Compassionate Action for Animals
Submitted: January 25th, 2014

Student Services Fee Request for 2014-2015 Academic Year

Coffman Memorial Union, Room 126, 300 Washington Ave SE, Minneapolis, MN 55455
Address

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Phone Fax Email Address

“We acknowledge that the Fees Committee does not award actual dollars, but rather a penny fee that earns dollars based upon student enrollment levels. Any difference between anticipated and actual income resulting from changes in enrollment are the responsibility of the student organization, not the Fees Committee.”

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Is your organization an IRS 501 (c)(3) not-for-profit? Yes _____ X _____ No _____

If yes, please provide proof of your organization’s 501(c)(3) status.

Funds are being requested for (check all that apply):

General Operating Support: Start-Up Costs: Capital:

Project / Program Support: Technical Assistance: Other
(List):

Budget
SSF Dollar Amount Requested $16,000
Total Annual Organization Budget $34,485.00
Total Program Budget (apart from General Operating) $22,495.00
Section 1: Narrative

About Compassionate Action for Animals

The Compassionate Action for Animals (CAA) student group was formally established at the University of Minnesota – Twin Cities in early 2003. The student group is affiliated with, but distinct from, the Compassionate Action for Animals community organization. References to Compassionate Action for Animals or CAA in this document refer to the student group, unless otherwise noted.

Compassionate Action for Animals is a nonviolent advocate for animals, embracing openness, humility, persistence, and respect as its cornerstone principles. For the past decade, students have volunteered their time organizing and carrying out hundreds of events and projects over the year, focusing on public outreach, education, and community building as a means towards achieving social change. CAA engages with all types of undergraduate and graduate students, staff and faculty, regardless of their dietary choices, to raise awareness about improving the lives of abused and exploited farm animals. For every event that CAA hosts, it requires the energy and dedication of student volunteers, which helps hone the leadership skills that they will need to be successful in their own lives. CAA started off hosting speakers on plant-based nutrition and animal ethics, soon expanding its schedule of events to include food giveaways, dine-outs, potlucks, film showings, cooking classes, a festival, and much more.

Organizational Highlights

2004

- CAA started one of its most distinguished events, the annual Vegan Food Showcase, hosted in September on the West Bank Plaza. The event is the precursor to one of our largest community events of the year, Veg Week. During the Vegan Food Showcase, CAA asks participants to pledge to eat vegetarian or vegan for a week (i.e., during Veg Week). During this week, the group hosts an event every day to show that making compassionate eating choices can be easy and participants are not alone. The events range from lectures and film showings to cooking classes and dine-outs. With a major speaker to kick-off the series of events, Veg Week is a favorite of many members of the University community. This has become a yearly event, with 2008 having the greatest amount of participation to date. Over 400 attendees packed the Coffman Union Theater for the kick-off event, and volunteers collected 800 pledges and distributed food to over 1,500 people.

2006

- CAA brought world-renowned philosopher (often considered the most famous living philosopher) Peter Singer to speak on “Ethics and Animals” on March 23rd with CAA as the primary sponsor. Co-sponsors included CENSHARE; Graduate Student Philosophy Association; Minnesota Center for Philosophy of Science; U of MN Philosophy Department; Program in Agricultural, Food and Environmental Ethics; and Students for Social Responsibility. Together we hosted event “Ethics and Animals”. This event was funded by the University of Minnesota McKnight Arts and Humanities Endowment, an MSA DEF Grant, the CLA Scholarly Event Fund, an SAO Event Partnership Grant, and the GAPSA Academic Initiative. Over 1,400 people packed the Ted Mann Concert Hall for this event, with 200 having to be turned away due to lack of space.
2007
• In April, the University Dining Services (UDS) adopted a cage-free egg policy for all six of their residence halls after a concerted campaign led by CAA. The campaign generated positive awareness of cruel confinement in conventional egg production through much public outreach and alliance building, and dozens of news articles and letters. This historic decision made the University of Minnesota the largest school in the country to adopt this policy and tangibly improved the lives of thousands of hens.
• The Student unions and activities office graciously granted CAA the Tony Diggs award in the field of Outstanding Program/Event of the Year for Veg Week.

2008
• Gowri Koneswaran, Esq., Director of Animal Agriculture Impacts at the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), spoke at “Fro Farm to Fork: The Environmental Impacts of Animal Agriculture” on April 9th. CAA, the Minnesota Public Interest and Research Group (MPIRG), and the HSUS hosted the event. Funding was provided by the Institute on the Environment, a Graduate and Professional Student Assembly’s Academic Grant, and a Student Activities Office Partnership Grant.
• Animal advocacy workshops, trainings and discussions were held at CAA’s first ever “Their Lives, Our Voices” conference. 170 attend this event in June. We hosted this event from 2008 through 2010, and resumed it again in 2013.

2010
• Hosted renowned vegan chef Isa Chandra Moskowitz at the Coffman Theater.
• Continued the successful tradition of the “Turkey-Free Thanksgiving Potluck,” attracting over 150 attendees for a compassionate, nutritious, and delicious Thanksgiving feast.
• Hosted 1st Annual Vegan Chili Cook-off at the Seward Community Café, an event which has grown every year since.

2012
• Organized first annual Twin Cities Veg Fest, one of the biggest events CAA has ever organized, with 1,200 attendees, 6 speakers, and over 40 exhibitors in Coffman Memorial Union. Guests were able to sample all kinds of great vegan food from many different exhibitors, and could also get food from one of the three food vendors. Guests were also able to visit with a number of other vegan friendly businesses as well as several animal advocacy groups. A total of 6 speakers presented throughout the day, including Erica Meier of Compassion Over Killing and Scott Heiser of the Animal Legal Defense Fund.

2013
• Organized second annual Twin Cities Veg Fest, held on campus in Coffman Memorial Union's Great Hall. Attendance increased significantly from 1,200 to 2,000 attendees. New exhibitors were added to the festival, as well as 4 musicians who performed in Coffman Union's Whole Music Club, based upon feedback from the 2012 festival.
• In conjunction with the Twin Cities Veg Fest, CAA organized and presented the 4th Annual Their Lives Our Voices animal advocacy conference in the Teaching & Student Services Building on campus.
• Additionally, CAA distributed over 12,000 leaflets explaining the cruelties of factory farming and encouraging students to choose plant-based foods on campus, contributing to 73,000 leaflets that have been distributed on campus since 2004.

Mission
CAA’s mission is to encourage people to cultivate empathy for animals and move towards a plant-based diet.

Core Values
CAA’s core values fall into three categories: Ethical, Organizational and Strategic. CAA’s ethical values form the bedrock of our activism: compassion for animals, integrity, nonviolence, non-discrimination, and courage.

CAA’s organizational values are intended to support a strong, cohesive organization capable of growth over time: egalitarianism, approachability, financial responsibility, responsiveness, efficiency, and humility.

CAA’s strategic values ensure effective and efficient operations: Provide role models for change, focus on factory farming and reducing consumption, use media strategically and responsibly, target a receptive demographic, and consider long-term as well as short-term goals.

Relationship with Organizations of Like Mission

CAA partners with community and national organizations such as Chicken Run Rescue, Mercy for Animals, Compassion Over Killing, the Humane Society of the United States, and more. CAA also works in conjunction with co-ops and natural food stores in the Twin Cities area. Groups that CAA partners with often have materials such as leaflets or videos that fit in with CAA’s message and that CAA chooses to distribute on campus or elsewhere in the Twin Cities. CAA collaborates with major animal rights groups Mercy for Animals and Vegan Outreach by distributing their leaflets, screening their films, and hosting their representatives as speakers. Through all of these partnerships CAA is able to bring a variety of events and informational opportunities to the University community.

Compassionate Action for Animals also collaborates with student organizations and University departments to host a diverse range of events. In previous years, CAA has collaborated with U of MN-affiliated organizations EcoWatch, the Minnesota Public Interest and Research Group, the Student Animal Legal Defense Fund, the Student International Health Committee, the Minnesota Environmental Studies Club, the Philosophy Department, and the U of M Bookstore.

CAA works with student organizations on events where the groups share common values. For example, CAA collaborated with the Women’s Student Activist Collective to host noted eco-feminist Carol Adams. Adams spoke about the connection between cruelty to animals and abuse of women.

CAA has worked with University departments where both groups are interested in expanding their audience. For example, the U of MN Bookstore and CAA co-hosted author Jim Mason for Veg Week, and the Bookstore sold his book at the event.

CAA is similar to other campus groups that advocate for social justice. These groups include MPIRG, Amnesty International, and EcoWatch. However, CAA is the only organization that focuses on animal advocacy exclusively at the U of MN. CAA is also similar to community animal advocacy organizations such as the Animal Rights Coalition, and EarthSave Twin Cities. However, CAA is the only on-campus organization of this type.

Need for Organization

A significant portion of the University student body is vegetarian or is interested in vegetarian eating. One out of every four college students wants vegan meals in their dining hall, according to an ARAMARK survey (Aramark, October 2004). In a 2009-2010 feedback survey among college students at campuses that Bon Appétit magazine oversees, 12% identified themselves as vegetarian and 2% said that they practice a vegan diet. Assuming that the University of Minnesota is average in this regard, upwards of 6000 students on-campus are vegetarian.
Need for Organization: A community support network for people who care about animals.

How Organization Meets Need: CAA fosters friendships and a wide support network among members and volunteers, through interaction between volunteers as they collaborate and work together to plan and host events. By way of potlucks, our animal advocacy conference, and volunteer appreciation events, volunteers and supporters of CAA have many opportunities to make friends and build strong connections over food and a shared passion for animals.

Events and Projects that Meet Need:

Their Lives our Voices (Animal Advocacy Conference) CAA hosts this event to provide an environment where community members and speakers can come together to discuss animal advocacy. This builds connections within the community between people interested in animal advocacy and those who coordinate events.

Volunteer Appreciation Events CAA thanks its volunteers in December and May every year for their hard work and dedication. CAA serves a meal and recognizes volunteer accomplishments over the last semester.

Potlucks/Feed-Ins Throughout the school year, CAA creates opportunities for students to communicate and create positive, lasting relationships. Annual potlucks include the Valentine’s and Thanksgiving potlucks.

Dine-Outs Dine-outs encourage people interested in making vegetarian dietary choices to enjoy veg-friendly restaurants (usually located in or near the Twin Cities) with each other.

Need for Organization: Skill development and leadership opportunities beyond the classroom.

How Organization Meets Need: Leadership opportunities, such as planning, advertising, and volunteering for events, are continually available for students involved with CAA. Fostering a community where new ideas may develop and be put into action also facilitates the growth of leaders. These activities provide students with the chance to learn writing, photography, design, public speaking, public relations, budgeting, networking, nutrition, and ethics, furthering their development as students.

Events and Projects That Meet Need:

Their Lives our Voices (Animal Advocacy Conference) Students at the event listen to speakers discuss the best ways to talk about animal advocacy. The skills discussed help students with their public speaking and event planning. The event is also a great networking opportunity for the students who can talk to people interested in animal advocacy.

Need for Organization: A place to advocate for animals. Many people are concerned with the mistreatment of farm animals and are passionate about advocating against animal cruelty; however, there are few opportunities for students to learn more about these issues and effectively help animals.
**Compassionate Action for Animals**

*How Organization Meets Need:* CAA brings together students interested in the respectful treatment of animals and offers opportunities to advocate for animals via leafleting, tabling, and other forms of outreach. Locations include concerts, the University of Minnesota Campus, colleges across the state, and community events. CAA presents materials that challenge recipients to think critically about their food choices and adopt a compassionate diet with fewer or no animal products.

**Events and Projects That Meet Need:**

- **Literature Distribution** CAA volunteers directly hand out thousands of leaflets each year at the U of MN. By handing out these leaflets, we reach people unfamiliar with the realities of animal abuse.

- **Staffing Informational Tables** CAA volunteers regularly staff informational tables in Coffman Union and other campus locations in an effort to educate the University and broader communities and provide resources such as recipes, stickers, and information on vegan nutrition. CAA encourages people to stop at the table to watch part of Mercy for Animals’ documentary Farm to Fridge.

- **Vegan Food Showcase** The Vegan Food Showcase is an opportunity to distribute high-quality vegan food to the University community. Volunteers help give away compassionate and tasty alternatives to common animal-based food products, such as cookies, ice cream, chocolate milk, hot dogs, jerky, and burgers.

- **Veg Week** During the first week of October, CAA organizes volunteers to put on several events centered around raising awareness about factory farming and providing information on vegetarian choices, including film screenings, dine-outs, cooking classes, and a kick-off concert. Volunteers raise pledges from friends, family, and the public to make vegetarian choices. Attendees often go to multiple events during the course of the week, facilitating an ongoing discussion about animal issues.

- **Veg Fest** CAA organizes a festival including speakers, exhibitors, and food vendors to demonstrate the benefits of a vegetarian or vegan lifestyle.

*Need for Organization:* Quality education about vegetarianism, cooking, and nutrition.

*How Organization Meets Need:* Through workshops and dine-outs, University and Twin Cities community members learn about the basics of vegetarianism, diverse and appetizing recipes, and proper long-term nutrition.

**Events and Projects That Meet Need:**

- **Vegan Food Showcase** We provide tasty alternatives to animal-based products to show students plant-based versions of their favorite foods.

- **Veg Week** Recipes, coupons for vegan food, a cooking class, discounts at local veg-friendly restaurants, dine-outs, and a feed-in all give students the opportunity to try new foods and learn about what vegan food choices are available at local restaurants and how they can prepare their own plant-based foods.

**Student Benefit**

CAA benefits the student body by providing:
Compassionate Action for Animals

By volunteering with CAA, students are able to gain experience with a successful organization, improve academic and career skills, and earn the satisfaction of making a positive impact in their community. CAA’s outreach programs help provide a comfortable, relaxed environment for students to learn more about animal advocacy and welfare, vegetarianism and veganism, and to meet others who have similar interest and beliefs.

**Leadership**

Students volunteer and gain leadership experience in many different ways with CAA. Many leadership opportunities exist in the form of planning events, campaigns, and other projects that they find interesting and inspiring. It is a unique and important responsibility that students take on when they decide to take charge in planning an event. They must brainstorm ideas, compose an event design, contact venues and suppliers, plan and execute an advertising strategy, contact volunteers, and create a schedule, and more. Orchestrating these elements into a successful event is an invaluable leadership opportunity that gives students the courage and teaches them the skills to be successful in a great variety of endeavors after graduation. CAA encourages all volunteers to take leadership in putting together successful events.

**Cooperation**

Students volunteering with CAA also gain invaluable cooperation and teamwork experience. The organization encourages all of its volunteers to help with the planning and execution of events. Ideas, suggestions, and feedback are considered as volunteers work together, bouncing ideas off one another in order to succeed. It is this atmosphere of teamwork that really makes CAA so successful.

**Community**

CAA creates a sense of community with people who care about factory-farmed animals and their rights. Vegetarians constitute a significant, and growing, minority within the U of M student body and it is very important for these people to have a place where their beliefs, choices, and actions are understood and respected. Life can be difficult for students concerned with animals’ well-being, particularly for those who eat in the university dining halls, where vegetarian, not to mention vegan, options tend to be quite limited. By having a presence in the student union, organizing dine-outs, cooking classes, film showings, speakers, and more, CAA brings these people together, creating a community where stories, feelings, thoughts, opinions, problems, and recipes can be shared.
Informational Resource

By providing assistance with obtaining ethical and nutritional knowledge to students, CAA benefits the U of M by supplying essential informational resources for students of diverse interests across all academic departments. Ethical information is shared with the student body through multiple avenues: tabling, leafleting, speakers, the CAA library, film showings, and much more. By providing the proper educational resources CAA benefits the student body by empowering the individuals within it to make informed decisions about how to conduct their ethical lives. The student body is supplied with nutritional information through speakers, leafleting, and film showings, as well as through events such as cooking classes and food giveaways. The cooking classes provide a venue for college students who want to learn to eat healthy vegan meals but aren’t sure how. By setting up participants with a competent vegan chef in an intimate kitchen setting with plenty of samples and recipes, students are able to learn how to live more compassionate lives through better eating. Food giveaways also make students aware of simple, inexpensive vegan food by giving away thousands of dollars of free food to students as they walk to and from class.

Self-exploration

CAA also benefits students by putting them in a position to explore themselves through an examination of their own beliefs. When leafleting or tabling, for example, students frequently must explain their opinions to others with differing opinions. CAA’s volunteers think critically about their viewpoints on these issues. There are many different opinions and attitudes and CAA provides an atmosphere of tolerance for students to become more open-minded and accepting of others.

Benefit for non-participating students

Students who pay student service fees but do not directly participate in CAA programs and services benefit through advocacy in the dining halls, including the introduction of a cage-free egg policy across campus and the addition of Meatless Mondays in the Pioneer dining hall in the 2011-2012 academic year. CAA also fosters dialog and community by conducting petition drives, receiving coverage in the Minnesota Daily related to advocacy, and hosting speakers on campus, in addition to the events described elsewhere.

Student Involvement

Compassionate Action for Animals engages students at the University of Minnesota by creating a supportive vegetarian-friendly community and offering exciting volunteer opportunities that not only help animals, but the students themselves by providing character and resume building experiences. Volunteers contribute in many ways, from helping out at one-time events, to regularly volunteering on campaigns or projects, to proposing and coordinating activities of their own. Whether students seek short or long term commitment, office work or event organizing, grant writing or graphic design projects, or even if they simply want to meet other vegetarians, CAA provides them with resources, a supportive community, and fulfilling experiences so that they can better their world and themselves in whatever way best fits the individual.
Getting involved

Students interested in becoming members of Compassionate Action for Animals usually get involved after learning about the group through outreach (e.g. tabling, poster ing, or leafleting), attending an event, or through word-of-mouth or online resources. Many also become involved after filling out the online volunteer application, where they can specify their skills, interests, and availability to ensure a successful transition into the organization. Regardless of how a student connects with CAA, CAA leaders meets individually with each one in order to familiarize her with the mission, history, resources, and volunteer opportunities of the organization, ensuring that each student gets involved in an appropriate and optimally useful capacity.

Low-commitment volunteer involvement

Volunteers seeking to help out without making a large time and responsibility commitment compose a large and important portion of CAA’s volunteer base. These volunteers work at speaker presentations, conferences, film showings, leafleting and tabling events, cooking classes, potlucks, and food giveaways, offering labor, ideas, and various other services to the event. At many events, volunteers serve food, hand out literature, provide other resources, and set up and take down equipment.

Higher Commitment Volunteer involvement

CAA is composed of many higher commitment volunteers who plan events and coordinate ongoing projects and programs. Students coordinate logistics to advertise, staff, fund, and execute events and projects.
Section 2: CAA Organizational Chart

CAA Student Officers administrate the organization. Officers recruit student leaders to plan events and coordinate projects. Many volunteers, under the direction of student leaders, help execute events and conduct outreach. We seek assistance from the affiliated local community nonprofit for technical, material, and financial support when needed.
Section 3: Performance Report

CAA evaluates its performance through formal surveys, peer-to-peer discussion, online postings, and more. For large events like the Veg Fest, attendance estimates are based off resources handed out (e.g. leaflets, gift bags, food samples). Attendance at small events is based off head counts.

In 2013, 48 students volunteered to plan, coordinate, and otherwise facilitate events and activities.

In our tabling program, volunteers encourage students to watch a short video detailing modern animal husbandry and agricultural practices. Over 595 students viewed this video in 2013.

Volunteers distributed over 12,000 leaflets to students in 2013. These informational leaflets provide background on animal abuse and the steps students can take to address the exploitation of animals. Feedback from students suggests these leaflets and brochures provide compelling information they would not otherwise come across.

At the 2013 Vegan Food Showcase—an event highlighting the diversity and deliciousness of food produced without animal products—over 2000 food samples were given to 800 students. Many remarked that these samples encouraged them to add more vegetarian and vegan food to their normal diets. Others expressed a desire to become vegetarian and vegan and themselves.

In 2013, 100 individuals pledged to become vegetarian or vegan through Compassionate Action for Animals' Veg Week pledge program.

In October 2013, Compassionate Action for Animals held its second annual Twin Cities Veg Fest at Coffman Memorial Union. This event—providing information, community-building, and delicious vegan food—was attended by over 2,000 students and members of the broader community. Veg Fest hosted over 40 exhibitors dedicated to promoting animal welfare, environmentalism, political activism, and much more. Four speakers gave presentations on effective activism, animal welfare laws and related policy issues, the environmental and health impact of vegetarian and vegan diets, nutrition, and the role of food and animals in our society. Four Bands performed at the event providing entertainment. The success of this event has led Compassionate Action Animals to move the third annual Twin Cities Veg Fest to a larger venue allow for more students and community members to attend.

Compassionate Action for Animals also organizes a variety of smaller events, including potlucks, dine-outs, and other social gatherings. These events are typically attended by 20 to 100 individuals.

Quotes about CAA

"CAA is just the kind of pro-animal organization we need to make a real difference. I've been impressed by the hard work and dedication of its volunteers, its concern to stretch its limited financial resources as far as possible, and its sensible, pragmatic approach. I've been involved with the animal movement for more than 30 years, and I just wish that there were more organizations like CAA." - Peter Singer, Ph.D., renowned philosopher and 2006 speaker
"I am grateful that so many young people, like the volunteers who make CAA work, are committed to a cause as planet-friendly, compassion-producing, and sane as this one. Every time I am contacted by the friendly people at CAA, I am reminded that there are individuals who care about life on this planet for every being - animals included. I am encouraged by their work!" - Jessica Shryack, past CAA volunteer and U of MN student

"As far as donations, there is no better return on your investment ... than through CAA, who effectively reach out to young minds questioning the ways of our culture. Both their efforts and impact are highly focused and result-driven. A truly amazing group." - Mark Van Ryzin, Ph.D., former Teaching Assistant in the U of MN Child Psychology Department

**Section 4: Reserve Accounts**

The student group does not have a reserve bank account. The CAA student group has access to funds held in reserve by the nonprofit to cover operational activities, should the need arise.

**Section 5: Fees Request**

Compassionate Action for Animals is requesting $9,325 in Student Service Fees for the 2014-2015 funding cycle. This is request is last then half of the amount of funding CAA received last year. The reason CAA is requesting less funding is because CAA realizes how important the Student Services Fees resources are and believe that the quality and quantity of CAA events will not be affected by the cut in funding. Of this money:

- $1,250 will be used to enhance Veg Week with more advertising and more food.
- $350 will be used to screen two films.
- $4,000 will be used to expand Veg Fest.
- $125 will be spent on the Thanksgiving Potluck to accommodate more students.
- $100 will be spent on food at the Volunteer Appreciation Event.
- $50 will be spent on the Valentine’s Potluck to increase student participation.
- $740 will be spent on the Chili Cook-off to accommodate more students by renting a larger venue.
- $300 will be used to distribute more food at the Vegan Food Showcase.
- $700 will be used to expand the Spring Feed-In event.
- $60 will be spent on a summer picnic.
- $550 will be used to move the cooking classes to a more appropriate space and advertise more.
- $1,100 will be used to host the event Their Lives our Voices
Section 6: External Funding

CAA places extensive effort in pursuing funding outside of the Student Services Fee income. A weekly update is sent out to over 20,000 recipients to inform individuals of what CAA is up to as well as provide an opportunity to donate. Individual donations to CAA are a large contributor to the group’s budget. In our projected 2014 budget, 2,500 dollars will be fundraising income. Income to fund Veg Fest is collected from companies and individuals sponsoring the event. Sponsors receive advertisement space in both the weekly update and Veg Fest program along with tables at the festival, space for items in the swag bags that are given out to first 1,000 attendees, and more. Exhibitor fees and sponsorships bring in 7,500 dollars for the event.

With out the support of the Student Services Fee, CAA would not be able to have the impact on campus that it currently does. With just the group’s alternative sources of income, events such as the Vegan Food Showcase and Veg Fest would not be as large and successful events. Funding from the Student Services Fee has helped to expand and grow those events to where nearly 3,000 students attended the two events.

For our requested 2014/2015 budget 54% of CAAs budget will come from Student Services Fees. The other 46% comes from a variety of locations with organizational contributions accounting for 26%, fundraising 9%, grants external to the U of M 5%, ticket sales 5%, and individual contributions 1%.