

6 Ways Your Kids Can Be Animal Heroes, by Kimberly Harper-Colucci, VLCE

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For many young people, a love of animals is their first realization of *sentience*, the idea that all beings feel. During these critical years, children develop the eating and behavioral patterns they carry with them throughout their lifetime. They began to associate the animals on the farm with the food on their plate.

They see the animals in their home and animals in shelters. They notice environmental issues of trash on the beach, plastics in the ocean, forest fires, etc.

These are all opportunities to empower our youth to take an active role in changing our world for the better. To stand up for the animals they love. To advocate for their needs. To educate their friends and family members.

Here are a few ways to empower young people to be animal advocates:

1. Have an Animal in Your Family?



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Really dive into what it means to be a responsible animal caregiver and steward. Learn about microchipping and spaying/neutering and why they are important. Set up grooming schedules. Build your

cat or guinea pig a play structure. Develop a training routine for your dog—they crave mental stimulation from sniffing and exploring. Connect with them and feel the love they have to offer!

2. Discover Local Wildlife Preserves, Animal Sanctuaries, or Rescue Organizations

Find out what is in your area. Arrange a time to learn about their inhabitants and what they do. What are some of the needs of the rescue organization? Plan an event to collect supplies to donate. Research the animals and use the opportunity to share about them with your community.

3. Cleanup!



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Keep the environment clean and safe for wildlife. Join a local park or beach cleanup and make it a family affair! Pick a day and invite all your friends and family to help pick up trash on trails, parks, along rivers and creeks, or the local beach. Every time you visit the beach, take a walk and fill up a sand bucket with trash. Trash from streets, sidewalks, and beaches end up in storm drains or washing into waterways, eventually entering oceans and killing wildlife and marine mammals.

4. Start a Club

Many schools encourage students to start clubs! Speak up and grab some friends and become animal advocate heroes. Ask a favorite teacher for sponsorship. There are many organizations you can join and start a chapter at your own school.

5. Choose Animal-Free Adventures

Don't attend or support events or venues where animals are used for entertainment. These events are driven by profits and animals suffer as a result. Performing animals are almost always trained using inhumane and cruel practices, punished, and denied their natural environment. Refuse to support this form of animal cruelty by not attending rodeos, horse races, circuses, marine parks, and theme parks that use animals.

6. Go Vegan!

Going vegan is the most effective way to help animals today. You save up to 200 animals per year when you stop using animal products. Much like the saying, “A smile is contagious,” let’s make the practice of not eating or using animal products contagious! Ask a friend to join you for support.

Want to learn more about how you can become an animal advocate? Join organizations such as [Animal Hero Kids](#) ([listen to Vegan Evan](#), the youngest graduate of the [Main Street Vegan Academy](#) and President of [Animal Hero Kids](#) on the [Main Street Vegan Podcast](#)) and [PETA Kids](#) and get involved in your community today.



Photo credit: Kimberly Harper-Colucci

As a [Main Street Vegan Academy](#) Vegan Lifestyle Coach and Educator, Kimberly Harper-Colucci specializes in modern food with an emphasis on local, lighter, plant-based fare. Her passion revolves around celebrating comfort food with a nutritious, elegant twist. She is devoted to helping others understand that healthy and delicious foods can be synonymous. Kimberly provides personalized lifestyle coaching for anyone wanting to transition to veganism or a whole food, plant-based diet. One-on-one time and tailored information shed light onto how easy veganism can be. She seeks to help make the world a better place, one meal at a time. You don’t need fancy gadgets or deep wallets. With the right instruction, plant-based cuisine can be simple and elegant with minimal work.