

Green Chimneys
Human-Animal Interaction
Conference Summary 2015



Growing Together:
Children, Animals and
Sowing the Seeds of
Resiliency

Brewster, New York, USA

April 24-25, 2015



Co-hosted by:



UNIVERSITY of
DENVER

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK
Institute for Human-Animal Connection

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements and Contributors	3
Greetings, Opening Remarks, Conference Overview <i>Joseph Whalen, Samuel Ross, Michael Kaufmann, Philip Tedeschi</i>	4-5
Risk and Resilience: Positive Youth Development <i>Philip Tedeschi and Miyako Kinoshita</i>	6-7
Resilience, Children, Animals and Culture <i>Brinda Jegatheesan</i>	8-9
A Guided Tour of Green Chimneys <i>Green Chimneys Staff</i>	10-11
Between Horses and Humans: Principles of Horse Handling and Training at E.Motion <i>Roswitha Zinck</i>	12-13
Building Children’s Resiliency Through Their First Pet Loss <i>Adam Clark</i>	14-15
Rewilding Our Hearts and Compassionate Conservation: Why Animal Emotions Matter <i>Marc Bekoff</i>	16-17
A Protocol to Building a Therapeutic Program That Allows, Empowers and Develops Resilience <i>Yoni Yehuda</i>	18-19
The Power of Play in Animal-Assisted Interventions <i>Risë VanFleet and Tracie Faa-Thompson</i>	20-21
University of Denver Graduate School of Social Work Debrief Session <i>Master of Social Work and Animal-Assisted Social Work Students</i>	22-23
Summary Panel and Conclusion <i>Marie Jose Enders Slegers</i>	24-25
Special Topic: Animal Ethics at Green Chimneys	26-27

Acknowledgements

To the people and animals of Green Chimneys, we send our gratitude for bravely opening your barn doors and hearts to the fortunate group of conference attendees in 2015. Walking the land of Green Chimneys, learning from your human animal and other animal staff and hearing from leaders in the field of human-animal interactions inspired thought and action for many years to come. Thank you.

To the students, faculty and staff of the Institute for Human-Animal Connection (IHAC) and University of Denver's Graduate School of Social Work (GSSW), thank you for your energy and participation at the Green Chimneys conference in 2015. The promise we see and foster within each of you gives us hope for the future. Thank you.

Contributors

This conference summary report was prepared as part of a unique special topics course at University of Denver's Graduate School of Social Work. Master of Social Work students earning a certificate in Animal-Assisted Social Work met on campus for planning, participated in a special pre-conference day hosted by Green Chimneys, attended the conference as part of their specialization, facilitated conference debrief sessions with attendees and prepared sections of the following conference report. Many thanks to the following contributors to this course and report:

Editors:

Erica Elvove, MSW, Manager with IHAC, Adjunct Faculty with GSSW
Philip Tedeschi, MSSW, LCSW, Director with IHAC, Clinical Faculty with GSSW
Hagit Brandes, PhD Candidate with GSSW

Student Contributors:

Alison Blanken	Renee Lenth	Olivia Pilcher
Sophie Briend	Alison Lentz	Amanda Ray
Chester DeAngelis	Valerie Meros	Sally Roberts
Samantha Herren	Emily Mittelman	Abbey Westphal
Meghan Kelly	Matthew Mock	Audrey Williams
Kathryn Konicek	Jeri Norkus	Whitney Young

Greetings, Opening Remarks, Conference Overview

Joseph Whalen, Samuel Ross, Michael Kaufmann, Philip Tedeschi

The 2015 Human-Animal Interaction Conference began on the beautiful main campus and farm of Green Chimneys in Brewster, New York. In the dining hall, participants passed through sliding glass doors that typically lead to a patio and on this day found a beautiful breakfast layout under a tent to enjoy while settling in before the official greeting from Michael Kaufmann, Farm and Wildlife Director of Green Chimneys.



From the dining hall, we were ever-aware of the inspiring human-animal-environmental interactions that surrounded us on campus. We could see the bright green grass, the oak and maple trees that gently danced in the wind and the handsome peacocks that fluttered their colorful feathers through the windows. Inside the dining hall, we could see the artwork that each of the children’s dorm groups designed, forming an ever-important anti-bullying campaign along the walls. We even sat under a hanging “chandelier” of colorful origami cranes in all different sizes and hanging lengths.

While we ate a healthy breakfast, we expressed disbelief that we were actually visiting the legendary Green Chimneys! The conference was quickly filling up with distinguished names and recognizable faces from books, articles and well-known organizations, budding professionals and eager students, all collected on the campus that was built on Dr. Samuel Ross’s dream of connecting children and animals.

Michael Kaufmann collected our attention to the front of the room, addressing us with both confidence and humor. He welcomed everyone to Green Chimneys and expressed his and the organization’s gratitude to those of us who traveled far to learn hands-on with the animals that live there. With this, Kaufmann introduced Joseph Whalen, the Executive Director of Green Chimneys, who explained the experiences that he witnesses on campus- the incredible interactions that the program fosters and the change that is possible.

Michael Kaufmann then invited Philip Tedeschi, Clinical Professor at University of Denver Graduate School of Social Work and Executive Director of the Institute for Human-Animal Connection, to the podium. Tedeschi set the stage for the conference by explaining how fostering resiliency through animal care can increase protective factors for children. Therapeutic farm models also help people address self-perceived risk factors in social environments. Tedeschi spoke of the pioneering days of Green Chimneys in



the field of human-animal interactions and the current need for research to help the field break into the ever-growing future of not only therapeutic farms, but the thoughtful incorporation of animals in a countless number of settings. Tedeschi referenced the passion that Dr. Samuel Ross, the founder of Green Chimneys, has for the children and animals that come to this campus as he invited him to address the eager audience.

Dr. Ross told stories of the children and animals at Green Chimneys that made every heart in the audience melt and he must have known he was preaching to the choir at this conference. Through countless inspirational memories, Dr. Ross described how the program has helped build resiliency within each student. His words elicited questions, curiosity and heart-felt support from the audience. His humble nature brought gratitude to those of us eager to learn from his experience of creating an amazing place such as Green Chimneys.

As Kaufmann brought the audience back from Dr. Ross's beautiful stories, he introduced Miyako Kinoshita, the Farm Education Program Manager at Green Chimneys, and Philip Tedeschi to begin the conference with a presentation on Positive Youth Development as a method of fostering protective risk and resiliency through working with animals.

Risk and Resilience in Positive Youth Development

Philip Tedeschi, MSSW, LCSW and Miyako Kinoshita

Philip Tedeschi and Miyako Kinoshita were the first to present at the conference, speaking on risk and resiliency in positive youth development in relation to Green Care. Tedeschi began by talking about Green Care and the benefits of human-animal interactions, evidenced by the work of Green Chimneys. Green Care is a term used to describe the combination of animal and environmental factors utilized for therapeutic purposes in human health. There are many documented positive outcomes of the Green Care model, including an increase in positive coping skills, patience, trust and hope for the future.

One major point made by Tedeschi was the importance of recognizing that human behavior can change throughout the lifespan. People adapt and change constantly, including adjustments to how they cope with mental health issues. In Positive Youth Development, the client's determination becomes part of the strength that motivates them to strive. Thriving is an active state or trait, not a passive outcome. In other words, the clients have to take an active part in their own treatment and Green Chimneys continues to look for ways in which youth can participate in their own constructive ability to thrive.

In order to encourage thriving and resiliency, Tedeschi discussed the 6 C's, which are a combination of psychological, behavioral and social aspects. The 6 C's include: competence, confidence, connection, character, caring/compassion and contribution. In order to illustrate the 6 C's, Tedeschi discussed how they are incorporated at Green Chimneys. Students build social, cognitive, academic, health-related and vocational competency while working with the animals and on the farm of Green Chimneys. For instance, students develop emotional regulation skills and vocational training by working with and training the shelter dogs at Green Chimneys.



Kinoshita reported that children are recognized on a daily and monthly basis for their accomplishments, which fosters confidence and motivation to participate. For example, Green Chimneys has a “Farm Kid of the Month” program where students are acknowledged for their growth and achievements as they gain new skills. Students at Green Chimneys build confidence by becoming knowledgeable about how to work with animals they are drawn to, such as Bactrian camels. This confidence then translates into the classroom, where students may feel more confident in raising their hand to answer a question.

The pro-social connections formed with animals assist the students in creating and sustaining positive bonds between their peers, family and community. Students also show caring and compassionate behavior through their work with the animals. For example, Kinoshita reported that some children do not even want to eat their meals before they have fed the animals. Lastly, the children and Green Chimneys employees co-contribute; these two groups work together to provide for the community as a whole including human animals and non-human animals.

Overall, Tedeschi and Kinoshita highlighted the work of Green Chimneys with children utilizing a Green Care model. Interventions are designed to achieve individual goals as well as strengthen social bonds. Tedeschi discussed risk and protective factors that frequently affect the children of Green Chimneys. Risk factors are described as situations that increase the probability of an undesirable outcome (e.g. poor impulse control or hyperactivity). Protective factors are described as the armor to protect the children when they are no longer at Green Chimneys, an example of this would be the development of a supportive living environment. By treating the children as their own experts and providing an environment with older students as mentors, the Green Chimneys students are able to learn and grow in a supportive environment model.

Resilience, Children, Animals and Culture

Brinda Jegatheesan, PhD

Dr. Brinda Jegatheesan provided conference attendees with her unique perspective of cultural factors to consider when examining human-animal interactions. Although it is important to realize that numerous cultures and religions hold different species to varying levels of esteem, positions in society and the family, Dr. Jegatheesan highlighted the fact that animal-assisted interventions have been found to be beneficial across cultures when utilized ethically and with cultural factors taken into account.

Culture, as defined by Dr. Jegatheesan, is a “way of life that exhibits values and norms passed through generations”. These values and norms vary greatly depending on culture and religion. Therefore, practitioners must work to understand the “local ways” and utilize multiple forms of interventions. There can be no one-size-fits-all approach. Dr. Jegatheesan provided an example of the acculturative effects of animals as she described Somali Muslim children who loved dogs despite their status as “haram” (or unclean) in her culture. These children receive conflicting messages between their religious practice and American popular culture and media, with shows such as Blue’s Clues and Clifford The Big Red Dog. She also referenced Native American cultures that had no concept of a “pet” and instead conceptualized animals as members of the community as a whole. For example, the ever-present reservation dogs belonged to everyone and no one, yet the children formed strong bonds with the dogs and viewed them as important members of the community. Such examples clearly demonstrate the importance of cultural understanding when partnering with animals in interventions.

According to Dr. Jegatheesan, resilience stands as an important aspect of culturally responsive practice with children as well. Although too much trauma can be unbearable, a child’s ability to “bounce back” and adapt positively after a trauma can be facilitated through the utilization of animal-assisted interventions. Positive interactions with animals can serve to decrease stressors, while increasing protective factors for the individual.

Dr. Jegatheesan provided an example of a client who experienced immense trauma due to issues connected to immigration and a lack of familial stability. She maintained a strong bond with a chicken named “Chucky Cheese,” who provided her with strength, a sense of stability, and served as a reminder of life in her home country. Animals, regardless of species, can exist as powerful protective factors for children and adolescents from varying cultural backgrounds.



When partnering with animals to provide interventions, the animal’s welfare must be of utmost importance to the practitioner. Dr. Jegatheesan emphasized that a stressed animal cannot help a human, and practitioners must be cautious about overworking animals. It is important to note that what is acceptable in one culture regarding the treatment of animals, may not be permissible in another. Dr. Jegatheesan cautioned that regardless of cultural or religious belief, the abuse or neglect of an animal is inexcusable. Arguing ‘that is my culture’s belief’ is not an appropriate excuse to misuse or mistreat an animal. While animal-assisted interventions must be culturally responsive, they must also protect the animals involved, regardless of religious or cultural values.

Dr. Jegatheesan’s session gave conference participants a glimpse into the complexities and benefits of engaging animals in child interventions across cultures. Animal involvement in a child’s life can provide protective factors and animal-assisted interventions can help to build a child’s resiliency. Animals can affect numerous areas of a child’s life, including identity, family cohesion, trauma, healing, and spirituality. As practitioners, we must maintain a dialogue with clients and should not operate from a purely didactic platform, but instead learn from the client the importance of their religious, cultural, and familial perspectives. If interventions are done with the safety of both the child and animal in mind, the results can be astoundingly beneficial.

A Guided Tour of Green Chimneys

Led by Green Chimneys Staff

Incorporating a guided tour into the schedule of the conference at Green Chimneys was a phenomenal idea. Leading up to the tour, one of the most common topics of conversation heard was the desire to see the animals. The attendees of the conference were excited to see the animals and the whole campus, where all the magic happens. When the time came to go on the tour, the attendees jumped up out of their chairs and rushed out the doors. Upon exiting the doors of the dining hall, staff members from Green Chimneys were anxiously awaiting participants and corralled them into groups. A friendly employee was awaiting my arrival, as well as several others while directing all attendees into groups. The employee was very knowledgeable about which employees were going to be tour guides and how many people should be in each group. After every attendee was settled, each group departed for their own unique experience.



My group started the tour by exploring the greenhouse on campus. From the greenhouse, which included an array of plants and flowers, we went to the playground. Upon walking from place to place, the vibe from many of us was a feeling that this was a place we all could call our dream home. The smells, the scenery, the emotions we felt were all the right thing. After going to see the

playground, we went to see the dorms. When we entered the dorms, each room we walked by was precisely designed with each child in mind. For example, the communal areas were painted a light, calming green. Along with the conscientious decisions for what systems were in place, there were also posters on the walls with behavioral expectations. There was also a poster for check marks, each indicating a moment when the students did something that was respectful, earning a check mark for the whole dorm. As we exited the dorms, we walked towards the area where the dog program was held. Then we went into the barn where the majority of animals are kept.

As we walked around campus, our tour group shared a similar feeling. We expressed that Green Chimneys seems to have all the systems in place for a well-oiled machine. An example of the well-oiled machine that this organization presents is in the barn. The barn had phenomenal diagrams for the layout of the barn, and also kept track of where each animal was at throughout the day. Laid out on a map was a picture of each animal and the environments where they could possibly be. There was also a checklist of chores that the employees and the children would complete in a day or week or month. Posters explaining the different activities the instructors used to incorporate skills with the students were precisely designed and demonstrated throughout the barn. Overall, the systems that are in place at Green Chimneys are intelligently and intentionally designed, with minimal flaws.

As the tour left the barn, we explored the other animal enclosures. Each of these animal enclosures were intentionally designed to meet each species needs. Even though there was not climate control in each of the enclosures, it was evident that the emotional and cognitive needs of each species were taken into consideration. There were different stops throughout the way back from seeing the animal habitats to the dining hall, which stimulated curiosity and interest among participants.



The overall experience of touring Green Chimneys was not only interesting, it was also incredibly inspiring. Inspiration stems from seeing such a wonderful organization, with well-oiled systems, making an impact on so many children's lives. Throughout the tour, it was very apparent that the magic happening at Green Chimneys is very impactful to the animals, both human and non-human, on campus.

Between Horses and Humans: Principles of Horse Handling and Training at E.Motion

Roswitha Zinck, Mag.

During day one of the conference, Roswitha Zinck of Vienna presented on the human-animal bond in relation to horses. Her work in Austria utilizes equine-assisted mental health programming with children diagnosed



with cancer and other serious illnesses. She decided to work with horses in her practice for a variety of reasons, including that horses tend to be social animals, that they are found in domesticated and wild environments and that they are extremely sensitive. According to Zinck, wild animals are more perceptive of humans than domestic animals because their senses are heightened for survival. Horses have an extremely sensitive awareness and can feel another creature's heart rate from as far away as 100 meters. It is crucial to remain in tune to what the horse is expressing during interaction and training since horses communicate in finite ways that their human handlers may not always perceive.

Greeting is a critical moment in any interaction. Many times when greeting a horse, humans put their hands directly on the horse's face. According to Zinck, this is an extremely rude way to greet anyone, human or animal. By learning how to greet horses in a more appropriate and respectful way, we can strengthen our relationship with them and lower the chances of injury in the first moments of interaction. Properly greeting an animal leads to more fulfilling and appropriate interactions between horses and humans.

As a natural progression of the sensitivity with which horses greet one another, they are also inherently attuned to balanced retreat and approach tactics during interactions. These greeting rituals require trust, as they can also be inherently dangerous. Mistakes during this delicate greeting process are difficult to repair, and therefore it is important for us to match and mirror the horse's rhythm and affect.

This unique and profound interaction means that horses can help to renew Zinck's client's spatial and physical awareness. Horses can enlighten clients to the subtleties of breathing or tensing and relaxing muscles. However, it requires specialized training of her horses. People act and respond very slowly compared to horses. Zinck believes that practitioners must focus on training skills of patience and frustration tolerance in their equine therapeutic partners. With appropriate preparation and training, therapists can be present during therapy sessions without overpowering the horse-client interaction.



In addition to appropriate training, choosing the right horses for therapeutic work is essential to success. Not only must the horses be in peak physical condition, which requires constant upkeep with training and exercise, but they must also have incredible focus, motivation, and enthusiasm. Zinck's horses have a consistent work schedule and training regimen, for example. Zinck is so dedicated to her horses that she ensures they, too, receive self-care in the form of vacationing at the beach.

Zinck concluded by sharing a video of one of her clients working with a horse at liberty in a grass pasture. The horse was so focused and motivated that it chose to forgo grazing in favor of working with this client. It was a testament to the success of Zinck's training methods and a joy to witness.



Building Children's Resiliency Through Their First Pet Loss Experience

Adam Clark, MSW

Adam Clark is a professional and passionate individual whose goal is to eliminate the negative social stigma around pet loss and bereavement by providing education and support. Clark's presentation, "Building Children's Resiliency Through Their First Pet Loss Experience", emphasized the importance of childhood experiences with companion animal loss and how helping professionals can support children during such difficult times. The presentation was emotional, educational and empowering, as Clark was both elegant and sensitive when delivering his presentation with open-mindedness and passion.

The presentation began with Clark asking the audience a few questions and encouraging participants to raise their hand if the answer was yes to his questions. Soon the room was full of hands in the air, as nearly everyone in the room had experienced a pet loss. Despite the participants being drawn to the conference for different reasons, the large group was now aware of a shared common experience. Through



this lens of camaraderie, Clark discussed how death and loss are inevitable and that despite this fact, we tend to run away from the topic.

Clark emphasized the importance of discussing grief and loss with children. He stressed that pet loss and the grief associated with such a loss can be extremely complex while looking different from person to person. Within his presentation, Clark provided handouts regarding children's grief in developmental stages and what that experience looks for children. He also provided a list of children's books and selected references for additional information.

One of Clark's main points described five factors that influence an individual's experience of pet loss and grief, including: the cultural stigma of losing a pet, lack of standard memorialization for closure, euthanasia, consistent and daily caretaking and the pure bond humans share with animals. Furthermore, Clark discussed how adults and helping professionals can support children during pet loss by teaching children about loss and the feelings associated with loss, involving children in the grief and loss process, REALLY listening to children, encouraging grief and encouraging them to process what the companion animal has meant to them.



As loss is something that everyone will have to experience and is sometimes unexpected, Clark discussed the importance of bringing the conversation forward in the beginning of a relationship. He gave us the example of Alex and Scarlett. Alex was a young boy that experienced a lot of turmoil in his life. He was in and out of the foster care system, he experienced sexual abuse, he was aggressive and he didn't trust people. While at Green Chimneys, Alex formed a relationship with an older cow named Scarlett, who also experienced a difficult life. Clark emphasized how it was important to talk about how Scarlett might not live that much longer. In bringing up

this topic, Alex could then potentially think about what loss means to him, how he has experienced loss in the past and how he will in the future.

Pet loss for children, including high-risk children, is a very emotional and heavy topic to discuss. However, it is essential that caretakers and helping professionals find the time and make the effort to do so. Clark gave a few tips for doing so that included talking about loss from beginning of relationship, providing education and reframing, and most importantly supporting children and promoting that it is okay to grieve. Lastly, as caretakers and helping professionals, Clark highlighted the importance of owning our own grief. This emotional topic and powerful presentation brought up many personal beliefs and feelings in the audience, emphasizing the importance of discussing grief and loss of animals.

Rewilding Our Hearts and Compassionate Conservation: Why Animal Emotions Matter

Marc Bekoff, PhD

Rewilding is a term originally used in the early 1990's in the field of conservation biology and has since become a personal journey for Dr. Marc Bekoff. Rewilding allows people to become wild once again and understand animals for who they are. Rewilding our hearts is the idea that what we are feeling can motivate our actions. Our natural inclinations to seek out nature and connect with animals (biophilia) make rewilding necessary for optimal human health. However, modern society tends to unwild people and further disconnects us from these natural tendencies.

Dr. Bekoff believes that in order to rewild, we have to change our language about and understanding of animals. Instead of understanding them as a “what”, they should be understood as a “who”. Our goal is not to exaggerate who they are but instead understand how they are. We are looking for the similarities and differences between animals to gain a better understanding of what makes each animal a member of their species. Through this process, we should begin to understand who they are and what they want and need. Further, we should allow ourselves to be moved by this social growth, we need to be in awe. Dr. Bekoff stated that, “if you aren't in awe, you aren't paying attention.” We also need to take note of who we are as a species to fully become rewilded. We have to realize that at heart, we are “nice mammals”, compassionate and empathetic.



Rewilding is possible anywhere, even in the middle of New York City. Dr. Bekoff shared a story about watching squirrels in Central Park. When some kids walked by they asked what he was doing and he said he was watching the squirrels play because “they are just like us”. He then sat and watched the squirrels play with the children and their caregiver. As they were walking away he overheard them say “can we come back and watch the squirrels again?” Another example he gave was talking about the children in his neighborhood watching a cougar sleep after eating 25 pounds of deer meat. It is important for kids to rewild because they are the answer to solving the world's problems. It is important to teach kids that everybody and everything is interconnected, our problems are our collective social problems.

To make wild again taps into biophilia, but to achieve this we must rewild education/classrooms, media, and the universe, really. When trying to make society wild again it is important to remember the 9 p's: proactive, persistent, patient, peaceful, practical, passionate, playful and present. These all need to be in place in order to activate change. This is where the developing field of compassionate conservation comes into play. Bekoff suggested that the bumper sticker for this field should be “do no harm, the life of every individual animal counts”. Every animal has intrinsic value. This raises questions like, “Should members of one species be killed for the well-being of another or their own species?” Dr. Bekoff mentioned a situation in Africa where people are putting up light fences to protect themselves and their livestock from the elephants, instead of killing the elephants. Another example was the wolves in Yellowstone National Park being killed by park rangers because the wolves were killing other animals of prey.



Dr. Bekoff concluded by stressing the importance of actively avoiding burnout in this field. He recommended that we step away from work and from our own brains. We need to know when you can't do something anymore and need to step away for a while in order to maintain balance. If we are kind to ourselves as well as other living beings, we will be able to continue this good work for our collective wellbeing.

A Protocol to Building a Therapeutic Program That Allows, Empowers and Develops Resilience

Yoni Yehuda, PhD



Yoni Yehuda, PhD explored the benefits of working with animals, people and clinicians in a way that provided possibilities for all interested parties to benefit from the interactions. Dr. Yehuda offered a light-hearted approach to his presentation that had the audience captivated from the first moment he walked on stage. He referenced the stuffed Green Chimneys animals he brought on stage, stating that they were his coping mechanism when being away from Havayot Center, an animal based therapeutic and educational farm and visitor center he opened in Elazar, Gush Etzion, Israel.

Dr. Yehuda first became involved with therapeutic riding through his own rehabilitation, as he was injured in 1997 Israeli's Army's paratrooper unit. He was one of the first veterans put on a horse, as it was the beginning of therapeutic riding in Israel. He was injured again by being shot at in a hostile situation. Dr. Yehuda decided to take his knowledge of animals and the human connection by combining animals and human interactions for therapeutic purposes. The Havayot Center provides treatment and education to the citizens of Israel.

When describing that he built cages for the animals, Dr. Yehuda stated, "cages are very nice for them, they will feel like this is home, because if they don't feel like this is home, the patient won't feel it's home. He will feel that it's a jail. When I am reaching to take this animal out, I can just put my hand here, like I am putting my hand inside the cage...or just open and the animal comes out to me." Dr. Yehuda stressed the importance of the animal having a choice and the necessity to build that sort of mutual relationship with the animal.

When trying to convince a family to start therapy, Dr. Yehuda talked about how that process can put a huge damper on their self-esteem. Imagine how it would feel if your significant other told you to start therapy. Then you go to therapy and the therapist talks about how much you need to be there, and how many credentials they have to be helping a person like you. This whole dynamic could put an already struggling person further into depression. Yet, if one was to tell this same person they were able to have therapy sessions at a place like the Havayot Center, which has all types of animals, domesticated and wild, how much easier it would be.

While in therapy, each participant is part of a triangle at Havayot Center. The client, therapist and animal all form the triangle from the top, not from the front. Where no one is any better than the other, providing a flat three-pointed triangle. At times, each participant may need the other's help. This provides a better perspective and truly an equal playing field. When working with a client, Dr. Yehuda obtains the client narrative, sets goals, chooses the appropriate theoretical framework to follow and then selects the most appropriate animal to include in the therapeutic process. Applying the theory and animal into practice is very deliberate and organized. Breaking up the process within segments, with the minimum usually 24 sessions, the first set is to build rapport. However, the number of sessions is not as important as the process. Dr. Yehuda ensures that there are sessions set up for termination as well.

Dr. Yehuda not only helps his clients and the community regain reliance and obtain resilience, he is also an excellent example of persevering and overcoming great odds. Even during his presentation he experienced technical difficulties with the video, sound system and a good-hearted jab from a few of the staff. He took all of this in stride, kept his sense of humor and pushed on. The people of Israel are very lucky to have an intelligent, big-hearted and goal-oriented scholar to help them overcome such great obstacles. By intersecting the human connection with animals to be used not only for the good of individual clients, but for building up the community, Dr. Yehuda offers a space where the community can band and grow together, while helping the animals at the same time.

The Power of Play in Animal-Assisted Interventions

Risë VanFleet, PhD, RPT-S, CDBC and Tracie Faa-Thompson, MA, AASW, PGdipNDPT

This conference session was presented by Risë VanFleet and Tracie Faa-Thompson and addressed the importance of play in the health and wellbeing of humans and other species. Risë VanFleet is a licensed psychologist, registered play therapist and certified dog behavior consultant. Tracie Faa-Thompson holds a master's degree in social work and a post-master's diploma and credential in play therapy.

Risë VanFleet

“Playfulness, humor, and light is your friend”, stated Risë VanFleet. VanFleet’s presentation was experiential in nature and consisted of education and role-plays that emphasized and encouraged play. Throughout her presentation, VanFleet highlighted the importance of relationship building between the clinician, client and therapy animal. VanFleet described four main components of animal-assisted play therapy relative to relationship building. These consisted of: knowing the animal’s language and communication, obtaining mutual respect, using positive training methods and playfulness in play.

VanFleet demonstrated an animal-assisted intervention through role-play with a conference attendee who acted as an 8-year-old client. VanFleet demonstrated the power of play and relationship building by teaching and allowing the ‘client’ to utilize clicker training with the therapy dog and reflect on how that felt. In addition, VanFleet demonstrated an animal-assisted group intervention by utilizing multiple therapy dogs provided by Green Chimneys. This activity consisted of 4 groups of 5 attendees each, who worked together as a team to cue the dog to perform a particular task, such as jumping through a hoop. The purpose of this exercise was to demonstrate teamwork and communication, and how this can be accomplished through play.



Tracie Faa-Thompson



Tracie Faa-Thompson provided attendees with a hands-on demonstration of how practitioners can provide a therapeutic atmosphere that creates emotional safety through the use of play and humor. She was able to demonstrate this activity by incorporating three of Green Chimneys horses; individuals were in groups of 3 and each group was paired with one horse. The intervention consisted of each group dressing up their respective horse with costume attire, the creation of a fictional name/title for the horse and

then a presentation of the horse's character to the audience. The purpose of this exercise was to build teamwork and communication skills within groups, and also to demonstrate that these types of skills can be carried out in a way that is creative, fun and humorous for the individuals and families served.

Conclusions

Risë VanFleet & Tracie Faa-Thompson provided a demonstration of creative ways in which human-animal interactions can benefit clients within a context that is fun and playful. It's important to keep in mind that there are many unknowns that could potentially arise when working with animals. For example, during Faa-Thompson's demonstration, one horse was unexpectedly bit on the rear by another horse, causing the horse in front to rear-up. Although this is not abnormal horse behavior, it was sudden and caught many conference attendees off-guard. It's important that in an instance such as this, the handlers debrief what happened, answer questions and be available to provide individuals with additional support if needed. This incident also reiterates that handlers must know their animal's way of communication and behavior and appropriately advocate for them in times of need (i.e when the animal is showing signs of stress or discomfort).

University of Denver Graduate School of Social Work Debrief Session

Master of Social Work and Animal-Assisted Social Work Students



As Master of Social Work (MSW) students prepare to enter the workforce with a specialty in Animal-Assisted Social Work (AASW), it becomes imperative that they immerse themselves in experiential opportunities in the field to heighten their awareness of gold-standard programming and develop confidence in themselves as practitioners. In spring quarter 2015, a unique learning opportunity was offered to University of Denver MSW/AASW students to plan the facilitation of a conference session during three on-campus meetings and then travel to the internationally renowned campus of Green Chimneys in Brewster, New York for the Human-Animal Interaction Conference. Through the

structured support of this special topics course, the Green Chimneys experience allowed students real-life opportunities to develop conference presentation skills, network with academics, researchers and practitioners in the field of human-animal interactions and become active participants in the professional realm of Animal-Assisted Social Work. Green Chimneys provided the ultimate professional development experience by opening their doors to active learners and welcoming our MSW/AASW students for an especially intimate and relevant experience.

The University of Denver MSW/AASW students were asked to help plan and facilitate a 1.5-hour debrief session at the conference. The majority of class time was utilized to help students plan for the debrief session and topics and methods were determined collectively during class.





These are the general topic areas discussed during the small group debrief sessions, which were co-facilitated by two MSW/AASW students:

- Examine strengths of conference: What did you find most beneficial?
 - What did you learn that was new? How does it apply to you?
 - What's one skill/idea that you think you will utilize in your practice?
- Considering that this field is fairly new and continuing to grow and develop, how will you take what you learned from this conference to lend credibility to the field as a whole?
 - How will you address ethical questions that come up in practice from the skills you learned here?
 - What animal welfare questions came up for you during the conference? And how would you address them in your program?
 - What topics were left unaddressed? Where could you go for more information/training?



On behalf of the Institute for Human-Animal Connection at University of Denver's Graduate School of Social Work, we'd like to thank the participants of the 2015 HAI Conference at Green Chimneys for participating in this debrief session with our students. We'd also like to thank Green Chimneys for hosting our group and for providing an additional pre-conference day of learning and experience just for our group! Of course, we couldn't have done it without the support of our own team at University of Denver's Graduate School of Social Work- thank you to our Dean, Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and other staff members for allowing this valuable learning opportunity. Last but never least, thank you to all the students who shared their time and spirit with all of us before and during the conference- we are so proud of your accomplishments!

Summary Panel and Conclusion of Conference

Marie Jose Enders-Slegers, PhD

Dr. Marie-Jose Enders-Slegers led the summary panel, which was the final session at the Green Chimneys HAI Conference. Dr. Enders-Slegers was visiting Brewster, NY from the Netherlands. She is the Vice President of the International Association of Human-Animal Interaction Organizations (IAHAIO). Dr. Enders-Slegers is a professor and researcher in Anthrozoology. She led a PowerPoint presentation summarizing the topics, takeaways and self-reflective critical questions on presenter's topics regarding childhood risk and resiliency.



Dr. Enders-Slegers reviewed the 6 C's, which Philip Tedeschi and Miyako Kinoshita discussed in the first presentation. She appreciated the correlation of the 6 C's with the efforts of improving the lives of children. Next, Dr. Enders-Slegers discussed Brinda Jegatheesan's presentation on the importance recognizing cultural differences, especially in human-animal interactions and AAT. Dr. Enders-Slegers was impressed by Brinda's beautiful stories she shared with the conference about her different experiences working with culture, families, children and animals. Dr. Enders-Slegers reflected that we should "never underestimate the power of kindness when working with animals". The third speaker, Roswitha Zinck, was highlighted for her in-depth explanations on the movement of horses aligned with movement of humans in order to build the relationship and connection for therapy and education. Dr. Enders-Slegers began to discuss the presentation from the next speaker, Adam Clark, who talked about stories of loss and building resiliency in children through their first pet loss. Dr. Enders-Slegers explained that she appreciated the stories and thoughts Adam provoked in the room. His presentation left Dr. Enders-Slegers with critical questions for all us to think about. Finally, Dr. Enders-Slegers addressed the keynote speaker, Dr. Marc Bekoff, whose presentation reminded us that we need to teach well, "rewild our hearts" and emphasize the importance of recognizing animal cognition and emotion.

Day two of the conference was summarized by Dr. Enders-Slegers starting with the first speaker, Yoni Yehuda, who was visiting from Israel and discussed how “animal-assisted intervention helps in surviving PTSD”. Dr. Enders-Slegers stated that “each animal can do something special: which animal would fit better for an intervention out of a choice of 90 species”. She highlighted this as an important part of Yoni’s presentation. The next presentation discussed the power of play between human and animal interactions and interventions. Dr. Enders-Slegers wanted to provide a video from the presentation, but stated that she “felt a video would be inappropriate of this experience”. This was most likely due to the altercation that occurred between two horses during the activity in the barn and she would not want to re-traumatize anyone in the audience. She touched on the issue brought up in Brinda’s presentation about animal welfare and if it is appropriate to dress the horses during the power of play presentation. Dr. Enders-Slegers posed many critical and personal questions for the audience to take with them after the conference and apply to their practice.



Overall, Dr. Enders-Slegers summarized what she learned and wanted to emphasize to the audience moving forward post-conference. She emphasized that the welfare of animals involved in animal-assisted interventions needs to be strongly addressed. She also emphasized that professionals who incorporate animal-assisted interventions should not only be educated in their field of expertise, but also in “animal behavior, animal welfare, animal emotion, animal cognitions, and animal ethics”. Dr. Enders-Slegers stated that she “does not believe that individuals who just go in and bring their dogs to programs are therapists or animal therapists”. She explained it is important to understand the purpose of the animal in an intervention and address the needs of that animal and population you are working with in specific terms. Dr. Enders-Slegers concluded with the assertion that individuals who incorporate human-animal interaction into their work need to be multidisciplinary in their knowledge and seek out continuing education specific to human and animal needs and behaviors.

Special Topic: Animal Ethics at Green Chimneys

The people who care for Green Chimneys, in all aspects, have had decades to work out ethical practice around the animals that live at the facility.

Undoubtedly, they have gone through various viewpoints, practices, and debates about how to interact and coexist with those animals. This is evident, in part, by the distribution of their proactive letter sent to everyone who attended the Human-Animal Interaction conference, which functioned as a sort of “Frequently Asked Questions” regarding ethical practices on site. This letter was to be read by conference attendees before arrival, to answer some

of the most common questions visitors have; it also served to prompt deeper thought about ethics of animal care and interactions. Once conference attendees arrived at Green Chimneys, they were taken on tours of the facility and given an opportunity to hear and ask more about the ethical practices on site.



Attendees learned (both from the letter and from being on the Green Chimneys campus) numerous important points regarding ethics related to the animals. Some of those points were:

- The animals are not “used,” but rather they “partner with” the staff and students to achieve therapeutic goals.
- The students and staff are offered both vegetarian and non-vegetarian meal options, and meat consumption is acknowledged as a debatable practice.
- Green Chimneys holds and cares for a plethora of wild animals, the majority of whom are not able to be released back to the wild for one reason or another; those who are determined to be releasable are released after rehabilitation.
- The wildlife program feeds the animals in their care with animals (such as mice and rats) from a medical research entity. The medical research teams euthanize the food-animals and Green Chimneys

only takes the individuals who were part of a control group, meaning they did not receive any of the drug or treatment being tested. This decision is made on the grounds that those research animals will die, regardless of whether Green Chimneys utilizes them as food or not. In the hands of the Green Chimneys wildlife center, those deaths go on to feed another life, rather than to end up in a waste processing facility.

- When a wild animal shows potential for being released back into the wild, the staff must assess its ability to survive without human assistance. Therefore, the animal must show that it can identify and kill live prey as it would in the wild. In these cases, staff members utilize live animals for feeding (appropriate to the species they hope to release).
- Animals who are considered “wild” are not named, and only those who are considered “domesticated” are given names. This is meant to clearly delineate, especially to the students, the important difference between a wild species and a species that has been domesticated over centuries.
- Green Chimneys rescues animals whenever possible, but barriers do exist, such as space to house the animal(s). Perhaps most importantly, the staff must consider whether the animal in need will be able to play a therapeutic role on campus, and whether it is capable of safely interacting with the students.



Green Chimneys does not claim to be a perfect facility, or to have a perfect system of ethics. It is fully acknowledged that people who come into contact with or learn about Green Chimneys might disagree with one or more aspects of how the whole organization is run. One thing to consider, though, is the importance of how Green Chimneys’ ethical decisions are perceived by their students, as opposed to independent adults. The student may not comprehend the nuances of naming some wild animals and not others, whereas an independent adult may. Just as experienced animal caretakers may feel

comfortable breaking certain safety rules because they know the animal very well, but those rules must be upheld with the students. Therefore, ethical decisions must always be made with the students firmly in mind.