



# Our Hen House Podcast: Transcript for Episode 658, Interview with Andrew Rowan

**Mariann Sullivan:** Welcome to Our Hen House, Andrew.

**Andrew Rowan:** Thank you for having me.

**Mariann:** It is such a pleasure to have you, you have such a long and illustrious history in the animal protection movement. And today we're talking to you specifically because I was so intrigued by this book, but I also want to talk to you about all of the other work you're doing as well.

And I do wanna talk about the book, because it's an issue that I am particularly interested in. And that of course relates to the relationship between dogs and poverty, I guess. And we tend to think that many of the problems associated with un-homed animals, at least dogs, maybe not cats so much, are somewhat resolved...that we've made a really lot of progress. But the fact is, just as people who are dealing with poverty live very different lives from those who are middle or upper class, animals whose people are dealing with poverty may live very different lives as well. And that's really what you're talking about in this book.

Can you just talk a little bit of the overall view of some of these contrasts between the lives that animals live.

**Andrew:** Sure. Poverty affects not just people, but the animals that share their homes with them. I've dealt a lot with the issue overseas, looking at street dogs and roaming cats overseas. So it's not generally regarded as a big issue in the United States, but poverty of course has a significant impact, whether it's in the United States or in India, for example. It's a really important factor in looking at just how people interact with their animals and just how the human animal bond develops.

It doesn't affect the strength of the bond, but it does affect some of the conditions that are surrounded.

**Mariann:** And the book, which I should have named, *Underdogs: Pets, People and Poverty* reports on a specific study, which was done in two different locations, one in the US, one in Costa Rica. And it set out to examine one aspect of the issue of poverty and that's basic vet care, which obviously is very important for people who are keeping animals.

I felt like you tried to look at one thing and ended up having to look at, because all the issues are so intertwined, you looked at many other things as well. And it's really a fascinating look into the lives of dogs who are living with people who are living in poverty. Can you just tell us a little bit though about the initial specific goal of this study regarding vet care?

**Andrew:** So Arnie Arluke, my co-author on the book, is a very skilled and insightful ethnographer. What that means is he goes into communities and talks to people about particular topics. And many years ago, I first met Arnie when I was up at Boston at Tufts Veterinary School. And he was then interested in the whole issue of animal research and what was going on inside laboratories that were using animals for research.

And so I was able to help him gain access to some laboratories and several papers came out of that. And so we've kept in touch over the years and he's always looking for a new research project. And I thought that a research project that looked at different cultures, in terms of how they engage with their animals, would be something that would be of interest to him.

And it turns out it was. And so we were able to find some funding and connect him with a group in Costa Rica that I've had a longstanding relationship with. And so he went down to Costa Rica and looked at the ethnography of human-pet or mostly dogs, but there are a few cats in the book, how people interact with the animals.

And of course, Costa Rica is not as high income a country as the United States, it's medium sort of medium to low. And so he was looking at how low income people in Costa Rica dealt with some of the issues that they were dealing with and specifically how they dealt with the issue of veterinary care.

That led him then to connect with a colleague at The Humane Society who was involved in a program called Pets for Life, which essentially focuses on low income communities in the United States. And some of the differences that you

see in terms of the human-pet relationship in low income communities compared to medium or high income communities.

For example, pets and low income communities are very unlikely to be sterilized. Whereas sterilization rate of pets in medium and high income communities is in the 80%, or thereabouts. And that's, of course, driven by economics and also availability because there are very few veterinary practices in some of these low income communities. So it's awkward trying to get your animal to a vet even if you had the means to do that. Transport is another big issue. So the veterinary care becomes an important part of the book because it's a distinguishing factor between what happens in medium and high income communities in the United States and low income communities in the United States. So that's why there's a lot of material in the book about "what do you do? Do you sterilize the animal and why would you do that? And why is there a difference between different income levels in different parts of the country?" So that was one of the framing features that came out in the research that I was doing. And I would emphasize, by the way, that even though my name's on the book as a coauthor, and I have read the book and helped with some of the writing, Arnie is the primary ethnographer who's done all the field work. And so he has a much richer understanding and viewpoint of what's going on, but I'd be happy to talk about some of the challenges that people in low income communities have to face if they have pets.

**Mariann:** Yeah. That is really the issue I wanted to delve into.

But I do highly recommend the book itself to people who are interested because it does go into a lot of detail. One of the things that these two areas had in common, which I think might make them kind of special and interesting to study, is that they both, as you pointed out, they have shelters. They have organizations and really good shelters and services, including vet care, that are available for free or no cost, which relieves the most obvious reason why people who are living in poverty don't seek animal care. Because it's expensive. So how are these shelters funded?

**Andrew:** So the shelter in Costa Rica has a very active veterinary program and the manager and founder of that shelter has, shall we say, a way with people. She really says, "you know, if you come here for veterinary care, you need to contribute something."

So she expects the clients to pay something towards the cost of the care. And that's one aspect of her funding. The other funding comes from donors and for many years, when I was at The Humane Society of the United States, we were

providing an annual donation to her to help support and help pay for a veterinarian for the clinic.

I would say this, you say that these are good shelters. And in fact, the shelter in Costa Rica, AHPPA are the initials, it stands for...actually, I won't even go into that...it's just called El Refugio, The Refuge.

And the shelter in Costa Rica has seen a huge change in its intake and its adoption program and now it's classified, if it was in the United States, it would be identified as a no kill shelter, ie 90% of the animals that it receives are adopted out and find good homes, or 90% or more. It has proven to be very successful and it has changed, I think I can't prove this definitely, but it has changed the way Costa Ricans deal with their animals. In interesting and helpful ways in terms of animal protection.

**Mariann:** Yeah. It. It really does demonstrate how hugely important having that kind of leadership is. And what about the shelter in North Carolina?

**Andrew:** Well, so The Humane Society of Charlotte serves an area in Charlotte, West Charlotte, that's low income, primarily minority, and has all of the usual issues that you would expect.

It's a food desert, it's a veterinary desert, it's a health desert, you know. So you have these communities, the Pets for Life group that works in low income communities refers to it as the yellow blob. There's this area in these communities that have very few services. So this particular community in Charlotte, that's served by The Humane Society of Charlotte is low income, primarily minority and challenging in terms of accessing any type of service, let alone grocery stores or things of that nature. Or veterinary practices. So the local shelter is providing services to these communities. And there are all the sorts of usual issues about, "well, if you don't have the money, how can you have a pet?" and this sort of thing.

So there are variety of sort of concerns that have been expressed over the years. And what the ethnography indicates is that this has an impact in how people perceive this help that is being offered by this no-kill shelter, and not always in a positive way. Because their experience when they go to the shelter aren't necessarily particularly positive.

One of the insights the book shows is that the shelter has to change how it reaches out into these communities in order to gain their trust and gain their willingness to partake of these low income or free services.

**Mariann:** Yeah, I found that to be one of the most interesting insights from the book, that it's not just cost.

I mean, even if you make it free, at least spay and neuter or vet care, other kinds of vet care. Even if you make it free or very low cost, it's not just cost. And I think that's such an important insight. So can you go a little bit into more detail about some of the barriers that keep people from going to that shelter and getting what is really something they can afford, but they still have blocks in why they would want to seek it?

**Andrew:** Well, transport, I mentioned, is a huge problem. Many people in these communities don't have cars so they have to beg or borrow a ride to get to the shelter, or to get to a veterinarian. That's not always easy. Somebody who has a car may say, "well, I'll give you a ride, but you have to pay me." So that's an additional cost.

The people may have jobs. They can't take off from the jobs to go to the shelter. And so when the shelters are open or not open is a factor here. And the shelters don't always understand that they need to be open when their potential clients can access them.

And so that's one of the things that is a challenge. So transport I mentioned, but then there's also this sort of stigma that's associated with low income communities and having pets. There's this sort of longstanding sense that if you can't afford to have a pet and treat it appropriately, in the minds of the person providing whatever help there might be, then you shouldn't have a pet. And so there's that sort of issue.

Animal Control, of course, is a law enforcement division. And the experience that people in these communities have with law enforcement is generally not particularly positive. It's also, there's a social work element and the experience that people in these communities have with social workers is not positive.

And so you are overcoming a number of potential barriers that people might have. Sort of, "well, I don't want to go there because..." And so there's a lot of problems with people going to a place and finding that what they feared is actually what happens, you know? And so, you see this sort of thing.

People remember the stuff that sort of feeds into their standard view of the world. They don't remember the stuff that doesn't, or they don't comment on the good stuff. They remember the bad stuff and say, "well, you know, that's what happened to me then. And therefore it's always gonna happen."

And they then repeat that to their friends and neighbors. And so there's a general resistance to going and accessing some of these free service.

**Mariann:** Yeah, it's certainly a story I've heard elsewhere that...I mean, nobody wants to be looked down upon. And if there are differences in the way people who don't have a lot of money, or there are class differences in the way people treat their animals. And if you're going to be criticized for that, you're not going to go.

It's a very compelling thought. And one of the things that was really interesting about this study - there were two groups, they were in totally different cultures, different countries, but similar class.

Let's talk about income. That income has an enormous effect on people's attitudes towards their companion animals, perhaps even more than the fact that they live in different countries and essentially different cultures.

**Andrew:** I would argue that income doesn't have an impact on attitude, but it does have an impact on behavior.

And so that's one of the key issues here is that people without money or without resources have more trouble providing support than people with money and with resources. So, it's more about the behavior issues rather than the attitude issues. The human-animal bond appears to be as strong in West Charlotte, as it is in Washington suburbs. But I mean, that's not a major issue. It's just what people are able then to do to support that bond that's more of a challenge. Not many of the animals are sterilized. It's an expense that not many people can afford in these communities.

And I've already seen it work. That's the other thing, is that what we find in say a place like Costa Rica, when you actually go out and offer these sterilization services in these outreach clinics, it changes the way people behave with their animals. And they suddenly say, "oh, that's what I do to take care of the animals." It's not that they're opposed, they've just never been shown what to do.

And so they now have a modeled behavior and they start mimicking that behavior and so the way that people interact with their animals changes. I'm convinced that this is a really important component to these sterilization outreach clinics. It's not so much that you're sterilizing a hundred animals, it's that you're changing the behavior of a thousand people.



**Mariann:** Yeah. That does seem to be very, very important in having an effect on animals. In addition to that, as we mentioned at the beginning, you started out to talk about vet care, but being poor is hard in a million ways. It's not just hard in your ability to access vet care.

And there are other barriers created by poverty other than the lack of access to vet care that can really affect people's relationship with animals. And I think, at least from what I've seen, particularly in working in New York city, is housing. If people are going to get evicted on a fairly regular basis, and that is happening way too often, at least in this country, maybe the housing issues are different in Costa Rica.

Obviously the level of commitment you can make to your animal is going to be different. I mean, you're just living in a constantly tenuous circumstance. So should part of the goals of the animal protection movement be protections from eviction, more rental housing that accepts animals, just helping people find housing where they can create a stable relationship with animals?

**Andrew:** That is a critical factor because housing stability is much lower in a low income community than in a middle class or upper income community. So people are constantly losing housing and having to move. And that's always a challenge when you have a pet to take with you, especially if that pet happens to be a dog that has a reputation.

So the new owner of the housing may say, "well, you can only have a dog that's under 25 pounds in weight," you know? And so that then restricts the type of housing that you can find and all. And it is a very big part of the problem that people in low income communities have.

In terms of identifying who can take the dog. "If I have to leave and go somewhere else, can I find somebody who has housing that will accept the dog?" That's a major factor in these communities. I'm not sure it's as much of a factor in a place like Costa Rica. Although housing restrictions exist globally. So that's not...I haven't heard that housing is such a big factor in Costa Rica, but it may be. It's just I may not be talking to the right people.

**Mariann:** Yeah. And actually another issue that came up, particularly in Costa Rica, which I found really fascinating...and maybe in both communities, I'm not sure, is this like a tendency to see animals as a little bit less our babies and a little bit more like independent contractors. They're living their own lives, but their lives are intertwined with ours.

And I'm kind of wondering whether... obviously, it's an important goal to relieve the barriers to taking good care of animals. But, do we really want to just achieve something similar to current middle class relationships with companion animals? Or is there any place for the notion that we will've actually lost something when so many people see them in a kind of infantilized way? Is there room to learn something here from people's relationships with animals in other, even lower income, settings?

**Andrew:** There are certainly some people in who study dog behavior who think that dogs that live on the streets have a much better life than dogs that live inside homes. That may be true in one sense.

They may be more prone to accidents and disease than the dogs that live inside homes. And so health wise, they may be better off if they're living inside homes, but that's a rather paternalistic approach to whether or not the dog is enjoying him or herself.

But I mean, I remember when we first came down to our current home. I was living in Massachusetts and we moved down to the Washington area in 1997. And we moved into an upscale neighborhood that has two acre lots, and, you know, lots of green space. And there were also lots of dogs that were roaming around at the time. Off-leash, most with collars, but a fair number that were roaming around off-leash. Today I don't see that happening, I don't see dogs roaming. There's been a big change in how dogs are managed in my neighborhood in the 20 years that we've lived here or 25 years that we've lived here.

And that led me to start thinking about the changes that have occurred over longer periods. So back in the 1950s and 1960s, there were maybe 25 or 30% of dogs were roaming free on the streets. Now they were owned. I suspect they were all owned, but those dogs have disappeared from American streets, by and large. They're still in places like Native American reservations or maybe some inner city communities. But by and large, they've disappeared from American streets but they're present on streets in Costa Rica and in India and in Africa and places like that.

So these are roaming dogs that have a home or have somebody who says "yes, that's my dog." They're not actually in the house, they may not be allowed in the house. They may sleep outside, but they're provided with some food, maybe some water. So what I've seen happening in Costa Rica over the last 25 years is a change in that relationship.



So, in 2003, there was a survey done in Costa Rica that asked people where the dog slept at night and 27% of the dogs slept indoors. Today that figure is almost 70% of the dogs are sleeping indoors at night. So, they're much more controlled and that you could say is better for the dogs and for the people, but the dogs have also lost something.

You know, they're not sort of free to sort of roam around and greet their friends and do whatever it is that dogs do in the middle of the day when they're not under the control of their human owners. So there is a loss involved in that, but then you have a much healthier animals, they live longer.

Typically an animal that is properly cared for is going to live twice as long as a street dog, at least, or at least twice as long. So you're giving up freedom for some lifespan, longevity, more years and more attention, more cuddling from your owner. It's an interesting philosophical point as to which is better, you know?

I mean, there's always the argument is it better to be a happy pig or unhappy Socrates, you know? I mean, when you start looking at what is better for an individual, you know? I suspect that dogs regret the fact that they've lost some freedom.

**Mariann:** By bringing it up, I'm not saying I think that we should go, you know, just have street dogs or whatever. Neither answer is entirely satisfying. I'd just like to...I appreciate your willingness to accept that there are advantages to dogs in both of these and neither is perfect. And perhaps we can keep that in mind and learn a little something about what is better for our dogs. And maybe...

You know, I'm the worst. Like, I would never let a dog off leash. I baby them, but I'm not saying that I have the perfect answer. They're not babies. They're grownups.

**Andrew:** Don't we all? I mean, so our dog, Abby is a sweetheart and she gets thoroughly babied in our house. She hates the sound of lawn mowers. So if there's somebody mowing a lawn in the neighborhood she wants in, she doesn't want to be outside. But otherwise she loves being outside in the sunshine and sort of...We have an invisible fence so she's free to roam in our property and she goes out and terrorizes the chipmunks and whatever other creatures are out there. She goes after the frogs as well but mostly the frogs are protected from Abby because every time they move, she starts back. I mean, it's funny to watch her sort of looking at a frog and then the frog hops and Abby will dart back.

So she loves to be outside, but not if there's lawn mowers and not if it's raining. She does not like being outside of its raining. And when it's really hot, she likes to be inside in the air. So, you know...

**Mariann:** Yeah, no, they definitely cooperate with being babied frequently. they can be very enthusiastic about it.

And it's always appreciated when, even if they still have their hunting instincts, that they're not that good at it. So we don't send them out there... That's always a problem with the idea of cats going out there to kill, which is what they do. But anyway, I digress... I want to talk about Wellbeing International, which is of course the organization that you founded and are currently with.

But before that I have one more question because the goal here was to find out barriers that existed for people to make use of low cost veterinary care. And in both of the places that you studied, you pointed out there were effective shelters. So veterinary care was at least somewhat available, actually pretty available.

But what about the other question? How a lot of people are living with animals and they do not have availability of low cost veterinary care. How does that change? Is this a charitable endeavor? Is this like people from wealthier countries making this happen? They're not even making it happen. I mean, in the US, we still have places that don't have available cheap veterinary care.

So, we may solve the problem of getting people to use it, but how do we get it there for them to use?

**Andrew:** So it's a complicated issue. And what I'm seeing at the moment is that there's a big increase in veterinary resources and veterinary capacity in Costa Rica. So the number of veterinary clinics in Costa Rica has probably quadrupled since 2000 and providing additional employment for veterinarians in the country. But also the reason why the number of veterinarians has quadrupled is because people are taking their animals to the vet.

And so there's an interesting issue here that happened. So veterinarians are typically pretty unhappy with services that are provided low cost or free by humane societies and animal organizations. They're regarded as unwarranted competition. And if the local animal group is tax exempt and they're not, they have to pay business taxes, then that's an added insult to injury.

But what I think's happened in Costa Rica in the last 25 or 30 years is that the animal movement has increased the value of animals, of companion animals. And has shown people that, you know, you should take your animal to the vet. And that's why the veterinary profession has expanded so dramatically in Costa Rica in the last 20, 25 years. If you look in the United States, companion animal practices and small animal clinics were relatively rare in the 1940s and then sort of came roaring ahead as pet ownership and people's interest in sort of taking care of their animals increased.

And so we can track how much people spend on pets and the proportion of one's household income that goes on your pets has been going up steadily since 1950, according to the US Commerce Department statistics. And the number of small animal clinics has been going up steadily in the United States. And so I suspect that, in fact, it benefits a local veterinary community to have these types of services provided because at the end of the day... So in a place like Bali and Indonesia, for example, there was an animal group that was providing mobile clinic services to local villages, but they were only there maybe once a month.

So the rest of the month, there are no vets, you know, there's no free service. You now have to go to a private practice. And what they found was that the local veterinarians, the professional veterinarians, opposed them initially, and then started welcoming them in. And the reason why that happened was because for those 30 days of the month, that the free clinic was not available, people were taking now going to the local vet.

And so they start spending money on the local vet. It increases the demand for services, vet services grow, infrastructure develops. And so it's beneficial to the veterinarian profession as well as to the animals, as well as to the pet.

**Mariann:** That's a fascinating story, the Bali story, that's fascinating.

**Andrew:** In Costa Rica I haven't been able to document it as tightly as I would like, but there has been a huge increase in veterinary capacity in the number of clinics that operate in Costa Rica.

I mean, in place like Jaipur in India. There were basically two vet clinics in the city of Jaipur at the turn of the century. There are now 21. And so again, that happens because people are now valuing the animals more, are prepared to pay for that extra veterinary care.

**Mariann:** And I just think it's interesting that it also allows people to allow themselves to value the animals if they become capable of caring for them.

Because obviously if you know that you can't care for your animal and you can't get food for your animal and you can't get vet care for your animal, you're going to resist wanting to get attached to that animal. So it all works to the positive... and then you don't have as much pleasure in the relationship. So, it does all work together.

Speaking of working together, that was such a great segue that I just thought of, because I want to talk about Wellbeing International and it seems like one of the themes of Wellbeing International is to see people, animals and the environment as kind of intertwined systems.

Can you talk about why you consider that such an important overall view at this point?

**Andrew:** So it happens that my wife has spent a lot of her career, she's a CPA. She spent a lot of her career working in human development NGOs and things of that nature, disaster response NGOs. She has that background.

I have this background of working in an animal protection organization professionally for 35, 40 years. And so when we got to that stage in our lives where we were moving on, she was indicating, "well, maybe we should start our own NGO." And so she came up with the name Wellbeing International that resonated with me.

And then she came up with the tagline "seeking solutions for people, animals and the environment." And that certainly resonated with me because one of the things you see is that you can't really solve animal problems without solving people problems and environmental problems too. And so if we want something that's truly sustainable, and I compliment the United Nations for developing the sustainable development goals, but they haven't done it as comprehensively as they should do it. You need to include animal wellbeing and environmental wellbeing in that equation in order to get something that's truly sustainable.

And there's some fascinating elements to that that we've been exploring at Wellbeing International. I mean, for example, I started off, I spent most of my career working on animal protection but because we are looking at human and environmental issues, I've also been looking recently at human wellbeing and human happiness. And it's fascinating if you start looking at the research on human happiness, do you know that there's a low point in happiness overall at the age in your thirties? And then as you age up to the seventies, before you start becoming decrepit, your happiness increases steadily from your thirties up to your seventies.

**Mariann:** That totally resonates with me. Your thirties are the best time. Like they're the best time, you should be at your happiest. Like you're healthy...well, for most people, if you're healthy, if you have an income, you're strong, you're having fun. And I would, you know, having fairly recently entered my seventies, I would definitely say it's just so much easier. Except for the impending doom.

**Andrew:** Yeah, except for the impending doom. But I mean, Confucius commented about that, had his statement...Confucius had statements on most things, and he sort of talked about: at 15 he had to learn a lot of stuff, and then he had to develop his career and structure. You know, finally, when he came to be 70, he could just do what he wanted to. You know?

**Mariann:** Right. Of course social security helps.

**Andrew:** Yes. Social security helps. I'd never thought about it that way.

And so our children are now in their thirties and embarking on their careers and families and things like that. And you can see, I mean, it's a stressful period, you know? They're more stresses in your life than there are right now, you know? At seventies, you know, we're doing what we want and sort of pleasing ourselves rather than taking care of...or we have to take care of ourselves, but our parents have died so we don't have that worry going on. And our children are generally old enough to take care of themselves. So there's always a bit of a worry about the children, but I mean, you know, you're in a much better place overall.

**Mariann:** I understand that the work that you're doing, the more specific work aside from the overall view, has been focused to some extent on Ukraine.

I assume that's in response to the crisis going on there. Can you just tell us a little bit about your work there and the current situation regarding animals?

**Andrew:** Well, in fact, Eastern Europe is an interesting place in terms of animal welfare. They've never really had a particularly strong nonprofit community in Eastern Europe.

There are nonprofits that work there and that are having an impact, but they tend to be smaller and less well resourced compared to say the RSPCA in the United Kingdom or the German Tierschutzbund or some of these other large organizations. And so they they've struggled a bit in terms of what they can do and can accomplish.

And so we're looking at Ukraine as an opportunity, in a sense. I think Rahm Emanuel, or one of the democratic politicians, or maybe it was Kissinger, said "Never let a good crisis go to waste." And there's an opportunity here to start, I think, sort of developing a better resourced animal protection community in Eastern Europe, and Ukraine is certainly going to need to do something. Millions of refugees have left the country with their animals and so they're having to address what happens with their animals. They're having help, support from people in Slovakia, in Romania, in Poland, lots of support from those communities and everybody needs some help there. And then of course the people who've left Ukraine and didn't take their animals with them. Those animals are now roaming the streets, and there are individuals who are going out and feeding them despite the dangers that they are facing. There've been several of these animal activists who've been killed by soldiers.

So I mean, it's a dangerous task, but they need help. So we put together a consortium of groups, one of which is Save the Dogs and Other Animals in Romania. Another is the Slovakian equivalent to the RSPCA. Another is The Street Dog Coalition, which is a Colorado based veterinary operation that has been helping the pets of street people. And they have volunteers who are now going over to Romania to the border with Ukraine and helping get people across the border and support themselves and their animals. And so we just felt that it would be, we would be missing an opportunity if we didn't try to sort of engage people and engage donors in that respect. We've had one donor who's gone over there and taken food and medicines to Kiev, for example.

I won't say we've had a huge impact, but we are doing what we can to sort of make the world a better place.

**Mariann:** It has been...I've found it extraordinary how, just cuz I've been around for a long time and the difference between how the response has been to people wanting to bring their companion animals, who are fleeing and how that seems...the press is very sympathetic, the other countries seem to be very sympathetic about people coming in with their animals. That just seems new to me and a really, really positive sign of the times in the midst of a dreadful, dreadful crisis.

**Andrew:** This whole issue of animals and disasters really had its genesis back when hurricane Andrew slammed into Florida and destroyed Homestead, south of Miami. There was some people suddenly started saying, "wait a minute, what happened to the animals?"

Because the zoo animals were, you know, the enclosures were destroyed. The zoo animals escaped. People had to deal with some of those issues. Companion



animals for the homes that were destroyed, people had to deal with that. And in fact, Southern Florida ended up with piles and piles of dog food. Everybody was so concerned and sent lots of pet food down there. But that then led to a more professional approach to animals in disasters.

And then Katrina was the next shall we say step that sort of created this general notion that animals need to be included in disaster planning. And so the PETS act requires the communities to include animals in their disaster planning. And so now everybody has at least a modicum of a plan to address not just the people, but the animals.

And I always remember in Katrina there was that young fellow who was being put on the bus and had lost his dog, I think, Snowball.

**Mariann:** Is there any of us who do not remember that? Do not remember Snowball?

**Andrew:** Snowball was the iconic creature, or pet, that pointed to the need to include animals in disaster response. And we've seen the same thing happening in Japan with the Fukushima disaster. The animals were left behind and there was all sorts of issues about what we should do. And so the Japanese are beginning to address the same sorts of questions.

**Mariann:** Yeah. And the thing I see in Ukraine, which really links to everything you've been saying in this interview, that as the systems have improved and as respect has been given to the idea that animals matter in these situations, you just see everyday responses like from the press and from other people kind of giving themselves permission to care about this and think that this is a legitimate issue and to engage their own emotions about helping people help their animals. So it's very inspiring. I wish we could spread it to every issue that involves animals.

**Andrew:** Well, I think it is spreading and I've been in the movement for 40 years, for more than 40 years and there was a time I would be confronted at cocktail parties. "Why are you working on animal issues when there's so many human problems?" You know? That doesn't happen anymore, or I haven't had that happen to me in decades now. No longer are people saying, "well, it's not important. We have to help people first, then the animals."

And in fact, I think it is two sides to the same point. That you encourage a nurturing behavior to people, animals and the environment. And it doesn't really

matter what you're focusing on, that nurturing behavior spills over into the other spheres.

**Mariann:** Well, it's very inspiring and I'm so thrilled that we were able to talk about it today, both in the specific situations involved in the book *Underdogs* and the more general goals you have for Wellbeing International.

Thanks so much for joining us today, Andrew.

**Andrew:** It's my pleasure. Thank you very much for having me.