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Students Awarded for Speaking Out for Animals in Science Education

Rose Churchill   Laura Streminsky

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Jenkintown, PA (December 2022) – This year Animalearn is pleased to recognize two Humane Students of the Year. Both exemplify a commitment to helping animals used in science education. We selected college sophomore Laura Streminsky as Animalearn's 2022 Humane College Student of the Year and high school sophomore Rose Churchill as Animalearn's 2022 Humane High School Student of the Year.

Animalearn learned about **Laura Streminsky**, a biology major at Stony Brook University in New York, earlier this year in an article entitled "Student's views dubbed "extreme" by biology professor," in her school newspaper, *The Statesman*. Laura had voiced her ethical opposition to dissecting a rat and live earthworm in her biology class in early 2022. Her request for an alternative assignment was met with resistance by faculty. She was labeled as extremist, culturally insensitive, and advised that her grade would be negatively impacted if she did not participate in the dissections.

Laura explained, "As someone who aspires for a career in medicine, I'm repeatedly told that my ability to treat patients is hindered by my refusal to exploit animals. In response, I say that I'm concerned about any medical professional who doesn't have any reservations in hurting another sentient being. The ultimate

goal of medicine (and science in general) should be to minimize suffering in the world as much as possible."

As founder of her high school's animal rights group, Laura has been advocating on behalf of animals for many years. Ultimately, Laura was allowed to opt out of the dissections without penalty to her grade. She is now looking into forming an animal rights group at Stony Brook, which would be the first of its kind at the university.

Laura responded with enthusiasm to news of her award. "This award shows me that I'm supported in my effort to advocate for animals, despite the resistance I've received from people who are ok with the status quo. The encouragement I've received from Animalearn has made me more motivated than ever to continue standing up for animals and for humane science education."

Rose Churchill attends Fairview High School in Colorado and was selected as Animalearn's Humane High School Student of the Year for taking a firm stand against dissection. Rose has proudly opted out of animal dissections since sixth grade. She has taken steps to enlighten her school about the topic of dissection in different ways, including giving a presentation to her school's environmental club and reaching out to her school's science teachers. She also contacted her local politicians requesting that they introduce dissection choice legislation in her state. Rose plans on petitioning for the use of non-animal alternatives and spreading the word to eliminate the use of dissection in biology classes.

Upon receiving news of winning the award, Rose said "This award is an inspiration and gives me faith that individual actions are important in this cause, as well as steps taken by activists for animals as a whole."

"As educators are aware, the future is in the classroom. With more and more humane students like Laura and Rose, I look forward to the future that they are creating for all sentient beings," said Alisa Brooks, Assistant Director of Animalearn.

As part of their award, Laura Streminsky and Rose Churchill will receive Dissection Action Packs from Animalearn to assist in furthering their pursuit of humane science education for all.

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, is the largest lending program in the U.S. and 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.

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