



VANCOUVER HUMANE SOCIETY

# ANNUAL REPORT 2008

## OVERVIEW

2008 was a year of continuing success 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 build credibility in the community 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.

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## KEY PROJECTS

### Farm Animal Welfare

#### **Chicken Out!**

VHS's Chicken Out! project made great strides during the year in the effort to end the suffering of battery (egg-laying) hens.

Nine more B.C. municipal councils, supplied with information from VHS, adopted cage-free policies, including the BC capital, Victoria. The policies encourage city facilities, businesses and citizens to purchase cage-free eggs instead of eggs from battery operations. Communities who joined the cage-free movement in 2008 were:

Duncan  
Revelstoke  
Chetwynd

Pitt Meadows  
Kitimat  
Queen Charlotte

Lake Cowichan  
Victoria  
Highlands

VHS presented to the Metro Vancouver Regional District's Agriculture Committee in October. The committee unanimously agreed that a cage-free egg purchasing policy for its cafeteria and concessions was worth pursuing. The District conducted an economic analysis of the cost to switch to cage-free eggs to submit as part of a draft policy recommendation for the Committee's consideration in February 2009.

VHS also assisted Humane Society International/Canada in launching the project in Ontario. This resulted in two cities – Port Colborne and Pickering – also adopting cage-free resolutions. By the end of 2008, 15 cities across Canada – 13 in BC and 2 in Ontario – had joined the cage-free movement.

In addition, VHS helped a growing number of educational institutions to develop cage-free policies, including:

Concordia University  
McGill University

Simon Fraser University  
University of Ottawa

Ryerson University  
Wilfred Laurier University

University of Waterloo

By the end of 2008, 11 Canadian post-secondary institutions were cage-free.

Chicken Out! and the cage-free issue attracted major media attention in December with a television news feature on CBC News Sunday. The program, which quoted VHS extensively, explained the issue from all points of view and clearly illustrated how caged hens suffer. Chicken Out! was also covered by CBC Radio, the Georgia Straight, the Surrey Leader, the Richmond Review and other local media during the year.

VHS gave presentations on Chicken out! at:  
Peretz Centre for Secular Jewish Culture  
Earthsave Potluck Dinner

Chicken Out! was also promoted at the following events:

Vancouver Wellness Show	National Farm Animals Day (Downtown Vancouver)
BCIT Open House	Commercial Drive Care Free Parade
Port Moody Golden Spike Days	Burnaby Farmers Market
Lonsdale Farmers Market	Riley Park Farmers Market
Trout Lake Farmers Market	Langley International Festival
Richmond Animal Wellness Expo	Earthsave's Taste of Health

Near the end of the year, Chicken Out! received a major grant from the Vancouver Foundation, confirming its continuing value as an effective animal welfare initiative.

### **Eat Less Meat**

VHS launched its Eat Less Meat project early in the year to raise awareness of animal welfare and other problems created by intensive animal agriculture (generated by the overconsumption of meat). In addition to running full-page advertisements on the issue in the Georgia Straight and Vancouver Courier newspapers, a new website section was launched and an information brochure was published.

A VHS op-ed article on the issue was published by the Globe and Mail website in January and VHS was quoted in two related features in the Vancouver Sun.

VHS also distributed DVD copies of the documentary film *Earthlings* to 15 senior media editors/producers in Canada. The film details the severe animal welfare problems created by intensive farming and other forms of animal exploitation.

## **Animals in Entertainment**

### **Rodeo**

VHS focused on the Mighty Fraser Rodeo at the Abbotsford Agrifair during July/August, formally requesting the Agrifair to follow the Cloverdale Rodeo's example and eliminate roping events from its rodeo program. (VHS received no reply.)

VHS brought its concerns to public attention with a local press advertisement and poster, challenging the morality of rodeo in light of Christian values. The ad generated considerable discussion in the local and national media.

Several of the Agrifair/rodeo sponsors agreed to VHS's request to reconsider support for the rodeo events.

VHS also had an op-ed article published in the Toronto Star, criticizing the Canadian National Exhibition's new rodeo event, and another in the Vancouver Sun questioning breast cancer charities for partnering with rodeos for fundraising events, given the links between meat consumption and cancer.

VHS had letters to the editor published in the Vancouver Sun and Calgary Herald, condemning the inhumane treatment of rodeo animals.

### **Exotic Pets**

Vancouver City Council voted in February to ban exotic animal performances, a move long advocated by VHS in its discussions with the council.

## **Direct Animal Help**

For the second year, we were fortunate to have the opportunity to raise funds for direct animal help via a matching grant from the **Irene Joy Stewart and Florence Maud Shedden Endowment Fund for Domestic and Wild Animal Welfare**, directed by Mrs. Donna-Mae Moore. The challenge was increased to \$15,000.00, and as of December 31, we had already raised \$12,286.50.

In 2008, VHS neutered 34 cats, 5 dogs and 2 other species. VHS spayed 39 cats, 8 dogs, and five other species.

We spent almost \$40,000.00 on emergency medical treatment for needy animals.

## **Humane Education**

The change in focus from on-site presentations to making presentations available online for teachers was successfully completed. Four presentations were put on the website and made available on dvd.

VHS also sponsored another successful "Sowing Seeds" humane education workshop in October.

Unfortunately, the Canada Revenue Agency determined in the audit mentioned below that the Power of One project was not within the mandate of VHS and we were ordered to suspend it. We are hoping that another organization will be coming forward to take it over, and we are making all of our materials available.

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## **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. In addition we sent two updates and a Christmas fundraising letter to our supporters.

All of our printing needs, including our newsletter production, has been turned over to Orca Printers. The newsletter reflects their care and expertise, particularly with regards to the quality of the photographs.

We sponsor two websites: [www.vancouverhumanesociety.bc.ca](http://www.vancouverhumanesociety.bc.ca) and [www.chickenout.ca](http://www.chickenout.ca). These are kept up to date with the latest information on our work.

### **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 2008.

### **Community Support**

VHS staff and volunteers handle dozens of calls every 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.

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**

VHS sponsored our annual Animal Rights Day downtown at the Art Gallery on August 9. Many other organizations attended and it was a successful event.

VHS assisted Zoocheck Canada in a promotional/educational event at the Vancouver Public Library on the plight of animals in zoos. Rob Laidlaw, Executive Director of Zoocheck, promoted his newly-released book, *Wild Animals in Captivity*.

All other events were mentioned in Chicken Out! above.

## **Networking and Conferences**

VHS continues to work closely with other organizations on a local, provincial and federal level to promote advancement on animal welfare issues. We continue to enjoy a productive working relationship with many organizations, including the BC SPCA, RestQ Sanctuary, Zoocheck Canada, HSI/Canada, Liberation BC and several others. VHS & the BCSPCA meet regularly to discuss common issues and strategies. VHS & RestQ Sanctuary co-produced a rescued animals calendar, which proved to be very popular.

VHS & HSI/Canada work together on farm animal issues, in particular, coordinating battery hen initiatives in BC and across Canada. Canadians for the Ethical Treatment of Food Animals has been supportive of our Chicken Out! project.

VHS staff took part in a BC SPCA-organized symposium on exotic animals, held in Vancouver in May. VHS was represented on a panel examining standards of animal care, where the reasons for our opposition to zoos and other captive animal facilities were explained. The audience comprised people from the zoo industry, government officials, animal scientists and animal welfare groups.

Also in May, VHS's Director of Farm Animal Programs presented at an event held by the UBC Animal Welfare Program called "Improving the Lives of Animals: An Alumni Panel Discussion".

## **Media**

VHS provided extensive information to the television program CBC News Sunday for its production of a documentary feature on the battery egg industry in Canada, which was broadcast in December (See Chicken Out! section above).

VHS had four op-ed articles published during the year:

Globe and Mail – Care about the environment? Eat less meat (January 23).

Vancouver Sun – Consolidation within the poultry industry an ominous trend (June 25).

Vancouver Sun – Marketing and charities make for odd couple (July 16).

Toronto Star – It's a pity CNE was roped into rodeo (August 15).

In addition to media coverage referred to elsewhere in this report, VHS was mentioned or quoted more than 70 times. Media outlets included: Vancouver Sun, The Province, Victoria Times-Colonist, 24 Hours, MacLeans Magazine, Globe and Mail, Ottawa Citizen, CBC-TV, Edmonton Journal, Global TV BC, CKNW Radio, CTV News, News 1130, Vancouver Metro, City-TV, Delta Optimist, Abbotsford News, Abbotsford Times.

## **Administration**

### **Planning**

The Raiser's Edge database was installed and initiated and has proven to be a valuable tool in managing our donor communications.

Throughout 2008, we continued our capacity-building project, with considerable work done on a long-term fundraising and financial plan.

As mentioned above, due to CRA concerns that the project encompassed social justice and environmental issues as well as animal welfare, the Humane Education Project was terminated and resources distributed to other organizations.

### **Staff**

We were again fortunate to have funding approved for two full-time summer students, which meant we were able to do a considerable amount of outreach.

We have turned our accounting and bookkeeping over to Loewen Kruse Chartered Accountants, a small, local firm which specializes in non-profits.

Our program staff, Peter Fricker and Leanne McConnachie, continue to exhibit an extremely high standard of work with their expertise, dedication and commitment to promoting the VHS vision - a society in which humankind respects the inherent rights and needs of all animals, and in which animals are not exploited for human purposes.

### **Directors**

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

Liberty Mulkani (President)

Lana Grosse (Treasurer)

Laura Brown (Secretary)

June Humphreys

Chris Hajek

Marge Adams