

Unless I care a whole lot, nothings going to change- it's just not!

Kitty Jones 3/1/2012

(The following is a log of my actions on behalf of animals from November 2011 until February 2012.)

During my Sophomore year of high school, I founded Students for Animal Rights, a club devoted to raising awareness and reducing animal suffering, while inspiring the youth to take social responsibility and action! The following is action log of sorts, explaining in detail my efforts to create a compassionate planets and observations of my personal ripple-effect on the school community. I've done enough activism and brought so much attention to animal rights issues at my school, that I've earned the title "Kitty, the vegan". I'm the school-wide activist.

Beginning November 1st, and every Tuesday following, I have organized weekly animal rights awareness tables in the student lounge. I contacted the Activities coordinator, gained her support, and have been doing the tables every single Tuesday since. The student lounge, where I setup the table each week, is a high traffic area, where the table can receive the maximum amount of attention. I volunteer with the Northwest Animal Rights Network, Action for Animals, and intern for the Humane Society of the United States, all of which were generous enough to donate leaflets to my tabling project. The focus of the table is animals killed for food, this is why I have set out brochures such as, "Why Vegan?", "Think before you eat", "Three steps to a humane diet", "what's wrong with dairy", as well as easy vegan recipes, Seattle vegetarian restaurant guides, and "Meet Your Meat" DVDs. Of course I address other animal issues by providing fliers about fur, the circus, animal testing, dissection, and dolphin slaughter. Many students are attracted to the table because of the stickers and that all the information is free.

As the president of the animal rights club, it's up to me to organize meetings and events. During the majority of our meetings we discuss animal rights issues and events in the news. In January we wrote thoughtful five letters Donna Karen and Bebe asking them to stop selling and using fur. The classroom where our meetings are hosted is always full of unaffiliated students, however, when I use the projector to display videos, everyone in the room cannot help but watch. Recently I took advantage of this and showed a video of rescued piglet, Emma Sue, of the local Pigs Peace Sanctuary, where I used to volunteer. Directly following that video I showed everyone (36 students total, 30 of which were not part of the club and had likely never been exposed to this type of video) "If Slaughterhouses Had Glass Walls" by PETA.

My school is extremely supportive of my activism, allowing me to put my passion for compassion into action. For the entire month of January I had organized, created, and setup a library display all about animal rights. I did another one two years ago. With help from the local animal rights community, I was able to collect and donate several animal rights books. Some of the books I donated to the school library were: Thanking the Monkey, CAFO, Animal Activist's Handbook, and various vegan cookbooks. All of these books, and more, were put out on the featured book table during that month, increasing their exposure and the likelihood that students would check them out. There was another table dedicated to animal rights literature and leaflets. Similar to the ones I used when tabling, I have information about veganism, the circus, fur, cruelty-free companies, and lots of stickers! I must have put out 400 stickers, all of which got eaten up! The display itself listed bulleted facts about specific issues; fur, the circus, eggs, dairy, and meat. With color photos from magazines and thought provoking posters and quotes such as Alice Walker's, "The animals of the world exist for their own reasons. They were not made for humans any more than black people were made for white, or women created for men."

My senior project has been another great opportunity to give people a taste of compassion! I organized with Pigs Peace Sanctuary to host a piggy "meet & greet"! At the event roughly 50 guests came to enjoy vegan pizza, donuts, mac n' cheese, cookies, hotdogs, and milks as well as meet and rescued pig face-to-face. I really believe that the cruelty inflicted upon animals used for food (and other things as well) is largely due to the sheer disconnect between our lives and theirs. I know that meeting Winston, the pig, will help people make the connection between the flesh in the package and the sentient being it came from. In class I gave a presentation on the pig meet & greet, in which I told everyone about the environmental costs and suffering involved in meat production. I was required to give another presentation on the project to a panel of judges. They too, heard all about the horrors of the meat industry, which they certainly didn't expect. Following my presentation, I gave each judge a flier on veganism.

In November 2011 I began my Meatless Mondays campaign. Ambitiously, my aim is to have Meatless Mondays throughout my district, not just at my school alone. I spoke with the higher-ups at my school that continually referred me to another person. Eventually I tracked down the head of food services in the district and wrote out a polite letter explaining my idea and why it would be so beneficial to students and staff alike. She was not moved, and after months of e-mail and calling her, it is clear she will not hear it. So, I decided to gain support by other means. I started a petition online specifically for Shoreline staff and students to sign, so far about 200 have signed. I e-mailed the petition to countless students as well as every single staff member in the district (about 1,000 teachers). I had Action for Animals and the Humane Society of the United States contact her to show support. The other high school in the district caught word of my campaign and I was interviewed in their school paper. Although she has chosen to ignore most of my contact, including the petition, I am far from giving up this battle. I've printed the entire petition (on recycled paper, of course), highlighted all the names from the district and sent it to her in the mail and a letter about how great Meatless Mondays would be! Now, I await her response.

On weekends I often take to the streets (or farmer's market) with a backpack full of 'Why Vegan' and 'Meat's not Green' fliers. On my birthday, December 4th, I was feeling extra excited to go leaflet and within five hours, I got out 500 leaflets! There are often protests on the weekends as well. Since my mother moved, I've had a hard time getting to place, however I've been able to attend anti-animal testing protests at the SNBL lab in Everett and the office of Action for Animals where I often volunteer.

I'm always sniffing out the next vegan outreach opportunity, and luckily there are events coming up all the time at my school for me to advocate for animals at. Our Tattoo Coffeehouse biannual poetry slam, Battle of the Bands, and the annual Unity Festival are perfect examples. At events like these I get a small grant from the Vegfund, with which I purchase delicious vegan sausages and cookies. I prepare simple, yet yummy, vegan dishes for all attendees to sample. Beside all my vegan dishes is always a sign reading "100% vegan (egg, meat, dairy, and cruelty-free) food!" in addition to pro-vegan fliers for the curious guests. Each year at the Unity Festival the Animal Rights club and I also perform a animal rights-based skit. This year we pretended I had prepared a delicious dinner, and after realizing it was made of golden retriever, my guests yelled at me and stormed out, I then turned to the audience and gave a short speech on how all animals feel pain and joy the same, and how baseless it is to be loving some species over others is.

PHOTOS OF ACTIVISM!



(All four above photos) Examples of my Animal Rights tables that I host every single Tuesday in the student lounge during lunch.



(Left) A boy enjoying some vegan sausage samples at one of my school outreach event.

(Right) The Animal Rights library display I created and set up for the entire month on January.



(Left) A friend who has just gone vegan and I at my senior project; the piggy meet & greet and vegan buffet!
(Right) Me at the farmer's market dressed as a cow handing out vegan recipes and information.



(Left) Flier for my senior project; a vegan potluck and meet & greet with rescued pig from Pigs Peace Sanctuary.
(Right) A vegan sausage dish, I set up with vegetarian restaurant guides, stickers, and fliers a at school poetry event.



(Left) Some of the letters I wrote on behalf of animals. I write to companies asking them not to test on animals, senators and legislatures asking them to oppose or support certain animal-related bills, to stores asking them to not sell fur, etc. I spend more on stamps than I do on food!
(Right) Winston, the rescued pig at my senior project. He helped open the eyes and hearts of meat-eating attendees, while they enjoyed delicious vegan foods.



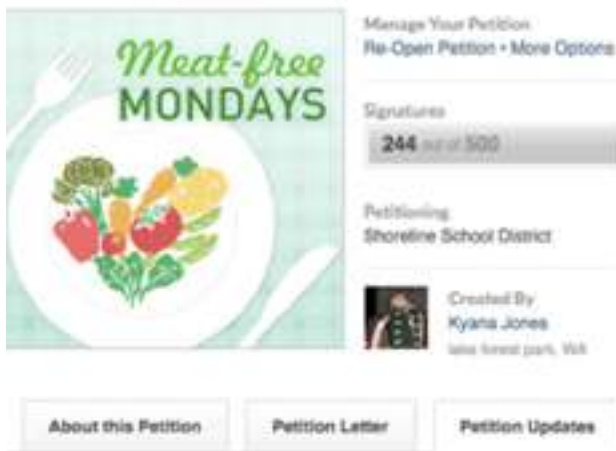
(Left) Student taking some vegan sausage samples at one of my school vegan outreach events.
(Right) An example of a recent animal rights informational project I did for my senior civics class.



(Left) More vegan outreach at my school during lunch!
(Right) A fellow student (who is trying to go vegan!) and I protesting animal testing at SNBL in Everett.



(Left) Photo from one of my vegan baking parties, which I host prior to vegan bakesale fundraisers. Most of the guests are not vegan, but have a great time making the food, and are beginning to incorporate vegan ingredients into their home cooking as well!
(Right) I hosted a special Valentine's Day "Have a Heart for Cows" event at my school. Wearing a cow suit I pour students cups or almond and soy milk and gave out lots of vegan cookies and literature.



(Left) My Meat-free Mondays petitions on Change.org, which I printed out and sent to my school district's head of food services.

(Right) One of my volunteer days with Action for Animals. I stuffed these vegetarian starter kits for 5 and a half hours!



(Left) This year's Animal Right Club yearbook photo.

(Right) Some more recent letters to Utah legislatures telling them why they need to oppose the recent Ag Gag bill.



(Left) My advertisement for the vegan, organic apple pies that I bake and sell for \$20 to fundraise for animal protection organizations such as the Humane Society of the United States, Mercy for Animals, and PeTA.

(Right) At the school Unity Festival, I set out a dish of vegan sausages (as I do at all public events I attend) with some pro-vegan literature.