

Ten-year-old launches petition urging Department for Education to approve annual fundraising day for animals

Thursday 22 July, 2021

A ten-year-old girl has launched a petition asking the Department for Education to introduce an annual fundraising day for animals in schools across the country.

Bailey Woozeer proposes that World Animal Day, held annually on October 4, would be an ideal opportunity for schools to support both British and international animal welfare charities through events such as non-uniform days.

Animal-loving Bailey appealed to numerous schools and animal welfare organisations to garner support for her campaign, with a phenomenal response. Since its launch, her petition has attracted over 27,000 signatures.

Bailey, from Doncaster, said: "Why are the nationwide fundraising days always about helping humans? Animals are desperate and suffering and many species are nearly extinct. It seems like most people just don't care about them. They need our help. Please sign and share my petition and support my campaign, because one school fundraising day a year, for the animals around our planet, is something that should already be happening.

We could even do this on World Animal Day. You can tell from the name of it that it's a really important day – why are we not all celebrating it in our schools? World Animal Day HQ even sends out flags for free; they would look perfect hung outside school gates every year."

Bailey's family wholeheartedly supports her campaign. Her father, Steve Howe, said: "Bailey is driven by what she sees as an injustice. She believes that for an issue of such great importance, one day a year is a tiny request. She cannot understand why neglect and abuse of animals continues to happen, or why more is not done to help. We are all very proud of her."

Copley Junior School, where Bailey is a Year Five pupil, has also voiced its support. Her teacher, Miss Wright, said: "We are so proud of Bailey and the resilience and determination that she has shown to get her petition off the ground. Supporting fundraising for animals in schools across the country is vitally important. Children like Bailey, who value the lives of all creatures, are the future of our country and should be supported and encouraged to challenge the status quo and stand up for their beliefs."

Like most charities, animal welfare organisations have faced a financial crisis during the past 15 months. Their income has been affected by a lack of fundraising events due to social distancing guidelines, charity shop closures during lockdown and donors reassessing their priorities.

Despite the gradual easing of restrictions, a survey conducted in May this year found that 'more than half of charities do not expect to reach pre-pandemic levels of fundraising events by the end of 2021'. Smaller charities are currently the worst affected, carrying out only 4% of fundraising events at pre-crisis levels.

Caroline Ruane, Coordinator at Gloucestershire-based World Animal Day HQ, said: "Getting such a positive reaction to her petition is an incredible achievement for Bailey and it has come at an opportune time for animal welfare charities. We hope that her campaign will encourage schools to seriously consider animals when they are planning their fundraising schedules. World Animal Day isn't just about collecting funds though – there's plenty of scope for teachers to raise awareness, invite discussion and instil compassion in young people. The global recognition of animals on October 4 isn't only for schools – we encourage individuals, businesses, universities, clubs, community groups and others to get involved too!"

Mike Cooke, Chair of Border Collie Rescue UK, a charity specialising in border collies and working sheepdogs, said: "The national curriculum in the UK does not address animal welfare issues in a serious way. To have one day a year where pupils consider why so many animals need rescuing by organisations like ourselves is a step in the right direction. The benefit of raising funds is wonderful. The added awareness this will bring to children is a major bonus. Bailey is cool. To have come up with this idea is great. To campaign to implement it shows courage and determination.

Coinciding this with World Animal Day makes sense to us and will give an additional perspective to the

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issue that will take it beyond our own shores and present it to the world as a way of bringing animal welfare issues to children everywhere."

Alison Standbridge, Founder of Paws2Rescue, a charity that works to relieve the plight of Romanian dogs, said: "Working in international rescue, we see so many cruel acts against animals, a lack of care and empathy. The future generations, our own children, are key to humankind across the world caring for and respecting animals.

When we heard about Bailey's campaign to hold one animal day in schools across the UK, we were so impressed with her foresight and determination to make this happen, that she immediately gained our support and backing.

One day where the children of this country raise donations to help animals in need, one day of learning about animal care, learning about empathy. This one day could make the change in the future of how we treat animals across the world. Bailey is an inspiration, and we know that her campaign for this animal day in schools will succeed in reaching discussion in parliament. This really needs to happen, the world needs all children learning to love and care, creating a global culture of empathy."

To sign the petition, go to:

Find out more about World Animal Day and how to get involved: worldanimalday.org.uk

Find out more about Border Collie Rescue UK: bordercollierescue.org

Find out more about Paws2Rescue: paws2rescue.com

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