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Students Honored for Animal Advocacy in Education



Jenkintown, PA (January 2025) – National humane science program, Animalearn, recognized Livia Aschheim, a student at Cupertino High School from Santa Clara, CA, as its **2024 Humane Student of the Year**. Three additional students received honorable mention as a nod to their activism on behalf of animal use in education.

Animalearn Director Nicole Green noted, “Our humane student selections for 2024 are true change makers, and I am inspired by their bold activism on behalf of animals. I hope that this recognition encourages them to continue to be a voice for animals for years to come.”

Livia Aschheim received top honors as Humane Student of the Year because of her dedication to encouraging her school to offer fetal pig alternatives for a science class. Because of her efforts, her science teacher borrowed pig dissection models from Animalearn’s free loan program, The Science Bank. In her nomination entry, Livia wrote “Even if you don’t believe animals’ lives are significant in the context of potential human improvement, we can likely agree that children shouldn’t have to go against their religious or personal values for a grade. Equitable alternatives encourage compassion, promote independent decision making, and provide the opportunity for continued progress.”

Livia responded to this recognition, “Thank you so much for the honor. It may take time to create change for what you believe in, but if you persevere and work diligently, progress *will* happen. Express gratitude and respect towards others, and it will make all the difference. Ultimately, the heart of the animal rights movement is in the desire to reduce suffering, and I think that principle is universal.”

Animalearn's three student recipients of honorable mentions have also taken steps to promote compassion in the classroom.

Alexandria Duran, a high school student from San Antonio, TX, received an honorable mention in recognition of her advocacy against animal testing through a school documentary project for which she sought Animalearn's help. She also took steps against frog dissections at her school. Alexandria responded to her recognition with the following thoughtful words: "In each animal, just like a human being lies a soul. A soul that thinks, a soul that feels, and a soul that loves. Though we cannot speak to each other, on a subconscious level we both understand. The relationship between humans is unlike anything else we have on earth. This is why I am very proud to receive Animalearn's 2024 Humane High School Student of the Year Honorable Mention."

Honorable mention recipient Mandy Wu, a high school student from Bronx, NY, wrote an article in her student newspaper, **The Science Survey**, in January 2024 entitled *The Unseen Suffering of Animal Testing*. In her entry, she wrote, "I wanted to shed light on the hidden pain animals go through in labs. To me, humane education means teaching science in a way that respects all living things. I believe we can still learn a lot in life sciences without harming animals, and I hope my article helps others think more about this and become more aware." After Mandy learned of her honorable mention, she wrote, "I am truly honored to receive the Animalearn 2024 Humane Student of the Year Honorable Mention. This award means so much to me, and it strengthens my commitment to making a real difference for animals. I hope it inspires others to care and take action as well."

Our youngest recipient of an honorable mention, Charlotte Belcher, a junior high student from Durham, NC, was selected because of her staunch opposition to sheep eye dissections. Because of her objection to dissection, Charlotte was able to do an alternative project (creating an eye out of clay) instead of dissecting a sheep's eye. After learning about her honorable mention, Charlotte wrote, "Getting one of the Animalearn Humane Student of the Year Honorable Mentions means so much to me! It shows that even though I am a kid, I can still make a difference, even if it is a small one. It makes me feel that trying to help animals was not in vain, and it inspires me to keep trying to help animals."

"These students are awe-inspiring and believe in standing up for themselves, for animals, and for other students who may be too afraid to speak out. I feel that each of them will go on to do remarkable things." said Alisa Brooks, Associate Director of Animalearn.

As part of Livia's award, Animalearn will donate a fetal pig model that she can give to her school science program, as well as a gift card and swag to help promote the message of humane science. The three honorable mentioned students will receive gift cards and Humane Science Education Action Packs to help them to continue to advocate for animals used in science education.

Animalearn, a division of the American Anti-Vivisection Society, works with educators, students, policy makers, and others to achieve quality humane science education without the harmful use of animals. Animalearn's free loan program, The Science Bank, is the largest lending program in the U.S. and offers humane science products that enable educators to teach and students to learn anatomy, physiology, and psychology lessons without harming animals. For more information visit [TheScienceBank.org](https://www.TheScienceBank.org).