

## **A conversation with The Humane League, August 22, 2016**

### **Participants**

- Mr. David Coman-Hidy – Executive Director, The Humane League
- Mr. Aaron Ross – Director of Campaigns, The Humane League
- Ms. Michelle Kucerak – Director of Development, The Humane League
- Lewis Bollard – Title of Position, Open Philanthropy Project

**Note:** These notes were compiled by the Open Philanthropy Project and give an overview of the major points made by Mr. David Coman-Hidy, Mr. Aaron Ross, and Ms. Michelle Kucerak.

### **Summary**

The Open Philanthropy Project spoke with Mr. Coman-Hidy, Mr. Ross, and Ms. Kucerak of The Humane League to get an update on a grant made to support its cage-free egg campaign. Conversation topics include The Humane League's use of its grant from the Open Philanthropy Project, the status of the cage-free egg campaign, and The Humane League's next steps for the cage-free egg campaigns and other campaigns.

### **The Humane League**

#### **Use of Open Philanthropy grant**

##### *New staff*

THL used its grant from Open Philanthropy to hire three additional campaign coordinators to work under Taylor Ford, Corporate Campaigns Manager; one corporate relations specialist to work under Chris Liptrot, Corporate Relations Manager; one full-time graphic designer; one attorney; one media relations specialist; and one web designer. Most new staff started on the same date—March 15<sup>th</sup>—at a training retreat. The attorney and the web designer started before this date.

##### *Impact of new staff*

As a result of these new staff, THL saw its capacity to target companies expand dramatically. It went from targeting approximately three companies at a time to an average of 14 companies at a time.

The additional staff has also allowed THL to increase the number of meetings with companies it travels to attend. In 2015, THL staff traveled for two meetings. Thus far in 2016, THL corporate relations staff have spent at least one week a month traveling for meetings.

The addition of three campaigners under Taylor Ford has allowed THL to replicate its public campaign model and run more concurrent campaigns. Each campaigner runs four to five campaigns at once.

The addition of the graphic designer and web designer has allowed THL to design and launch customized websites much more quickly. Prior to hiring these staff, THL would spend up to two weeks to design and launch a website. With these new staff, websites take 48 hours to design and launch.

The media specialist THL hired has helped to increase the amount of publicity its victories have received, which in turn helps to put additional pressure on other companies to commit to the cage-free campaign. THL has had over 100 media hits—articles about its campaigns or the cage-free commitment—this year, compared to just two or three in 2015.

THL's increased media coverage has led to increased awareness of the cage-free campaign in the industry. For example, when THL meets with companies in the U.K., staff from these companies often mention the press that they've seen about the cage-free campaigns in the US.

### *Spending to date*

For the first seven months of 2016, THL has spent \$175,000 in grant funds, including:

- \$134,600 on staff expansion,
- \$25,500 on travel, and
- \$15,250 on material campaign support.

THL has not yet spent any grant funds on an office rental.

### **Cage-free egg campaign**

The Humane League (THL) started its corporate cage-free egg campaign in late 2014.

THL uses several tactics in each of its public campaigns. It:

- Creates custom websites and videos,
- Circulates petitions,
- Takes daily social media actions,
- Routinely reaches out to all employees to inform them about the animal cruelty in which their employer engages, and
- Designs pamphlets and ads that it shares with each company. If THL becomes entrenched in a particular campaign it will distribute these pamphlets outside of the company's stores and run the ads.

At the beginning of 2015, THL had two staff working on the cage free campaign, with a third staff member occasionally working on the campaign as well. Later in the year, THL hired two additional staff to work on the campaign, although one of those staff later went on to work on a different campaign.

### *Foodservice*

THL spent most of 2015 convincing the foodservice industry to purchase only cage-free eggs and successfully secured commitments from virtually all of the top 50 foodservice providers.

### *Restaurants*

During the last part of 2015, THL began recruiting restaurants to commit to the cage-free campaign, and had its first success with the Cheesecake Factory. Also around this time, TLH began recruiting hotels and food manufacturers. Finally, in 2015, THL led a grassroots campaign that contributed to Costco's commitment to cage-free eggs.

THL experienced a high point in its restaurant industry victories in January 2016. Denny's, Bob Evans, and White Castle were among the restaurants to join the campaign during this time.

### *Retail*

In February 2016, THL began its retail campaigns. Its first victory in this arena was BJ Wholesalers, which was the first retailer (excluding Whole Foods) to produce a timeline for a cage-free policy. The majority of THL's retail victories came in March of 2016. THL is currently wrapping up its retail campaign.

### *Producers*

THL is currently wrapping up the corporate side of its cage-free campaign and starting to focus on getting commitments from egg producers themselves. Some producers have already made commitments to the campaign.

Once the producers commit, there will be nothing left to do for the cage-free campaign in the U.S. THL hopes to secure a final timeline from the United Egg Producers that all producers will agree to.

### *Future plans*

THL still plans to seek commitments from several other big corporations. It hopes to have these commitments by the end of 2016.

THL hopes to wrap up its cage-free campaign within the year but this will depend on how egg producers and the UEP respond to the campaign. THL may have one staff member finishing the cage-free campaign while others focus on broiler chicken welfare.

### *Accountability*

To ensure that companies are living up to the pledges they have made to the cage-free and other campaigns, THL plans to check in with them at least once a year. THL also wants to develop a third-party auditing process to track companies' progress.

Ensuring that the producers are meeting their commitments will be particularly important, as holding retailers to their commitments is just an indirect way to get to

the producers. Producers need to give firm timelines for changes, and THL wants public statements regarding the industry's progress from UEP on an ongoing basis.

THL is also updating its website with a commitment tracker where visitors can see each company's policy and track each company's progress towards fulfilling its pledge.

*All Open Philanthropy Project conversations are available at  
<http://www.openphilanthropy.org/research/conversations>*