



Ceramic treat jar for dogs made by Ryan Williams.



Fifth-grade student making a linoleum print.



Photographs of animals dressed up for fundraising calendar.



Whatcom Humane Society volunteer Phyliss Shelley visiting a classroom with Danny to educate students about the mission of humane societies.

# PAWS for Art

Gaye Green

This lesson introduces students to the concept of arts-based service learning. Teaching students how the visual arts can be used to address community issues is a valuable way to demonstrate the importance of art in our society. In this lesson, fundraising for local humane societies is one way to further the cause of community members who assist animals in need.

### Essential Concepts

1. The visual arts can be used to address community concerns.
2. Students create animal treat jars to be used for fundraising purposes.
3. Students learn about the function and mission of humane societies, especially how to be kind to animals.

### Preparation

To prepare students for the lesson, have a volunteer from your local humane society visit the class. Discuss the work of humane societies and important issues such as neglect and abandonment of animals. Next, read about animals housed in shelters from books such as *Shelter Dogs* by Peg Kehret to inform students of the plight of abandoned animals.

Third, to teach students empathy for animals, share the scenarios and ask students to determine how the animal likely feels by choosing one of the adjectives from the provided list.

### Scenarios

- I am an elephant who has spent most of my life entertaining people in a small circus. We spend more than forty-eight to fifty weeks on the road each year traveling. When I am not traveling or performing, I spend the rest of my life chained to a railroad car. It's not especially clean either. Did you know that the famous elephant Dumbo spent twenty years restrained by a martingale which is a tie that runs from our tusk to our feet? Some of us elephants spend our entire lives in these conditions.
- I am an Australian shepherd dog who lives in a small kennel.

**Making treat jars will both promote kindness to animals and will provide funds for local humane societies.**

I have a hyperactive personality and love to run! I wait all day long for my owners to come home. But, many times when they come home they don't have time to visit with me or walk me. I just wish that they would spend time with me or even just talk to me. I really miss them during the day.

- I am a huge tiger who lives in a small, fairly cold cement cage in an older zoo. I pace a lot because I have nothing else to do. There isn't anything in my cage except for a metal bowl for my water. Time passes really slowly when you live in a rectangular enclosure with nothing but your own thoughts for company. The most exciting thing that ever happens to me is that people stare at me and throw things at my cage, day after day.

### Suggested Adjectives

Bored, sad, desperate, cold, unhappy, lonely, depressed, neglected, unwanted, needy, uncomfortable, angry, and stressed.

Ask students to share their stories of how they are kind to animals. Finally, talk about how art can be used to help with problems in the community. Describe how making treat jars will both promote kind-

ness to animals and provide funds for their local humane societies.

### Making Treat Jars

Provide each student with two coils of low-firing clay. Demonstrate how to form a coil pot by beginning with a round 1/4" base and adding the coils one by one. Emphasize the importance of scoring and using slip to attach the coils. After firing the jars, paint with acrylics. Spray fixative to seal paint on jar.

### Reflection and Celebration

- Have students write about the mission of humane societies and how such organizations help their community.
- Have students photograph how they are kind to their pets using disposable or digital cameras. Mat the photographs and hang for viewing at a family sharing day.
- Students can also share by going to other classrooms in the school and presenting their pictures and learning experiences.

### Extensions

- There are many art projects that can be used to raise funds for humane societies. Linoleum prints can be used to make cards to sell at special holidays.

- Silkscreen T-shirts to sell for profit or to be used by humane societies.
- Photograph animals to create a calendar that can be used for fundraising purposes. ☺

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### NATIONAL STANDARD

Students apply subjects, symbols, and ideas in their artworks and use the skills gained to solve problems in daily life.

### WEB LINKS

[www.sPCA.com/index\\_a.asp](http://www.sPCA.com/index_a.asp)  
[www.hsus.org](http://www.hsus.org)

### Materials

- two 3/4" thick, foot-long coils of clay and slip per student
- clay tools
- canvas
- selection of acrylic paints
- spray fixative