

Compassionate Action for Animals

Annual Report 2013



Dear supporter,

In 2013, Compassionate Action for Animals expanded our reach on behalf of farmed animals, bringing our compassionate message to thousands at events and online.

Thanks to devoted supporters, 2013 was another successful year. We grew Twin Cities Veg Fest, our festival celebrating all things veg. We revived our conference, Their Lives, Our Voices, to connect, inspire, and inform animal activists. We continued our outreach, distributing leaflets and showing videos, and we hosted regular community-building and social events. Here are a few highlights:

Attendance to Twin Cities Veg Fest grew to 2,000. Our festival included delicious vegan food, resources on vegetarian nutrition, speakers, and a concert. Most importantly, **we demonstrated that the animal protection movement is thriving and we helped attendees feel encouraged and enthusiastic about making compassionate food choices.**

Outreach grew! **We distributed over 30,000 leaflets** at colleges and concerts exposing the cruel realities of modern animal agriculture. It's not enough to know that abuse is happening; we need to spread our message of compassion. We also continued our paid-per-view program, showing factory farming footage to hundreds, and ran an innovative online campaign.

We brought back Their Lives, Our Voices. We first held this conference from 2008 through 2010, and we revived it as a one-day conference the day after Twin Cities Veg Fest. We're growing the animal protection movement by giving activists the tools and education they need to speak out and organize on behalf of farmed animals.

We like to have fun! Potlucks, dineouts, and a camping trip were some of the ways we connected our community together. Sharing resources and connecting with other people that care sustains our momentum.

We continue to speak at schools. **Bridges of Respect, our humane education program, conducted over 50 presentations at middle schools, high schools, and colleges.** Our thought-provoking presentations engage students to embrace compassion and give them valuable critical thinking tools.

Rain and snow didn't stop us! We rescheduled our outdoors Spring Vegan Food Showcase twice in April due to rain and snow, and we finally held it on a cold and rainy day, but that didn't dampen our spirits. We handed out tasty samples of chocolate almond milk, veggie hot dogs, and coconut ice cream.

This is just a sample of what we accomplished. Please read stories in this report from our volunteers and supporters about their experiences with Compassionate Action for Animals and learn about the powerful impact we're having.

Our effort is a collective one. Volunteer leaders provide skills and connections and carefully plan outreach and events. Over 150 volunteers engage the public in animal issues and help run our events. National and local animal advocacy organizations provide literature, videos, speakers, and strategic leadership. Companies provide tasty and affordable plant-based foods. Finally, individual donors provide most of our funding.

Our collective effort is making a difference! We've heard from hundreds of participants that our efforts are giving the information, tools, and motivation to make compassionate food choices.

Yours for the animals,

Unny Nambudiripad
Executive Director

Twin Cities Veg Fest

By Nick Coughlin, Volunteer



So many great resources to see at our second Twin Cities Veg Fest.

Two years ago I met my friend Unny Nambudiripad for lunch in a little nook overlooking the courtyard of Coffman Union. We met to catch up, but I also wanted to ask Unny what I could do to help out with CAA's first Twin Cities Veg Fest.

If you know Unny, you've probably heard his hearty laugh, seen his uncanny ability to network, and felt his intense enthusiasm for animal advocacy and for life in general. When he asked me if I had ever heard of "Paid-Per-View" before, that intense enthusiasm nearly shattered the window behind him. Eyes wide, he said, "It's one of the most powerful forms of activism, Nick."

Sure enough, it is.

Now, for the past two years, I have helped run the Paid-Per-View table at the Twin Cities Veg Fest. We set up a table with three computers and offer visitors a dollar to watch a four-minute segment of "Farm to Fridge," a documentary produced by Mercy For Animals that gives people a glimpse into the hidden world of animal agriculture and allows them to make more informed food choices.

The footage is grotesque and difficult to see, but I never lie in order to get someone to watch it. Even so, we maintain a steady flow of viewers throughout the day. Some people watch for three seconds before wincing with a hand up and walking away, but most watch the entire video.

This is, indeed, one of the most powerful forms of activism. I've held sobbing adults stunned by what they've seen, strangely thanking me for opening their eyes to the ugly underworld of animal agriculture where sentient beings endure the unimaginable. Some make an immediate connection and swear they will never eat meat, dairy, or eggs ever again. Others are more guarded as they take their dollar and silently walk away. No matter the reaction, we are there to provide positive, supportive feedback and kind alternatives.

The Twin Cities Veg Fest embodies that spirit of positivity, and I am proud to have been a part of it.

Outreach

By Grace Van Susteren, Outreach Coordinator

Over the course of the year, CAA has educated thousands of people about factory farming in many ways, including our tabling and leafleting programs.

It's been an exciting year for leafleting. We've handed out leaflets to thousands of concertgoers, university students and community members. One of my favorite and also one of our most successful leafleting events was the Minneapolis May Day Parade, where we handed out 2000 leaflets to festival attendees. I also enjoyed hosting some special guests from Vegan Outreach and other animal advocacy groups. I enjoyed the opportunity to learn and leaflet with them!

In 2013 CAA continued with the "Paid Per View" tabling campaign where \$1 is offered in exchange for watching the "Farm to Fridge" movie. This year I tabled mostly at the University of Minnesota's Twin Cities campus. I really enjoy educating my fellow students, and there is never a boring Paid Per View day. There can be yells, tears, questions, answers, and the ever glorifying 'hamburger into garbage' toss.

One day, towards the end of a tabling session, a man ap-

proached me wanting to watch the video. He didn't say much beforehand, but afterwards he was all questions and stories. He had been a vegetarian about ten years prior, but had stopped due to advice from his doctor. He said he had forgotten how animals were treated and was happy to have seen the video, but expressed regret because he thought it was a diet that would never work for him health-wise. I told him that nutrition research over the last ten years shows that it is very possible to be healthy and vegetarian. I then gave him some links to good information and he was eager to do some research and try a vegetarian diet once again.



A viewer witnesses the horrors of modern animal agriculture at Twin Cities Veg Fest 2013.

Their Lives, Our Voices

By Josh Jacobson, Supporter

I grew up on the traditional American diet. My daily meals usually contained meat and potatoes in some fashion. Teachers had taught me that these foods contained necessary nutrients for humans to survive, and the USDA perpetuated this belief with their "food pyramid." In 9th grade, I slowly began to cut meat from my diet and eventually became vegan after watching "Farm to Fridge." I will always remember my transformation when talking to people about a plant foods-based diet.

I could not cut all animal products out of my diet immediately, and so I should not expect others to do the same. I merely hope that by showing them the reality of the animal agriculture industry, they will begin to make more compassionate choices when deciding what to eat. I choose to advocate for animals in the hopes that others will do the same and reduce suffering in the world.

I attended "Their Lives, Our Voices" this year for multiple reasons. I do not know many vegans, so I thought it would be amazing to see so many vegans in the same place for once. More importantly, I wanted to learn how to effectively advocate for animals, and TLOV provided an excellent resource for me and other advocates. Nathan Runkle of Mercy For Animals provided a powerful opening that reminded me why I fight for animals. His talk also reiterated that the people in the slaughterhouses work in terrible conditions and would most likely not choose to be there if they had a better economic circumstance. Nick Cooney of the Humane League gave the talk that impacted my advocacy the most.

He discussed the psychological reasons why people would choose to become vegan and explained the most effective ways of persuading people to become vegan. One of the final sessions I attended taught me how to host larger vegan advocacy events. These talks all served as reminders of why I became a vegan in the first place and taught me how to use my life for the voiceless in the world.

As animal advocates, we need to recognize and fight exploitation of all levels in the world, whether it be non-human animals, slavery in the chocolate trade, or workers who do not receive a fair wage. We also need to remember that being a vegan requires some form of privilege. Not everyone has access to the requisite knowledge of nutrition nor do they necessarily have time to learn how to create vegan meals. In fact, it may be impossible for some to have access to affordable and nutritious vegan food due to the lack of close by and convenient grocery stores. If we work toward a solution for these interconnected issues, we can slowly loosen the grip that animal agriculture has on society. As this grip loosens, we will be able to create a world where each of us has the ability and means to make more compassionate choices in their life. Compassionate Action for Animals does amazing work on these fronts. The advocacy events teach us more advocacy skills, and CAA hosts events teaching

people how to cook delicious, cheap, and healthy vegan meals. In this respect, I think CAA provides a great example for grassroots advocacy groups as all parts of the problem receive recognition. We need to recognize all parts of the problem and work to fix them as a whole if we want greater progress.



Learning about animal advocacy at Their Lives, Our Voices

Community Building

By Torie Meltzer, Volunteer

I became a vegan because of the community provided by Compassionate Action for Animals. A few years ago, I wanted to make the step from vegetarian to vegan, but I had no support from my family, friends, or boyfriend at the time. I began to attend CAA's events, and in doing so, gathered the courage to try a vegan lifestyle.

In spite of my passion for animals, I still did not have any close friends that were vegetarian, much less vegan. That was extremely discouraging for me, especially when most of my friends were skeptical of Tofurky and kale. I soon realized that there must be others in situations similar to mine and I wanted to provide a community for those as passionate about animals as I was. I decided to help out and become part of the vegan community with CAA.

This year, I organized the 10th annual Vegan Thanksgiving Pot-

luck. While I was making announcements to the large crowd at the event, everyone in the room was turned toward me and smiling back. Even though the potluck had just begun, I felt connected and supported by people that I had met for the first time. I spent part of the afternoon speaking with a volunteer about living in a non-vegan household. I had never met this woman before, but I instantly felt she could understand my passions more than my closest friends.

Furthermore, this event was about experiencing delectable vegan food. At times, the table (and dessert table) were completely full and almost everyone came for seconds. During the event, my conversations with new friends all included my description of how "I've never been to an event where I could eat everything served on the table!" I returned for thirds on Annette's orange caramel cake (recipe on exploreveg.org).

Not only was the Thanksgiving Potluck a delicious annual event for the vegan community, it was also a valuable experience for those who, like me, are seeking encouragement and community support. The event drew a large crowd that was teeming with positive energy, good food, new friends, and a strong compassionate vibe for animals.



Enjoying animal-free food and the company of friendly people.

Bridges of Respect

By Shannon Kimball

Bridges of Respect, Program Coordinator



Shannon Kimball with Steve Odmark (right)
after a couple of presentations.

We were invited to eleven different schools in 2013 to talk about animals and our food choices. By the end of the year, the Bridges of Respect Humane Education Program reached more than 1500 students during 51 presentations. One of our regulars is Steve's Ethics classes at Century College. Since 2008 we've been providing two or three presentations per semester with a summer class or two thrown in for good measure.

By 2008 I had been giving animal protection presentations for five years already when I took Steve's Ethics class. The wide range of topics in the syllabus interested me and I needed a philosophy credit as I neared graduation. It was a 'slam dunk' when I noticed animal rights as one of the topics. As we approached the animal rights chapter, I brought some of my presentation materials such as large, laminated photos of factory farms to Steve's office. I told him a little bit about what I do and that I wouldn't mind giving the other students a 10 to 15 minute overview of how I incorporate the theories we're learning in class into my everyday lifestyle, i.e., veganism. Steve liked my presentation to my class so much that he gave me the full class period with his other class (that I wasn't enrolled in), and so it began.

As a lead-in to my presentation, his students read "All Animals Are Equal" by Peter Singer in addition to other material from their text. The presentation looks at animal protection from a social justice perspective and is now part of the curriculum as a series of essay questions on their final exam.

On a personal level, Steve has been affected by the presentations from Bridges of Respect. While working out compromises with his family, they've made strides toward veganism, such as switching to soy milk. They haven't become vegetarian or vegan, but in an effort to reduce their purchases from factory farms, they raise their own hens for eggs now. Was that the outcome I was hoping for? Well, not precisely, but yes. We praise everyone who has made an effort to help animals. Every time someone moves away from factory farming or chooses to eat fewer animal products, it reduces the amount of suffering that animals will endure. We want to support people who care about animals, regardless of what stage they're in on their journey to a fully plant-based diet and lifestyle. That's the CAA way.

Will Steve ever be fully vegan? I don't know, but I do know that he's closer than when we met. He is my friend now and I accept his rate of change. I'm glad I could help in any way to facilitate that change, whatever the rate. People with different personal stories and backgrounds may be able to modify their lifestyle faster. After all, it was one of Steve's students who approached my wife and me at the TC Veg Fest because she wanted to tell me that she's been vegan since she saw the presentation four years prior.

Financial Report

Dave Rolsky
Treasurer

Income

Category	Amount
Individual Donations	\$66,329
Grants	\$50
Programs	\$15,810
Other Income	\$441
Total	\$82,580

Expenses

Category	Amount	Percentage
Administration	\$9,719	12%
Fundraising	\$12,831	15%
Programs	\$60,937	73%
Total	\$76,837	

Program highlights

Program	Amount
Twin Cities Veg Fest 2013	\$13,529
Paid Per View	\$2,013
Bridges of Respect	\$1,239
Veg Food Showcase	\$1,029

Thanks to your support, 2013 was a great year for our efforts on behalf of farmed animals. As always, the vast majority of our income came from individual donors like you. Because of our strong financial position, we were able to spend more on Twin Cities Veg Fest 2013. In particular, we budgeted more money for advertising and a concert. As a result, we were able to attract around 2,000 people to the event!

Our income has grown over the past years, and we've been finding ways to spend this money most effectively for animals. This past fall, we hired two new part time staff members, an Outreach Coordinator and an Events Coordinator. These staff people have allowed us to continue planning big events like Twin Cities Veg Fest while also doing regular smaller activities like leafleting, Paid Per View video showings, potlucks, and dinners.

We're also looking at other ways to continue spending the money you've so generously donated. We plan to increase our advertising budget for the 2014 Twin Cities Veg Fest. This event is one of the best ways to introduce people to delicious vegan food and teach them about factory farming. We think that there is great potential to increase attendance at this year's event with more and better advertising.

Thank you again for your continued support. We are excited to see Compassionate Action for Animals continue to grow and become more effective advocates for farm animals. We know that every time we can convince someone to move towards veganism, we have spared some animals from the brutality of factory farming. With your continued support, we will remain steadfast and strong in our work for animals.

CAA Thanks Our Donors

Animal Guardians (\$1,000+)

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We encourage people to cultivate empathy for animals and move towards a plant-based diet.