

ASPCA: AN ANIMAL'S BEST FRIEND?

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Synopsis

Ed Stevenson was watching television one night with his grandmother when an advertisement for the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) appeared. It showed several dogs and cats that, according to the ad, had been neglected or abused. Ed's grandmother commented that she was considering leaving a significant portion of her estate to the ASPCA as her children, "really did not need the money." She went on to comment, however, that she knew some charities did not really do what they claimed to do and misused their funds. She asked Ed, a college student, to look into the ASPCA and their activities to see if they were truly reputable and deserved her financial contribution. Did the organization seem well managed? Was it using most of its money to help animals? Were the actions really helping the animals? Was the organization doing anything a reasonable person would consider unethical? This is a decision case.

Learning Objectives

The objectives of this case are to:

1. Evaluate the appropriateness of contributing to ASPCA.
2. Discuss reasons individuals and organizations become involved with charitable organizations.
3. Identify what activities of the organization students consider appropriate or inappropriate.
4. Examine compensation issues in not-for-profit organizations.
5. Evaluate resources used by ASPCA and determine whether or not these resources are used as donors intend.

Application

This case is intended for use in an ethics, non-profit or social responsibility class to evaluate the use of funds, priorities, and missions of non-profit organizations.

Key Words

Ethics, Social Responsibility, Non-profit, Philanthropy, Mission

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