

January 2013

Valuing Diversity and Equal Opportunity

## The Diners & Dinners Learn to Get Along: Review of "Animal Kingdom – A Diversity Fable"

A new addition to the Affirmative Action Resource Library is a slim volume entitled "Animal Kingdom – A Diversity Fable" by noted authority on diversity and empowerment Dr. William Guillory.

While elegantly illustrating the importance of diversity and inclusion, the book's main message deals with vital aspects of communication, collaboration and cooperation within a diverse community. Taking place in the African savannah the story tells a tale of how the top-most components of the food chain – the lions, zebras, caribous, and gazelles – deal with an impending environmental disaster. These groups all share the grasslands and they have never cooperated or come to trust each other before.

However, all the groups now understand that the increasing population of the herds is putting increased pressure on the ecosystem creating impending food shortages and worse. Can they overcome mutual distrust and histories of non-cooperation?

In this idealized African world . . . yes! Unfortunately, (not to give away too much of the story), achieving this complete turn-around in the course of animal society and custom does not come without considerable, rather drastic, expense to the ruling elders of each of the herds and the lion pride, itself. Let it suffice to say that, having no history of democratic elections, the animals relied on Earth Mother Gaia to take matters into Her own hands and "clean house" – as it were. And clean house She does – though it should be noted that the lion leaders more-or-less brought their individual fates upon themselves through a sneaky, underhanded attempt to silence dissent and restore a status quo that they could not recognize as gone for good. The fable also illustrates that responses that have worked in the past will not always work in the future and we must be flexible and not tie ourselves to habits of thinking that blind us to a change in circumstance that would demand new thinking.

The basic principles that Dr. Guillory wishes to emphasize in his fable are helpfully highlighted at the end of each chapter. One such principle is:

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## 4-H in San Luis Obispo: Learning to Thrive

San Luis Obispo County 4-H member 16 year old Mathew Tierney is no stranger to challenges; he has been diagnosed on the Autism Spectrum and struggles with Auditory Processing issues. While we can all agree that 4-H offers an inclusive environment that encourages youth to Thrive, this is especially true for Mathew. Mathew has been in the 4-H program for 4 years now and is very active in his club; he has participated in Leadership Development, Dance, Outdoor Adventure and most recently Market Goat. Through 4-H Mathew identified his spark to be more of a leader and was able to reach that goal by earning the Sargent of Arms Leadership position in his clubs Outdoor Adventure Program. During Outdoor Adventure, Mathew was in charge of leading younger members on hikes and being a good role model by appreciating nature..

Mathew is homeschooled and expressed a desire to become more social, make more friends and have the opportunity to show a 4-H animal at the County Fair. Mathew was able to achieve those goals this past year, he enrolled in his 4-H Clubs Market Goat Project and was able to show his goat at the fair. Mathew had a positive experience; he had the support of all his 4-H club members, leaders, friend and fellow Market Goat Project 4-H'er Ty. Mathew recruited 16 year old Ty to join his 4-H club, knowing that Ty is challenged with Down syndrome Mathew felt that 4-H was just the place for him to Thrive. As mentioned, both 4-H'ers showed their Goats last summer at the fair and received awards at the San Luis Obispo County 4-H Achievement Night! Mathew's story reminds us that 4-H offers opportunities to young people that clearly transcend any challenges they may encounter by teaching them the skills they need to Thrive!

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## The Diners & the Dinners – cont.

“Going beyond your own group identification to become part of a greater whole creates true unity.”

This one principle is the lynchpin to the entire fable, in my mind. The animals who, to whatever degree, embraced this principle were led safely through the environmental disaster to a new land of balance and plenty. And to a rather unexpected final ‘truth’ – at least, as I interpreted the ending. You may see the fable differently.

Anyway, this little book will undoubtedly stir conversation. It also includes well-thought out discussion questions at the end.

The author, Dr. Guillory, is CEO of Innovations International, Inc., an organization fostering transformation and leadership development. The website is <http://www.innovint.com/>

If you would like to borrow “Animal Kingdom – A Diversity Fable” go to [http://ucanr.edu/sites/anrstaff/Diversity/Affirmative\\_Action/Resources/](http://ucanr.edu/sites/anrstaff/Diversity/Affirmative_Action/Resources/)

Fill in and send the Resource Library Loan Form to me at the address on the form or email it to me: [dewwhite@ucanr.edu](mailto:dewwhite@ucanr.edu)

David White, Principal Analyst AA  
ANR AA Office

## Learning to Thrive – cont.

In the photo, below, Mathew is on the far left and his friend Ty is on the far right.



Krysti Jerdin, San Luis Obispo 4-H Office

## Remember the Cultural Resource Team?

The ANR Cultural Resource Team, or CRT, is in the process of re-forming and we're looking for some more volunteers! ANR is seeking academic or staff employees to self-nominate and become members of the new CRT.

There are no meetings to attend. The CRT will be a group of ANR employees who are willing, in practical was, to help ANR in our drive for diversity and wider outreach..

Your name and contact information, along with the culture(s) and/or language(s) you are offering to assist with (with your supervisor's O.K.) will be posted on the ANR Affirmative Action website. This will permit other ANR employees to seek your assistance in the area of your expertise. You may help translate a meeting announcement or give etiquette tips for another culture. The goal? Increase ANR employees' cultural sensitivity.

If you'd like to serve UC ANR in this role, please send in your name, contact info and the culture(s) and/or language(s) you have fluency in to David White [dewwhite@ucanr.edu](mailto:dewwhite@ucanr.edu)

