



Animals Teaching Character



A unique blend of Humane Education and Character Counts curriculum

The Valley Animal Center offers FREE educational presentations to schools & groups throughout the Central Valley!



Promote positive character development, citizenship, and empathy for animals



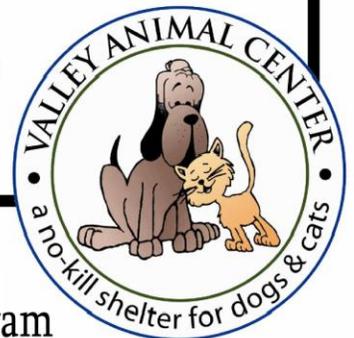
Offer your K-12 students a unique, fun, and educational way to be involved within the community



Bring *Character Counts!*[®] to your classroom in a whole new way!

Classes can be held at your school or group location or at the Valley Animal Center! **Studies conducted in South Carolina and across the country have shown that when you bring Humane Education programs like Animals Teaching Character to your school you are not only improving relationships with animals, but amongst students, staff and families as well. Successful programs have seen decreases in overall acts of violence, with an increase of student focus and academic success!**

Program curriculum has been composed by certified Paraeducators for the Fresno County Office of Education, backed by knowledgeable experience with animals, as well as educating youth throughout the Central Valley.



For more information on our humane education program or how you can get involved at the Valley Animal Center, please contact Shannon Escobedo at (559) 233-8690 or via email at shannon.escobedo@valleyanimal.org.

Valley Animal Center Animals Teaching Character Class Summaries:

May I Pet Your Dog? (Pre-School – 3rd Grade)

Students will learn how to properly approach a strange dog and the importance of asking an adult owner before petting a dog. Use of a flip-book with various dog scenarios will be used and the students must decide whether or not it would be a good idea to pet the dog in the picture and why. For the younger students, they will be able to use a board to answer yes or no to each scenario and will be able to practice what they have learned on a stuffed animal before meeting our education and outreach dog for a special one-on-one interaction session.

Tails are Not for Pulling (Pre-School – Kindergarten)

“Tails are not for Pulling” is a lesson plan based around a popular ‘manners’ series of books. “Tails are not for Pulling” is a picture book that discusses proper manners around animals/pets and the respect children should convey towards pets even at a very young age. The group will have a chance to practice on stuffed animals and have a group discussion on why animals wouldn’t like us to ‘pull their ears’ or ‘pull their tails’ and equate it to us by acting out those behaviors on another person or having that behavior acted out on themselves. At the end we will bring a live animal ambassador dog (child friendly) from the shelter and let each child show what they’ve learned. This will be followed by a tour of the Cat Adoption Center where they will again be able to practice what they’ve learned with actual animals. A strong message will be driven that animals can have the same likes/dislikes as people then it comes to how we are treated.

Pet Pals (Kindergarten)

Students will learn all about cats, dogs, and other pets being a part of the family. They will learn how animals make great friends and can bring joy to our lives and families. We will also introduce the needs of pets and how we can responsibly care for them. Children will be able to make toys for our feline friends and meet our education and outreach dog. During their tour of the Cat Adoption Center, they will be able to make a new feline friend of their own.

Caring for Pets (1st – 3rd Grade)

What are the needs of our pets and how do they compare to our needs? Does a goldfish have the same needs as a horse? What do all pets need most of all? Children will read a story about pet care and take part in a hands-on group activity that talks about the different needs animals have and compares them to what we need. They will learn that all pets (as well as ourselves) share a universal need for love and commitment from our families. They will tour the shelter and learn what our homeless animals need each day and what they need most of all...a forever family!

Inside a Shelter (2nd – 3rd Grade)

During this program, we will focus on what you find in a shelter (homeless animals needing homes and new families). We will also discuss who works in a shelter, what their different roles are, and the differences between a home and a shelter. Students will have a chance to visit the shelter and make posters for the animals waiting for their homes based on each individual pet’s special needs. We will also discuss (age appropriately) why it is important to adopt from a shelter or rescue and spay and neuter pets.

Canine Community Service (3rd – 6th Grade)

During our “canine community service” program, students will learn about different service roles canines take in our community. They will learn about search and rescue, guide dogs, therapy dogs, and even have the chance to do trick training with our education and outreach dog! We will tie up the lesson by discussing what our dogs can do for us as part of our family and have a chance to visit the animal shelter to meet more dogs. We will also include how students can get involved in their community as well by helping dogs to return the favor!

It’s Raining Cats and Dogs! (2nd – 4th Grade)

Students will be introduced to pet-overpopulation and the homeless animal crisis. They will learn why it is important to spay and neuter pets, and that by spaying and neutering, your pet will be happier and healthier! They will have a story read to them (It’s Raining Cats and Dogs) and partake in a simple math activity based around spay and neuter statistics. After briefly touring the shelter, they will have the opportunity to make posters about spaying and neutering.

Who’s the Bully? (4th – 6th Grade)

Students will learn about stereotypes and will discuss how they are started. They will be asked to identify animals that they are afraid of or do not like and will explore why they feel that way, then be asked to find positive things about that particular animal and why it has a place. We will discuss common stereotypes with pets in shelters, including pit bulls, black cats, etc. and why these pets have a harder time finding homes. We will finish with a tour of the shelter to talk about individual cases and how we are working to turn these stereotypes around.

Careers with Animals (7th – 8th Grade)

Junior high school students will learn about the expansive field of animal careers. From veterinarians to animal trainers, they will be introduced to the ins and outs of the animal care field, and even have a hands-on opportunity to work with shelter animals (brief dog training and cat socialization session)!

Animal Advocacy 101 (9th – 12th Grade)

High school students will be introduced to pro-activeness in animal welfare beginning with their community. We will touch on subjects from animal abuse/neglect (chained dogs) to dog fighting and dog safety. They will learn the signs of abuse/neglect and also learn who to contact should they see any of this evidence. The take-home message will be to lead by example by first making sure they are practicing responsible pet guardianship and speaking to friends and family on behalf of neglected animals by being active within their community or local shelter (like VAC)! We will end the lesson/visit with a shelter tour and discuss how many of these animals have faced neglect and abandonment in their life. We will also briefly touch on national/global animal issues and promote our “Humane Action League” as a way they can become more involved and gain more awareness.

Veterinary Sciences (9th Grade and Up)

Our veterinary sciences program provides an in-depth look behind spaying, neutering, and the pet-overpopulation crisis. Students will be introduced to basic nomenclature and the health benefits to spaying and neutering our pets. We will also discuss the positive experience gained through working in an animal shelter setting, and how it will influence their future career in a positive way. Students will end by getting a tour of the Valley Animal Center spay and neuter clinic to observe our Veterinarian and Veterinary technicians in action behind the scenes.