

'Kind Kids' Take Center Stage

Six youths are honored by the American Humane Association for helping animals.

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Annie Lee Vankleeck of Shokan, N.Y., above, and Abby Jungers of St. Peters, Mo., are the grand-prize winners of American Humane's Be Kind to Animals Kid Contest. Six youths from across the United States have been recognized as "kind kids" during the American Humane Association's Be Kind to Animals Week.

These budding "humane-itarian" are devoted to helping animals and are all winners in American Humane's Be Kind to Animals Kid Contest. From volunteering at animal shelters to collecting used towels and blankets for homeless pets, these kids demonstrate values that help form a more humane society, said Marie Belew Wheatley, president and CEO of American Humane.

The grand-prize winners are Annie Lee Vankleeck of Shokan, N.Y., and Abby Jungers of St. Peters, Mo. The runners-up are Monica Plumb of Powhatan, Va.; Rylie Sullivan of Herndon, Va.; Shelley Johnson of Lake Stevens, Wash.; and Casey Mills of Mt. Airy, Md.

"These children are examples of the power of the human-animal bond," Belew Wheatley said. "We are proud to recognize their accomplishments with a prize and we hope that they will be viewed as role models for other children and adults about the importance of treating animals with compassion and respect."

Grand-prize winner Annie, age 6, was awarded for her efforts to collect used blankets and towels for Out of the Pits, a nonprofit pit bull rescue in Albany. Abby, the grand-prize winner in the ages 13-17 category, has clocked more than 700 volunteer hours at the St. Charles Humane Society in Missouri.

The top winners get a \$1,000 prize. Be Kind to Animals Week is observed May 3-9 this year.