Humane Education at Charleston Animal Society (CAS) and leads the veterinary camp program there. Heather’s prior experience in the veterinary field enables her to help campers learn and practice standard veterinary procedures with the use of humane non-animal alternatives, that she commonly constructs herself. “With the resources awarded, we are eager to explore new opportunities for our veterinary programming that we know will humanely impact both children and animals,” stated Grogan.

“These educators are operating at an astounding level to ensure their students are learning in the most humane ways possible,” said Alisa Brooks, Assistant Director of Animalearn.

Clarke’s statement about her award sums up the purpose succinctly, “With Animalearn’s gift, my 7th graders will have an enhanced experience, seeing animals as sentient beings who deserve our respect.”

As part of her award, Animalearn will donate \$1,500 worth of anatomical models for Clarke. All honorable mentions will receive humane science education resources valued at \$500 each.

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Animalearn, a division of the American Anti -Vivisection Society, works with educators, students, policy makers and others to achieve quality humane science education without the harmful use of animals. Animalearn’s free loan program, The Science Bank, offers humane science products that enable educators to teach and students to learn anatomy, physiology, and psychology lessons without harming animals. For more information visit Animalearn.org.