

Name _____ Date _____

Songwriter Diane Warren Helps 4-H Student Save Lamb From Slaughter



For animals used in 4-H, the National FFA Organization (FFA), and other agricultural programs, the summer fair circuit is unlikely to come to a pleasant end. The animals in these programs are typically destined for one of two heartbreaking fates: to be sold at auction for **slaughter** or to be used as “breeders” (and likely sent to slaughter later, once they’re no longer **profitable**). All the while, these programs teach children the harmful message that sending their animal friends—with whom they’ve likely bonded for months—to a violent, terrifying death at the slaughterhouse is acceptable.

But the bond between a California boy in a 4-H program and his beloved lamb, Cotton, was too strong to allow this to happen. The boy approached legendary songwriter and PETA supporter Diane Warren and begged her to help save his lamb from slaughter. Warren knew that she was facing an uphill battle.

The program organizers tried to stop her from helping by threatening to cut off funds to the boy if his parents sold the lamb to Warren. But the Golden Globe winner was determined to prevent the lamb from being sold at auction, so she secretly outbid butchers at the Santa Barbara County Fair to win Cotton’s freedom.

Now, thanks to PETA and Warren (along with her attorney Ryan Gordon of Advancing Law for Animals), Cotton is safe and sound at the star’s private animal **sanctuary**, and the boy who helped save his life has been invited to visit him.

“4-H programs aim to compel children like this caring boy to betray their beloved animal friends in order to prop up the meat industry, to choose violence and death over compassion,” says PETA President Ingrid Newkirk. “Diane Warren had a hard fight, but she saved this lucky lamb, whose story PETA hopes will inspire other kids to reject such despicable programs.” PETA held an eye-opening protest at the Santa Barbara County Fair in support of Cotton and all the other animals **exploited** in 4-H programs.

According to one former FFA student, “I joined [FFA] because the organization sounded like a bomb club to join if you’re into animals, leadership, and agriculture. But I soon discovered that joining FFA meant agreeing to a very hypocritical code of ethics.” FFA, 4-H, and other agricultural programs could easily stop using animals and focus instead on some of the animal-free programs that they already promote, like gardening, expressive arts, and leadership programs.

Vocabulary: Songwriter Diane Warren Helps 4-H Student Save Lamb From Slaughter

Using contextual evidence from the passage, define the bolded terms in your own words.

slaughter

profitable

sanctuary

exploit

Comprehension Questions: Songwriter Diane Warren Helps 4-H Student Save Lamb From Slaughter

1. Why did the boy need Diane Warren's help?

2. What obstacles did Warren face? How did she ultimately save Cotton from slaughter?

3. In addition to sending thousands of animals to slaughter every year, what other negative effects do 4-H and other agricultural programs have?

4. Do you think 4-H, FFA, and other agricultural programs should stop raising and selling animals and instead promote animal-free activities, like gardening, expressive arts, and leadership programs? Please explain your answer.

Answer Sheet: Songwriter Diane Warren Helps 4-H Student Save Lamb From Slaughter

1. Why did the boy need Diane Warren's help?

Answer: The boy was in a 4-H program and had bonded with his lamb, Cotton. He wanted to save the lamb from slaughter. (Literal)

2. What obstacles did Warren face? How did she ultimately save Cotton from slaughter?

Answer: The program's organizers tried to stop her from helping by threatening to cut off funds to the boy if his parents sold the lamb to her, so she secretly outbid butchers at the Santa Barbara County Fair to obtain legal rights to Cotton. (Literal)

3. In addition to sending thousands of animals to slaughter every year, what other negative effects do 4-H and other agricultural programs have?

Answer: 4-H programs desensitize young people to the suffering of others by compelling them to betray their animal friends. (Literal)

4. Do you think 4-H, FFA, and other agricultural programs should stop raising and selling animals and instead promote animal-free activities, like gardening, expressive arts, and leadership programs? Please explain your answer.

Answers: Will vary. (Evaluative)

Name _____ Date _____

Hotel Chain Ends Fish-Rental Program With PETA's Help

After PETA contacted boutique hotelier Kimpton Hotel & Restaurant Group, LLC, the chain agreed to end its fish-rental program, in which live fish were delivered to guests' rooms upon request. PETA gave the company information about fish sensitivity and requirements and explained that the goldfish and guppies used for rentals suffered when confined to small bowls and shuttled from one stressful environment to another.



Kimpton Hotels and PETA worked together to place the more than 200 fish in permanent adoptive homes. This was presumably a welcome change for the fish, who are far more intelligent than many people give them credit for. For example, fish converse with one another through a range of low-frequency sounds to communicate courtship, alarm, or submission. They can recognize themselves and other fish, eavesdrop on conversations between other fish, and even tend a garden, just like humans. They're social animals who **languish** in small tanks. A behavioral ecologist at the University of Bern in Switzerland, said, "Fish have some of the most complex social systems known."

And fish can of course feel pain. They have a complex nervous system (which interprets pain signals) and react to painful stimuli the way all animals do—their breathing rate increases, their muscles contract, and they try to escape. Dr. Donald Broom, former scientific adviser to the British government, states that anatomically, physiologically, and biologically, the nervous system in fish is virtually the same as in mammals.

While ordinarily, PETA would never **advocate** putting any fish in a tank, these fish—who would have continued to suffer as they were carted from hotel room to hotel room—are now swimming, jumping, and diving their way around their new spacious tanks, which are full of plants, clean water, and loads of **stimulation** to keep them content.

“As a pet-friendly hospitality company, we decided to discontinue the Guppy Love program,” said a Kimpton spokesperson. “We look forward to continuing to welcome pets of all shapes and sizes to our hotels.”

PETA Executive Vice President Tracy Reiman added, “Scientists have proved that fish become depressed from a lack of space, stimulation, and adequate **enrichment**, just as humans do. PETA applauds Kimpton for making the kind decision to discontinue this program.”

PETA asks anyone who is considering acquiring fish to adopt instead of supporting the pet trade and to do research beforehand into providing fish with the extensive care they need and deserve.

You can help put a stop to the commercial “pet” trade by never supporting companies that put profit before the well-being of animals. Fish are at their happiest and healthiest when free to swim in their natural habitats. Reputable local rescue groups and shelters often have fish who need new homes. If you already have aquatic animals, make sure they have a sizable amount of water, appropriate climate control and filtration, regular aquarium cleaning, and ample psychological enrichment. You can also make their lives more pleasant by providing them with an environment that’s as much like their natural habitat as possible. To learn more about fish and how to care for them, visit **[PETA.org/CaringForFish](https://peta.org/CaringForFish)**, and share this information with others who have fish.

Vocabulary: Hotel Chain Ends Fish-Rental Program With PETA's Help

Using contextual evidence from the passage, define the **bolded** terms in your own words.

languish

advocate

stimulation

enrichment

Comprehension Questions: Hotel Chain Ends Fish-Rental Program With PETA's Help

1. How did the fish suffer in the hotel's fish-rental program?

2. What similarities do fish share with humans?

3. How do all animals, including fish, respond to painful stimuli?

4. Do you think it's ethical to buy fish and other living beings from stores? Explain your answer. What can people interested in caring for fish do instead?

Answer Sheet: Hotel Chain Ends Fish-Rental Program With PETA's Help

1. How did the fish suffer in the hotel's fish-rental program?

Answer: They were confined to small bowls and transferred to and from various locations in the hotel, which caused them stress. (Literal)

2. What similarities do fish share with humans?

Answer: Like humans, fish live complex social lives. They communicate with one another, listen in on each other's conversations, and even garden. They can also feel pain. (Literal)

3. How do all animals, including fish, respond to painful stimuli?

Answer: When fish and all other animals encounter painful stimuli, their breathing rate increases, their muscles contract, and they try to escape. (Literal)

4. Do you think it's ethical to buy fish and other living beings from stores? Explain your answer. What can people interested in caring for fish do instead?

Possible answer: Fish are at their happiest and healthiest when they have the freedom to swim in their natural habitats. Even under ideal circumstances, aquariums cannot mimic life in the wild. Stores prioritize sales over the safety and well-being of animals, so their needs are rarely met. Instead of buying fish from stores, people can adopt them from a reputable animal shelter and learn how to care for them properly. (Evaluative)

Name _____

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PETA Honors Teens Who Rescued a Suffering Squirrel

Two New Brunswick, Canada, teens came across a squirrel in desperate need of help—but at first, they didn't even know he was a squirrel.

Jaydon Pettipas and Aidan Hart saw a group of people gathered near a car, and then they saw a nearly unrecognizable animal struggling to breathe and move: a squirrel who was almost entirely covered with hard foam insulation. When looking at the photographs, it's hard to **fathom** how this little animal could still be alive. But luckily, the teens sprang into action, quickly containing the squirrel and asking friends and family for advice.



Eventually, they were able to find a vet clinic that agreed to see the squirrel. They got him to the clinic, and after the foam insulation was removed and he was treated, the vet was able to release him back into the wild!

All animals have the ability to feel love, joy, pain, and fear and to value their own lives. And when an animal is in need, it's up to **good Samaritans** like Jaydon and Aidan to take action. When we see someone suffering, we should always try to help—regardless of the **species**—and that's exactly what Jaydon and Aidan did.

Without these two compassionate teens, the squirrel might never have received the help that he so desperately needed and deserved. For their compassion, PETA presented them with a Hero to Animals Award.

If you ever come across an animal in danger, please take action. If the animal is in **imminent** danger, contact your local police department immediately.

Key Vocabulary: PETA Honors Teens Who Rescued a Suffering Squirrel

Using contextual evidence from the passage, define the bolded terms in your own words.

fathom

good Samaritan

species

imminent

Comprehension Questions: PETA Honors Teens Who Rescued a Suffering Squirrel

1. According to the article, what do all animals have in common? What other similarities do they share?

2. Why do you think PETA presented Jaydon and Aidan with a Hero to Animals Award?

3. Why do you think the author of the article refers to the squirrel using the personal pronoun “he” rather than the impersonal pronoun “it”?

4. Have you ever seen an animal who needed help? What did you do, or what would you tell others to do in the same situation?

Answer Sheet: PETA Honors Teens Who Rescued a Suffering Squirrel

Key Vocabulary

fathom	understand
good Samaritan	charitable or helpful person
species	group of living organisms consisting of similar individuals capable of exchanging genes
imminent	about to happen

Comprehension Questions

1. According to the article, what do all animals have in common? What other similarities do they share?

Answer: All animals require food, water, and shelter to survive and have the ability to feel love, joy, pain, and fear. (Literal) We all value our own lives and have a strong desire to live, protect our families, and avoid discomfort. (Inferential)

2. Why do you think PETA presented Jaydon and Aidan with a Hero to Animals Award?

Possible answer: PETA presented Jaydon and Aidan with the award to recognize their compassion and to inspire others to help animals in need. (Inferential)

3. Why do you think the author of the article refers to the squirrel using the personal pronoun “he” rather than the impersonal pronoun “it”?

Possible answer: The author aims to communicate to readers that squirrels and all other animals are living, feeling individuals, not inanimate objects. The personal pronoun “he” indicates that the squirrel, just like the teens who rescued him, is someone, not something. (Inferential)

4. Have you ever seen an animal who needed help? What did you do, or what would you tell others to do in the same situation?

Possible answer: Answers will vary. Upon discovering an animal in danger, students should stay on the scene (when safe to do so) and contact their local law enforcement agency. (Evaluative)