

Whyville: The Next Generation of Public Outreach

The future of laboratory animal science depends on promoting biomedical research through public outreach and maintaining a continuous flow of talent into the nation's science workforce.

With public support for animal research hovering just above 50%, it's more important than ever for our industry to educate the next generation of leaders about the essential role of animals in biomedical research.

That's why the AALAS Foundation partnered with Whyville — the leading education-focused virtual world for teens and pre-teens — to create the Community Animal Research Environment (CARE), a series of fun, educational games in a virtual laboratory.

At CARE, Whyville citizens create habitats for animals, take on the role of an animal caretaker, and discover how animal research generated cures and treatments for ailments impacting humans and animals.

This exciting public outreach project, the Foundation's largest and most ambitious to date, teaches future leaders how animals help scientists in research — and how research, in turn, benefits animals.

Why Whyville?

With over 5.4 million registered users, Whyville (www.whyville.net) is a vibrant, kid-safe website that brings science-based educational content to kids in an incredibly engaging manner.

Whyville represents a truly unique delivery mechanism for educational outreach. The hands-on, inquiry-based nature of the site enables the AALAS Foundation to create customized interactive activities that engage young minds.

Why is Public Outreach Important?

It's critically important for our industry find new and creative ways to keep young people interested in science because the health of laboratory animal science tomorrow depends on improved preparation of our students today.

Unfortunately, research illustrates that children, especially girls, lose interest in science as they move from elementary school into middle school.

Thankfully, studies also suggest that exposing young people to engaging educational activities during this critical period can substantially shape opinions and influence future academic and career choices.

The Foundation is harnessing the power of Whyville to site to build understanding, respect and support for laboratory animal science.

How You Can Help

The AALAS Foundation relies on your financial support in order to launch important public outreach programs like Whyville.

With your support, the AALAS Foundation can continue to educate future leaders about the benefits of biomedical research and maintain a strong pipeline of talent into the nation's laboratory animal science workforce.

For more information about the Whyville program, or to contribute to the cause, please contact the Foundation at 901.754.8620 or visit www.aalasfoundation.org/whyville.html.