



VANCOUVER HUMANE SOCIETY ANNUAL REPORT 2007

OVERVIEW

2007 was a year of considerable change for VHS. As well as focusing on our key projects, significant work was accomplished in the areas of succession planning and capacity building. VHS continues to become stronger and all of us, Directors, Staff and Volunteers, are working hard to ensure that the organization will continue to be an effective voice for animals in the future.

KEY PROJECTS

Chicken Out!

2007 turned out to be one of the busiest and most exciting years for Chicken Out!, the VHS initiative to end the use of battery cages for egg-laying hens.

The year began with a national expose of Clark Egg Farms in Ontario, showing consumers once again the cruelty of Canada's battery (cage) egg industry. With assistance from VHS, the University of Guelph became the first university in Canada to remove whole (shell) eggs from the campus cafeteria.

In May, Langara College became the first campus in Canada to remove all eggs from caged hens from campus food services (liquid, shell, boiled) followed by Crofton House School, both in Vancouver. The City of Richmond became the first city in North America to request the removal of eggs from caged hens from all city-run facilities and to recommend all other consumers, businesses and producers do the same.

During the summer, the City of Vancouver and the Resort Municipality of Whistler both passed similar initiatives to Richmond. Numerous other cities are now considering similar recommendations. At this

time, VHS also began working with numerous local and national corporations on cage-free egg procurement policies and labelling initiatives.

With schools back in session, more academic institutions announced cage-free initiatives, including BC Institute of Technology (all eggs) and the University of BC (shell eggs). VHS has continued to work with schools and are expecting to announce 8 more cage-free schools in early 2008.

The Chicken Out! project has been very popular in the media as well, with stories in the Vancouver Sun, Richmond Review, Richmond News, Globe and Mail, Ottawa Citizen, the Vancouver Courier, the Georgia Straight, and many other dailies and weekly papers in Canada. The project was a regularly highlighted on CFUN's The Nik and Val show and Vancouver Co-op Radio's Animal Voices.

In 2007 the project has received generous funding from supporters and particularly the **William and Charlotte Parks Foundation for Animal Welfare** and the **Humane Society International (Canada)**.

Presentations were given by the Chicken Out! project and VHS at:

- Richmond City Council
- Vancouver Food Policy Council meeting
- Vancouver City Council

Some of the events that Chicken Out! either held or participated in included:

- The Vancouver Wellness Show
- National Farm Animals Day
- The Vancouver Sun Run
- International Respect for Chickens Day
- Animal Voices Film Festival
- Richmond Night Market
- Chicken Dance Party
- Richmond Community Festival
- East Side Pride Celebration
- Vancouver Folk Music Festival
- Richmond Animal Welfare Expo
- Henny on the Run
- Golden Spike Days
- Animal Rights Day
- Various Farmer's Markets around Vancouver
- SPCA Paws for a Cause
- Davie Days Festival
- Earthsave's Taste of Health
- UBC's Sustainability Fair

Animals in Entertainment, Exotic Pets and Captive Wildlife

Rodeo

VHS achieved a major victory for animal welfare when the Cloverdale Rodeo decided in May to discontinue four key events: calf-roping, steer-wrestling, team-roping and wild cow-milking. The decision followed several years of VHS (and other organizations) activity to educate the public and local officials on the cruelty involved in rodeo and the need to immediately eliminate some of the worst events.

Late in the year VHS received a request for information from the town of Markham, Ontario, which was considering emulating the City of Vancouver's ban on rodeo (which VHS was instrumental in achieving). At time of writing Markham had approved in principle a ban on rodeo, which would end the long-running rodeo held there.

VHS continued to request that the Vancouver Olympic Committee ensure that rodeo would not be featured in the entertainment for the 2010 games, but the Committee has not responded.

Exotic pets

VHS's work with the City of Vancouver on the issue of exotic animals resulted in the city council passing an exotic pet bylaw in February. The bylaw banned the ownership of a number of exotic species and outlawed the sale of these and several more.

The killing of a young woman by a pet tiger in 100 Mile House, B.C., brought massive public attention to the lack of regulation of the keeping of captive exotic animals in the province. VHS, which had highlighted the tiger's inadequate conditions previously, made submissions to the provincial government's subsequent review of the issue. The government has committed to addressing the problem and its proposals are due in 2008.

Greater Vancouver Zoo

Cruelty charges against the Greater Vancouver Zoo were dropped by Crown Counsel, which deemed the charges "not in the public interest." The charges stemmed from a VHS complaint to the BC SPCA about the treatment of Hazina, the zoo's baby hippo, and a subsequent investigation. VHS was disappointed at the outcome of the case but, under considerable public pressure, the zoo built a

new hippo facility which has greatly improved Hazina's conditions. The attention to the case also highlighted the lack of zoo regulation in B.C.

Vancouver Art Gallery

VHS voiced its opposition to an exhibit at the Vancouver Art Gallery in April that pitted live animals against each other for the sake of art. The installation consisted of lizards, snakes, toads and a number of insects kept together in a small display case. After a public outcry the gallery removed the exhibit.

Animals in film

VHS made a submission to the B.C. Film Commission's review of animal use in film productions in B.C. This followed the death of several golden retriever puppies during the making of a movie in the Lower Mainland, which helped bring to the attention of the commission and local municipalities. The commission has since produced draft guidelines on using animals in film-making, which are designed to improve safety and welfare.

Circus in Prince George

Following a number of representations from VHS, the BC SPCA and local citizens, Prince George City Council approved a bylaw banning circuses using exotic animals from the city.

Direct Animal Help

VHS was indeed fortunate to have a unique fundraising opportunity to raise funds for our McVitie Fund - emergency medical help for needy animals. The **Irene Joy Stewart and Florence Maud Shedden Endowment Fund for Domestic and Wild Animal Welfare**, held at the **Vancouver Foundation**, challenged VHS supporters to raise \$10,000 which the fund would match. This was successfully accomplished in four months!

In 2007, VHS spent nearly \$40,000 on spaying, neutering, food and supplies, and emergency medical help for desperate animals. Our focus, as last year, was the latter, as very little emergency assistance is available from other organizations. VHS Director June Humphreys continues to handle most of the calls.

We spayed or neutered 9 dogs and 83 cats, for a total of 92 animals.

VHS continues to sponsor CatFind – a telephone information service for people who have lost or found cats.

Humane Education

We are sincerely grateful to the **Vancouver Foundation** for again providing a grant for this worthwhile project.

The second year of our Power of One project saw a shift away from providing on-site presentations in classrooms to making the presentations available online to teachers so they could use them in their classrooms themselves. This is a much more manageable approach and has the potential to reach exponentially greater numbers of students.

Work was begun on the initial four presentations. The website has been updated and modified to reflect this new approach. The focus is also on keeping the website updated with fresh and interesting material.

The VHS sponsored another very successful “Sowing Seeds” humane education workshop in October. The registration topped 50! The feedback was overwhelmingly positive.

GENERAL

Communications with supporters

Three newsletters were produced and distributed to supporters, libraries and various community locations, as well as being distributed at VHS events. We have changed the format of our letters that go out in between newsletters. Two of the three are now in the form of an update, which is more informative. The third mailout is our Christmas fundraising letter.

429 activists (up from 355 in 2006) are on our email alert list and we issued almost 40 alerts. We distribute information on activities undertaken on any issue not only by VHS, but by other groups as well.

We continue to sponsor three websites: www.vancouverhumanesociety.bc.ca, www.chickenout.ca and www.powerofonehumaneeducation.org. We are making a concerted effort to keep the websites

up to date, and this has certainly paid off, as our donations via the website, as well as donations from unknown sources are increasing.

Volunteers

Volunteers continue to be a vital part of VHS. Including time spent at events, outreach, meetings, media, educational presentations, working directly with animals, etc. Volunteers have contributed well over 3000 hours to VHS activities in 2007.

Community Support

VHS staff and volunteers handle dozens of calls per week regarding cats, dogs and other animal issues. We provide advice on dealing with strays and/or feral cats, and spay/neuter issues and encourage individuals to take responsibility for the strays/ferals in their communities.

We also handle calls about animal cruelty issues, directing people to the appropriate authorities and providing advice and contact information.

We occasionally assist smaller organizations with advice on obtaining funding, charitable status and structuring their organizations.

For the sixth consecutive year, a VHS representative served on the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee at the Vancouver Foundation.

VHS director Marge Adams continues co-hosting Co-op Radio's Animal Voices program, of which VHS is a sponsoring organization.

Educational Events, Presentations and Displays

The VHS held many displays and events in 2007, at which our programs, brochures, factsheets, newsletters and reports were highlighted and distributed. These events are outlined above, primarily under "Chicken Out!"

As well, presentations were made at Capilano College, Brock House Society, the Animal Voices Film Festival, A Taste of Health and the UBC Animal Welfare Program.

Displays were held at the Wellness Show, the Sun Run, the Richmond Animal Wellness Show, Animal Rights Day, Vancouver Folk Music Festival, UBC Sustainability Fair and various farmers' markets.

Networking and Conferences

A VHS representative attended the National Farm Animal Care Council's (NFACC) first conference in Ottawa in September. NFACC has replaced the old Expert Committee on Farm Animal Welfare but consists of primarily the same players (industry) without the experts. The token animal welfare organization is the CFHS and will result in an organization more concerned with industry welfare than animal welfare. The conference, however, was very useful with international and local speakers as well as learning, monitoring industry and networking opportunities.

Two VHS representatives (Executive Director and the President) attended a Volunteer Vancouver workshop titled "The Critical Role of the Board Chair".

A VHS representative attended the Taking Action for Animals Conference in Washington, DC. and was able to accomplish significant networking and planning with several other organizations.

We continue to enjoy a productive working relationship with many organizations, including the BC SPCA, RestQ Sanctuary, Zoocheck Canada, HSI/Canada, and several others.

Media

An extensive article on factory farming written by VHS was published in the magazine "Alive" in August.

VHS had the following op-eds published:

Hamilton Spectator & Regina Leader-Post– , "*Paralyzed by choice at the egg cooler*" – Jan 12
Richmond Review and Richmond News – *cage-free eggs* – January 19;
Globe and Mail Online – "*Animal welfare: the writing's on the cage*" – April 2, 2007;
Vancouver Sun – "*How to choose more humane eggs*" – April 6, 2007;
Calgary Herald – "*The times they are a changin'*" – July 19, 2007;
Vancouver Sun – "*Factory Farming – cruel to animals and hard on the planet, too*" – September 25, 2007.

As well as the media quoted elsewhere in this report, VHS was mentioned or quoted over 200 times and had dozens of letters to the editor printed. Media outlets included CKNW Radio, CBC Radio, Peace Arch News, Asia Pacific, City TV, Burnaby Now, Abbotsford News, La Presse, Vancouver Province, CTV Newsnet, Vancouver Courier, CFUN Radio, Georgia Strait, Ottawa Citizen, The PoultrySite.com, Global TV, CTV, Victoria Times Colonist, Reuters, National Post, United Press International, Knoxville News, Edmonton Sun, CKWX Radio, Canadian Press, CFOX Radio, Ubyssy, Brandon Sun, London Free Press, Kelowna Daily Courier, Wake Up America, Langley Advance, Montreal Gazette, and the Calgary Herald.

Administration

Planning

The **Vancouver Foundation** generously provided a grant to VHS for capacity-building, which will include fundraising and succession planning. We're very grateful to VF for this opportunity, which has enabled us to:

- upgrade our database program to one which will serve us on a long-term basis, providing stable data storage, more efficient output of receipts and donor acknowledgements, and opportunity for more targeted fundraising in a user-friendly and recognized environment;
- hire a consultant to assist us in board development (governance and financial training); developing a diversified fundraising strategy and assist in outsourcing appropriate tasks, and
- examine the Power of One program for long-term efficiency and viability within the context of VHS's resources.

Staff

This year saw significant changes in staff. In the Power of One project, we redirected the resources previously used for a project manager to cover the costs of streamlining and redeveloping the project into a more realistic format. Bruce Passmore, our Farm Animal Welfare Project Coordinator, retired from his position to pursue higher education and we were very fortunate to hire Leanne McConnachie, who has a Master's degree from the Animal Welfare Program at UBC to act as our new Farm Animal Welfare Project Director.

Our long-time bookkeeper John Soer left VHS to spend more time with his children, and we have hired a new bookkeeper, Nona Carey. Nona worked on updating our accounting software and streamlining our bookkeeping processes, such as printing cheques directly out of the program.

We were extremely fortunate to receive funding from **Services Canada** for two summer students. Carita Chan and Kaylee Yochim extended our outreach program tremendously, and fortunately both have stayed on as part-time employees, making an outstanding contribution to VHS.

Directors

At our AGM in March, the following directors were elected:

Marge Adams
Laura Brown

Liberty Mulkani
June Humphreys
Joanne Chang
Jason Halvorson
Lana Grosse