Five years ago, I was researching for a 7th-grade English project about how processed food was manufactured. Article after article, I read about the dark secrets of the processed food industry. I held my breath as I scrolled through disturbing images of slush -- chicken nugget paste at McDonald’s -- and images of sausages -- I don’t even want to describe what I found out. The picture below shows my 7th-grade Cornell notes; they detail the process of how a chicken nugget is made.

In one article I found, there were two pictures formatted side by side: a happy, healthy cow next to a lump of meat on a plate. The thought gnawed at the back of my brain. It had never occurred to me before but suddenly facts were slowly falling into place. I suddenly came to the realization that I had been eating cows, pigs, and chickens all of my life; at 12 years old, I had never connected the dots between the live animal and the lifeless meat on my plate.

I made a vow to myself that I would not only stop eating meat, but I would make a positive impact on farm animal’s lives. From that day forward, I was determined to make a change in the world’s preconceived perceptions about farm animals.

In a 2014 scientific study, scientists discovered “that people can alleviate unpleasant feelings aroused by meat consumption by attributing animals to lesser minds” (Loughnan et al.). Meat eaters justify eating meat as a part of the social hierarchy among animals -- humans being above all animals. The gender identity most strongly associated with eating meat is men. This is

<table>
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<th>Notes:</th>
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<td>Fast Food and the Obesity Epidemic by Autumn Libal</td>
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<td>• About a chicken Nugget: The process begins with a chick hatched from an egg. With plenty of water and food, the chickens grow to be plump. 6 weeks after, food supply is cut off. They get butchered removing feet and head. Then the meat is scraped from the bone and mixed with other meat, salt, spices and chemicals. The mixture is carried through tubes and shaped into nuggets. The nuggets are carried...</td>
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for many reasons, the most prominent being the influence of food marketing and the association of eating meat with being masculine.

Since 8000 BCE, humans have been domesticating animals for food. While this is a practice that has gone on for thousands of years, only recently has the demand for meat soared. In the past 50 years, “total [meat] production has more than quadrupled” (Ritchie et Roser). The increase in demand for meat has increased the practices of factory farming. Factory farming can be associated with the idea of maximizing profits while minimizing costs (“Factory Farming”).

In recent years, the animals’ well-being in meat production has had little consideration. Animals are forced to grow quicker than nature intended, be confined to steel cages with no fresh air or sunlight, and never experience living a regular, happy life. While animal health has declined, the health of the planet has also deteriorated. Today, the meat industry accounts for “over a quarter (26%) of global greenhouse gas emissions” making it the most disruptive industry for the planet (Ritchie et Roser).

Farm animals are now considered one of the most abused animals on the planet (“Why Factory Farming”). I knew that I had to try to help make a difference in the farm animal’s lives now more than ever. I started brainstorming all of the ways that I could use my artistic skills to inflict positive change.
With my best friend Melissa, I wrote and illustrated a book called “A Happy World”. The project took 7 months to complete after the initial ideation to the final, printed product. My children’s book (written for 6-8-year-olds) strives to educate children on how to make the world a better place for generations to come. “A Happy World” follows a curious young girl named Summer who wants to make Mother Earth happier! In her dreams one night, she meets Mother Earth and is given a list of five things that she can do to make a positive impact on the world.

The first thing that kids can do to make the world happy is “Bee Kind to All”. By designating this as the number one thing kids can do to make a positive impact on the world, it places a certain significance on this ideal. The book teaches kids that being kind to all -- not limited to worms, cows, butterflies, bees -- is the number one most important thing that a person can do to change the world. “Kindness is one of the most important things you can give to others. If everyone was kind to all living things, the world would be a much happier place! No matter how big or small, how short or tall, it is important to be kind to all.”

To further our impact on animal’s lives, I decided that with every book sold I would donate to a farm animal sanctuary. I reached out to the Austin Farm Sanctuary to see if they
Aimee Jones  
*Bee Kind to All*

would be interested in partnering with me. Pictured below is Angela and Chris Fuller-Wigg who are the founders of the sanctuary. For every book that's sold, $1 goes to the Austin Farm Sanctuary who rescues farm animals from abusive situations and educates the public on the importance of animal rights.

So far, I have sold 80 books and have donated $80 to the sanctuary. In the upcoming years, I hope to spread the positive message of the book by doing book readings at schools, libraries, and private events. I also hope that my book will inspire kids to write their own books on how humanity can unite together and spread positivity. Like quoted in my book, “the world would be a much happier place if [humans] were kind to *all* living [beings]”! 
Works Cited


Pictures:

1. Screenshot of school notes from 2015
2. Personal photo taken by Melissa Richardson
3. Screenshot of the digital version of “A Happy World”
4. https://austinformsanctuary.org/humas