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ANIMAL CAREERS



Officer Annemarie Lucas

Supervisory Special Investigator, ASPCA Humane Law Enforcement

If you watch the TV show "Animal Precinct," you've probably met Officer Annemarie Lucas. As an ASPCA Humane Law Enforcement (HLE) agent for the past seven years, it's her job to make sure people follow laws about the care of animals. That might mean rescuing cats and dogs who have been abused, or seeing that the horses in New York City, like those who pull carriages in Central Park, are humanely treated. To find out the complete scoop on her job, Animaland caught up with Officer Lucas after a busy day on the beat.

How did you get involved in humane law enforcement?:

I never knew that police for animals existed until I read an article on Humane Law Enforcement in ASPCA Animal Watch magazine. I'd had previous experience working at an animal shelter, and my interest in law came from my husband, who is a sergeant with the New York Police Department—so it all came together so smoothly!

What skills do you need to do this kind of job?:

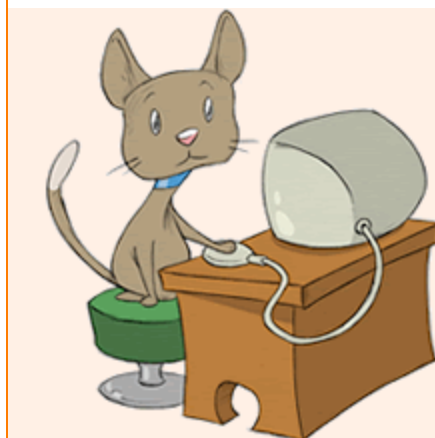
I had six months of on-the-job training, where I learned all the laws and had weapons training.

What's the hardest part of your job?:

Seeing animals in bad condition and knowing that there are so many others out there.

Every day you have to visit homes where parents have been reported for mistreating their pets. Do you talk to the kids who live there, too?:

Always! If a parent isn't treating the family's pets right, I tell kids

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that their dog or cat would really appreciate a bowl of fresh water every day, or if they spent some time playing with them. If the animal was left outside without shelter, I'll say, 'You have a nice house, and if you get cold, you can put a coat on. But your dog can't do that. Don't you think he'd like a nice warm place to go, too?'

Do you have any advice for kids who'd like to do what you do when they get older?:

Start as early as possible helping animals. Read a lot about them, learn to understand them, and see what's going on with animals in your town. And remember, it takes a certain kind of person to do this job. You have to be able to keep a cool head and not show anger when dealing with people who hurt animals. It certainly isn't glamorous—you have to get down and dirty every day!

Have things changed since you've been on "Animal Precinct"?

I'm constantly recognized on the street! But I love the results that the show has had. People are learning that you have to be kind to animals and that animal abuse is against the law--especially kids.

Do you have any pets at home?

I have four cats—Shaney, Benny, Mako and Cody. They're all rescued, and they're my pride and joy!

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