

February 17, 2014

Example #1

Dear Editor:

Although that Ms. Mason makes some interesting points about school uniforms in her editorial published on February 12th I believe she has overlooked some key advantages of implementing uniforms in public schools. Many students complain about the dress codes at their school, and totally reject the idea of school uniforms, but I feel there are many benefits to this proposal. These days everyone is so concerned about being attractive and popular that they forget the real reason for going to school. Increasing academic performance, along with decreasing violence, is more important than looking cool for your friends. Students who wear uniforms to school can express their individuality in more valuable ways than by what they wear.

A good portion of the student population does not give schoolwork a high priority. With uniforms for every student, there would be less focus on fashion and more emphasis on education. Grades are directly related to how much time students spend studying and doing homework. By focusing on their work students would see their marks increase and therefore their self-esteem would rise. Our report cards would be posted on the refrigerators for everyone to see, rather than stuffed at the bottom of our backpacks. Private school students who are required to wear uniforms score higher overall on provincial wide tests which measure student achievement. They do not have to spend time worrying about whether what they are wearing is the latest fashion, and can spend more time focused on their class work. They are also not distracted by revealing clothes worn by other students.

Teen violence is common in our schools. Anyone who has spent time in a high school has heard students being taunted and bullied. If all students wore uniforms, fewer would be teased for their attire, and sexual harassment caused by provocative clothing would come to an end. No one would steal another person's clothing, because if everyone wore the same thing there wouldn't be any point to it. Our schools would provide a more secure environment in which we all could learn.

Many students argue that school uniforms will restrict their personal freedom. They do not realize that they could still select their own trendy accessories, and they could wear whatever they desire at home and on the weekends. With a standardized dress code, individual personalities would shine, and not be hidden behind the latest fashion. If everyone appeared the same on the outside, people would begin to recognize others for what is on the inside.

The benefits to students of wearing a school uniform cannot be overlooked. Uniforms would help students focus on the true reason for being in school, to get an education. We should be encouraged to change the standards and be individuals. We should all stand out for what we achieve, and for what we believe, not for what we wear.

Sincerely,

Bob Anderson

February 13, 2013

Example #2

Editor:

I was distressed at the number of "Free Pets to Good Homes" ads in the newspaper tonight, and just had to write to let people know what happens to many of the pets obtained through such ads. Much too frequently, the Humane Societies and other animal rescue organizations are called in to rescue former "free to good home" pets--if the pets are lucky.

There are very good reasons that Animal Rescue, the Humane Society, and Animal Control all charge an adoption fee for their animals. These small fees in no way begin to cover the cost incurred for medical treatment and upkeep of the pets they adopt out.

Did you know:

- People value what they pay for. Pets obtained for free are more likely to be abused and/or discarded, because "there are plenty more where that came from!"
- Puppy millers take free unspayed/unneutered pure-bred dogs for breeding stock.
- So-called "Bunchers" gather free pets until they have enough to make a trip to a lab worthwhile, then sell them for \$25 a head for experimentation!
- Free animals are taken to "blood" pit-bulls and other fighting dogs - -to train them how to kill, and to enjoy it!
- According to one Humane Society, free kittens are being taken to new "good homes" in some areas--as dinner for a pet snake!
- So-called animal hoarders watch the newspapers for Free to Good Home animals. These hoarders truly believe they are "rescuing" the animals!

Some people answering the "Free to Good Homes" ads really are loving, responsible pet owners. Many are not. Please DON'T advertise Free pets; charge at least \$25 to discourage sale to research labs. Please DO take the time to interview each and every prospective owner; the Humane Society or any rescue organization can help you with what types of questions to ask. And please have Mama spayed as soon as the kittens or puppies are weaned!

Sincerely,

Bob Anderson

January 25, 2014

Example #3

Dear Editor:

While circuses and traveling shows featuring wild animal acts may seem innocent enough, it has become apparent over the past decade that wild animal acts are inherently cruel and unsafe.

Most circuses and traveling shows that use wild animals keep them for months on end in cramped transport cages, sometimes hardly larger than they are, with only brief periods outside to perform. The animals have no opportunity to move or behave in a natural way. That's why veterinarians, animal behaviorists, biologists and animal welfare organizations around the world have condemned wild animal acts.

Circuses and traveling shows with wild animals also pose a risk to human safety. Numerous circus employees have been seriously injured or killed by performing animals and circus audience members have been injured when handlers have lost control of their animals. Many performing animals are large, potentially dangerous species that even zoos don't handle. But when they perform in circuses and traveling shows, they often do so without adequate protection for staff and audience members.

We now know that performing animals suffer in circuses and traveling shows and that wild animal acts pose a danger to human safety. Hundreds of jurisdictions around the world, including entire countries, have recognized this and prohibited wild animals acts.

Our community should not condone cruelty to animals by allowing performing animal acts to visit, nor should we wait for someone to be injured or killed before we decide to act in the interest of human safety. Halifax should consider a prohibition on wild animal acts as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

Bob Anderson