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Haven on Earth

A model community offers an enlightened way of interacting with animals.

Barry Sultanoff

Leilani Farm Sanctuary (LFS) in Lower Ha'ikū is an idyllic, peaceful place—a microcosm of the kind of harmonious planet that some idealistic humans dream of and wish to actualize. On nearly eight heavenly acres of rolling tropical land, a community of goats, donkeys, cats and chickens enjoy their full measure of animal life, nurtured by human helpers. For those who volunteer at LFS, their choice reflects a deep calling to the practical task of extending kindness and support to these four-legged and finely-feathered beings.

Laurelee Blanchard, the sanctuary's founder and visionary, is unwavering in her mission to foster the humane treatment of animals. She's a devoted educator who believes that introducing others to the joy of engaging with animals that live in healthy natural environments can awaken their hearts and help evoke compassionate behaviors toward all non-human life.

There are some who believe that human beings rightly have exclusive dominion over all the animals, which are here on Earth to satisfy whatever human whims may arise. Others, however, view the human role as one of responsible stewardship and cooperative living in harmony with all life on earth. Leilani Farm Sanctuary exists as a living testament to the birthright of

every sentient being to have a quality life of gentle companionship, in safe community with others.

In Blanchard's view, the human-animal interface has become deeply corrupted in modern times by a prevailing attitude of commercialism, which in its worst aspect promotes the torture of animals for food production through a barbaric system of factory farming. LFS has been created, in part, as a modest antidote to such callous indifference. It is be-

***Become
the peace
you wish
to see in
the world.***

— MAHATMA GANDHI

coming a model community that offers a hopeful window into a new, more enlightened way of interacting with animals.

For Blanchard, farm animals are not "commodities" to be exploited by humans as food and labor. Rather, each one is to be appreciated as a unique individual with real personality and flair. Indeed, every animal at the sanctuary has its own special story, the thumbnails of which are told, along with engaging photos, on the

colorful LFS Website at www.LeilaniFarmSanctuary.org.

Most of the rescued animals at the sanctuary escaped deplorable conditions. Lehua the donkey had been living under the dark crawl space of a dilapidated house, Larry the goat had spent ten lonely years tied up in a rancher's front yard, and Charlee the cat had been discarded in a restaurant dumpster before giving birth to kittens. Ned the goat was saved from the butcher's knife.

Daisy the hen, rescued from the now defunct Makawao Egg Farm, was one of several dozen chickens that had been de-beaked, then crammed into cages. When that commercial operation suddenly shut down, the chickens were left abandoned and suffering without food and water, she said. Blanchard and her friends proceeded to rescue them, on a moonlit night last summer.

Through the grace of the caring actions of Blanchard and her friends, life has become very rich for these rescued animals. Lehua and Jenny, the resident donkeys, amuse with their antics—and for the more adventurous, Lehua offers wet kisses. Lewis the goat skillfully massages visitors with his head. People-friendly Maizee, a "broiler chicken" rescued from the dinner table of a kind doctor who decided to donate her to LFS rather than eat her,



Laurelee Blanchard is the founder and visionary of Leilani Farm Sanctuary in Ha'ikū.

Photo: Photo: Rick Gartner



Ned, a beloved goat at Leilani Farm Sanctuary, was rescued from a butcher's knife.

Photo: Barry Sultanoff



At Leilani Farm Sanctuary, the love flows both ways!

Photo: Peter Dobias

loves to be embraced and scampers with a quick, comical step toward visitors. Elegant Pearl, an indoor-outdoor cat, engages humans with her soft touch and winning ways.

Judy Elam, a recent visitor to the sanctuary, commented, "I think when you go there, you realize this is more than just another happy 'animal rescue' story. These animals clearly adore Laurelee as much as she loves them, and their friendliness is clear testimony to how happy and fearless they now feel."

Blanchard, a Coldwell Banker real estate agent and director of the Vegetarian Society of Hawai'i,

talked about the evolution of her home into a sanctuary for animals, and her lifetime calling as an animal rights activist. "Helping animals is richly rewarding for me. These animals are lucky to have been saved but unfortunately are only a drop in the bucket compared to the ten billion farm animals raised and killed for food each year in the U.S. I believe the best way for anyone to help animals is to stop eating them. By adopting a plant-based diet we can make the biggest difference for the animals."

LFS is in need of volunteer help. Tasks include brushing the animals,

trimming the goats' hooves and barn cleaning. Also on the LFS wish list are volunteers for installation of rain gutters on the goat house and barn painting. Fundraising and graphic design skills are also sought.

Monetary donations to LFS in any amount can go a long way toward giving these and other rescued animals a new lease on life. Checks can be mailed to LFS, P.O. Box 792200, Pā'ia, HI 96779. (Non-profit 501(c)3 status is pending.)

LFS can be contacted at info@LeilaniFarmSanctuary.org, or via the Website at www.LeilaniFarmSanctuary.org. ✨