People for Animals

Affordable Veterinary Care For All

HUMANE EDUCATION PROGRAM

Grades 6 & 7
WHERE DOES THAT CUTE PUPPY COME FROM?

HUMANE EDUCATION

GRADES 6 & 7 PUPPY MILLS 45-50 Minutes

OBJECTIVE:

Students will learn:

- What a puppy mill is: conditions in puppy mills, illnesses, number of animals, overbred females.
- How to recognize an ad for puppy mill dogs for sale (advertising, pet store/internet connection).
- That where a dog comes from has a profound effect on the lives of other dogs, so our choices make a difference.
- What puppy mills owners' motivations for running this business is. (Profit vs. compassion).
- How to make a difference and stop supporting puppy mills.

SETUP: (5 minutes)

- Cram a stuffed dog into a crate that he barely fits into. Have the crate in clear view for the students to see. Ask what they see. If that dog were kept in there 24/7 would that be right? Why, why not?
- Who has a dog or knows someone who does? Where did he/she come from?
- What considerations were taken into account before deciding to get a dog?
- What research did you do before getting a dog?

ACTIVITY: Watch video (3 minutes)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vvmYj_wxKww

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DISCUSSION: (10 minutes)
Explain USDA's relationship to commercial dog breeders. The United States Department of Agriculture is tasked with inspecting commercial dog breeders under a federal law called the Animal Welfare Act. It is estimated that there are 10,000 puppy mills in the U.S. Three thousand of them are regulated by the USDA.

A commercial dog breeder is defined as a person who owns more than four breeding females and sells to customers without a face-to-face interaction (through brokers, the internet, pet stores).

There are two main problems with the relationship between the USDA and commercial dog breeders:

1. The USDA is woefully understaffed (it also must inspect labs, circuses, roadside zoos, etc.) and from an institutional standpoint, it does not emphasize its oversight and regulatory powers over commercial dog breeders. In other words, it sees itself more of a partner than a police force.

2. The Animal Welfare Act, which the USDA uses to regulate breeders, is pathetically inefficient at protecting animals, allowing cruel and inhumane violations to continue, like underfed or starving dogs, filthy water bowls covered in algae , lack of proper exercise, confinement in small cages, breeding at every heat cycle, and killing of unwanted dogs.

Explain Animal Welfare Act's relevance to commercial dog breeders: A list of what the Animal Welfare Act allows is provided below. The irony behind the Animal Welfare Act is that it allows commercial dog breeders to get away with neglecting their animals' welfare.

Explain the generally accepted definition of a puppy mill: A puppy mill is a facility where the owner values profit over the welfare of the dogs present. In other words, making money is more important than properly taking care of the animals, and if corners need to be cut in order to save money, so be it.

Pet Store bans: New York is now the sixth state to pass a ban on pet sales in stores, following California, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Oregon and Washington.

ACTIVITY: What the Animal Welfare Act, which the USDA uses to regulate commercial dog breeding, allows: See activity for printing and distribution to students below. **(10 minutes)**

ACTIVITY IS PRINTED TWICE FOR USE AS HALF SHEETS.

ACTIVITY:
Which of the following are not allowed by commercial dog breeders under the Animal Welfare Act? Put an X next to your answer.

	ALLOWED	NOT ALLOWED
1. More than 500 dogs on their premises.		
2. More than 1000 dogs on their premises		
3. Confining dogs in cages only 6 inches larger than their own bodies.		
4. Keeping a dog in a cage 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.		
5. Breeding females at every heat cycle of their lives.		
6. Killing unwanted animals.		

ACTIVITY:
Which of the following are not allowed by commercial dog breeders under the Animal Welfare Act? Put an X under your answer.

	ALLOWED	NOT ALLOWED
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3. Confining dogs in cages only 6 inches larger than their own bodies.		
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GROUP/CLASS DISCUSSION: (5 minutes)

- Come up with a list of practices that responsible dog breeders should follow regarding:
  - Care of both parent dogs and puppies
  - Vetting prospective buyers
  - Lifetime involvement with dog and its adopters
  - Transparency and health guarantees

DISCUSSION OF PUPPY MILLS THAT PASS FOR LEGITIMATE BREEDERS

How can you tell a legitimate breeder from puppy mill dogs?

- A responsible breeder wants to do a background check on a potential buyer to make sure his/her dog is going to a loving, responsible home.
- A responsible breeder is completely transparent about his/her operation and facility, welcoming questions and inspections from potential buyers, allowing them to meet the parents, including where and how they are being raised, seeing if they are healthy, and their interaction with other dogs and people.
- A responsible breeder does genetic testing and behavior evaluations, refusing to breed dogs that might result in sick puppies.
- A responsible breeder will always take back a puppy it has sold at any age, no questions asked.
- A responsible breeder does not do mass breeding. He/she cares for his/her dogs like family, not sparing expenses. They are in business for the love of the dogs, as much, if not more so than to make money.

Any of the following behaviors by a breeder should be a red flag warning you to walk away:

- Not allowing you to see their facilities/home.
- Wanting to meet you at a “neutral” site.
- Not agreeing at the time of sale to take the dog back at any time.
- Not providing you with health, vaccination paperwork.

GROUP/CLASS DISCUSSION: (10 minutes)

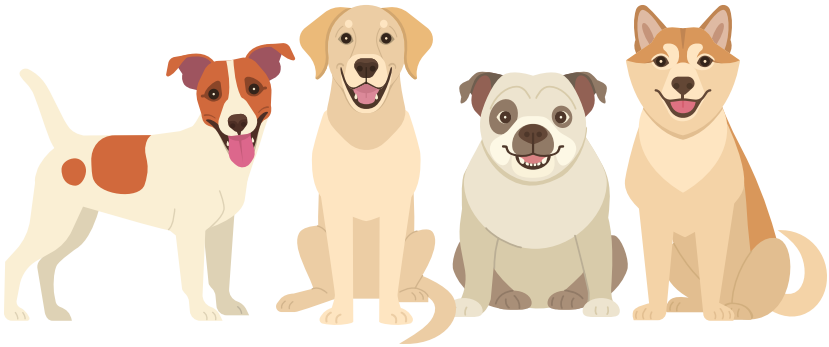
Ask each group to brainstorm ideas below, except for the last two groups.
They should do the opposite: brainstorm ideas to discourage that method of purchase.

- Make a list of all the different ways people can obtain a dog.
- List the pros and cons of each.
- Distribute index cards with each method to separate groups.
  - Shelter
  - Rescue
  - Stray
  - Neighbor/friend/family member
  - Backyard breeder
  - Purchase (store, internet, flea market, neighbor)

CLOSURE: (5 minutes)

How can people be convinced to obtain more dogs in ways that help reduce the homelessness, problems and hardships that dogs face in our world? What can you do?

- **S**preading the word (share your knowledge with your friends and loved ones, particularly those expressing an interest in obtaining a companion pet).
- **A**wareness (understand the meaning behind the "adopt, don't shop" philosophy).
- **V**isit a shelter.
- **E**ducation (learn as much as you can about the commercial breeding industry at sites like humanesociety.org and bestfriends.org).
- **A**ctivism/Agency (volunteer at a shelter or with a rescue group or advocacy organization).



You can make a difference in the life of an animal!

Be Kind

Be Patient

Be Compassionate to Animals!

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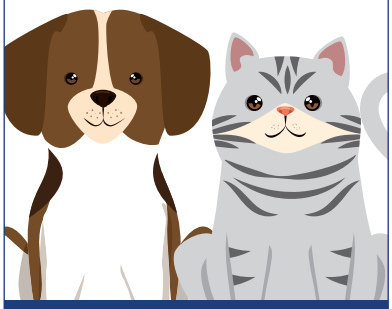
People for Animals
a private non-profit
offering compassionate
and affordable veterinary
care since 1980.



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Certificate of Completion

Kindness, Patience and Compassion for Animals

AWARDED TO _____ DATE _____

Our vision is a healthy, happy life for every animal!

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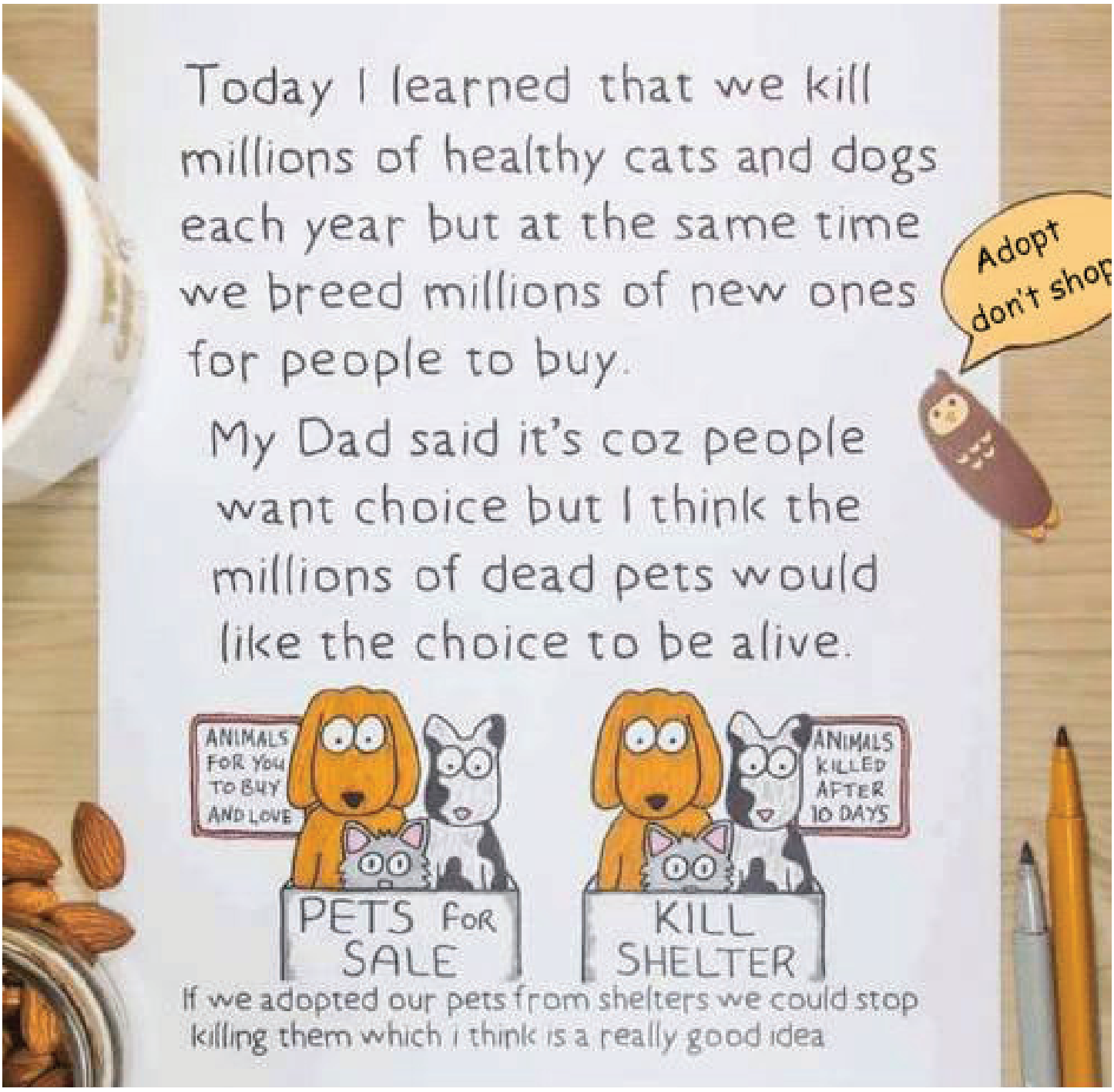

credit Takis Shelter

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