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HEART Announces Reorganization and Introduction of Humane and Character Education Pilot Program to Meet New York State Mandates

HEART (Humane Education Advocates Reaching Teachers) announced today an organizational restructuring which includes the election of a new slate of directors and officers and the introduction of a combined humane and character education instructional curriculum that meets requirements under New York state law. New York law requires humane education in all elementary schools and character education in grades K through 12.

The curriculum under development is a comprehensive 10-lesson humane/character education program, which HEART will launch first as a two-year pilot program beginning in January of 2006. The program will be field tested in the Fall of 2005. The initial target of the program will be for the 4th, 5th and 7th grades.

HEART believes there is a natural synergy between Humane Education and Character Education. Combining the two will provide a cohesive program to allow schools to comply with both statutes and improve school climate while also encouraging students to include all living beings and the environment in their circle of compassion.

The new HEART board includes Brad Goldberg, President of Animal Welfare Trust, as Chair; Lydia Antoncic, original founder of HEART; Zoe Weil, President of the International Institute for Humane Education; and Bill DeRosa, Executive Director of the National Association for Humane and Environmental Education.

“It is our hope that this pilot project will become a model for Humane Education in schools not only in the New York City area, but eventually across the country” said Brad Goldberg. “Humane and Character Education are a compelling and powerful combination to instill compassion, responsibility and a sense of civility in our youth.”

Meena Alagappan has been appointed Executive Director of HEART and will have direct responsibility for implementing the project. Meena graduated from Cornell University and obtained her law degree from Northwestern University. She also received a M.S. in Animals and Public Policy from Tufts University School of Veterinary Medicine.

Bob Schwalb will be joining HEART as Humane Education Instructor. Bob received his Masters in Education, with a focus on Humane Education, from Cambridge College and has been teaching humane education in Chicago.

HEART is a 501(c)(3) public charity dedicated to fostering a more humane world through education.