

New global education program, *Cats, Dogs and Us*, brings compassion into the classroom

Written by Australian Business

YARMOUTH PORT, Mass., Oct. 4, 2013 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- Cats and dogs are two of the world's most universal species, living side by side with people in hundreds of millions of homes and communities in every human society on this planet.

Yet, on every continent and in every culture, dogs and cats continue to be subject to cruel and inhumane treatment. And a growing body of research has shown that violence against animals is connected to violence against people.

To help address the root causes of animal cruelty, the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW – www.ifaw.org) is launching a new global educational program, ***Cats, Dogs and Us*** (www.ifaw.org/united-states/our-work/education)

which introduces students ages 5-14 around the world to the many different ways that people live with cats and dogs and helps develop knowledge, skills, and empathy and respect.

"IFAW's education programs don't just benefit animals. They are good for people and communities too," said IFAW President and CEO Azzedine Downes.

Numerous studies have shown that integrating humane education into the classroom can lead to reductions in school violence and bullying, while supporting moral development and instilling a sense of responsibility for both animals and people. Humane and environmental education have also been found to improve critical thinking skills, motivate students to become more engaged, and promote academic achievement, including better performance on standardized tests.

"IFAW is unique in combining a bottom-up and top-down approach to humane and conservation education," said Nancy Barr, Director of IFAW's Animal Action Education Program. "We engage individual teachers and students with coordinated activities across 20+ countries, while at the same time working with education ministries and other high-level institutions to infuse animal welfare and conservation themes into core reading, writing, science, social studies and other

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required school curricula."

IFAW's educational program have recently been endorsed by the European Commission, the Ministry of Education for the United Arab Emirates, and the UN Educational, Social and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), among others. In the United States

the United States

, IFAW is launching the new

Cats, Dogs and Us

program with

Time for Kids

and other high-profile partners, including the Los Angeles Unified School District, which is the second largest district in the country.

"We're also working closely with communities struggling with dog and cat populations to understand their needs and approach the issues with sensitivity and respect," said Downes. "By relating this work on the ground with political action and partnerships - most recently with the Clinton Global Initiative and the UN Development Program (UNDP) – we have helped implement animal-friendly solutions that last and can be replicated the world over."

About Animal Action Education IFAW's Animal Action Education program (www.ifaw.org/education) provides free teaching resources in more than a dozen languages and dialects that are expected to reach more than 5,000,000 educators, students ages 5-14 worldwide.

Cats, Dogs and Us

is the newest addition to IFAW's library of educational resources on a wide range of animal welfare and conservation themes. All the resources are aligned with local, regional and national curricula in literacy, language arts, science, social studies, citizenship and other core subject areas taught in schools worldwide.

About IFAW (the International Fund for Animal Welfare) Founded in 1969, IFAW saves animals in crisis around the world. With projects in more than 40 countries, IFAW rescues individual animals, works to prevent cruelty to animals, and advocates for the protection of wildlife and habitats. For more information, visit

www.ifaw.org

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