

**OpenLearn mini-documentary**

*Sanctuary Tales: Fighting Speciesism One Animal at a Time*

**Matthew Cole, Ellie and Chloe:**

MATTHEW COLE: Hello and welcome to Hillside animal sanctuary in Norfolk. My name is Matthew Cole. And I'm a lecturer in Criminology at the Open University. And we're here today to find out some more about Hillside sanctuary and the work that they do with the animals they look after here.

What's great about somewhere like Hillside is that it gives us a chance to spend some time with other animals, including those ones who tend to be exploited for food and so on. We can get to know them as individuals. We can get to meet them as unique personalities. And we'll get to know a little bit more about what they like and what they don't like.

Let's go and meet some of the animals here at Hillside and some of the people who work with them.

ELLIE: I'm Ellie. I've worked at Hillside for around 15 years. I work on the small animal section, which is mostly rabbits, guinea pigs, chickens, goats, sheep. But we've got some bigger ones as well. We've got some pigs, llamas, alpacas, donkeys.

And so we start off in the morning just making sure everyone's all right, giving them their feed and their water, cleaning them out. If it's a bit of a wet, cold day, give them extra bedding, that kind of thing. If it's a lovely sunny day, they'll go out into the paddocks and have a nice time.

CHLOE: My name is Chloe. And I've been working here at Hillside for four years. I sort out all of the medications and deal with getting any animal care for any chronic illnesses or anything that arises at my time staying here. Come rain or shine, storms, snow, anything you have it, we have to be out there because they do need your care 24/7. There is no days off, no such thing as a bank holiday here. But like I say, it's all for the better cause, so you don't mind so much.

ELLIE: You see them come in all scared and skinny. And then you build up a relationship with them, they trust you. And you see them blossom and their characters come out. It's so heartwarming, it really is.

CHLOE: There is a pony here called Henry, who myself do have a special bond with. He is a little terror sometimes. But he came in from the pound, he was very scared, very nervous, very untrusting of people. And luckily over time, I have been able to gain his trust.

And he enables me to catch him, worm him, do his feet, which not everybody can do. So it's really lovely that we have that little relationship that he trust me enough to allow to care for him in the way that he needs.

ELLIE: One of my special animals is little Horus, the goose. He's an Egyptian goose that was found all on his own in a field as a baby. And since he's been out there, he has absolutely blossomed.

It's just wonderful to see that not only do we look after domestic animals, but we'll take in the occasional wildlife case. And they are so special. They really are. I'm a sucker for the underdog definitely. Most people absolutely love coming here. One of the first things they usually say is they didn't realize how big it was and how many animals we have.

CHLOE: A lot of visitors that come here to Hillside feel that it's very eye opening. Obviously, they learn more about their stories and how things ended up here. It just makes them think a little bit more. It makes them think about what they might go home and do, the differences they might make. Things like your diet, they might make better choices with cutting certain things out or go into alternatives for certain things just to help the animals out really.

MATTHEW COLE: So what can that tell us about the way society is organized? What can we learn about this from a social structural point of view or from a social science point of view? Well, I think it actually teaches us quite a lot.

Because if we have that sense of personal discomfort when we imagine these animals who we've got to know a little bit being harmed, that suggests that we might feel the same kind of way about all the animals who are exploited, who are used for food and so forth. If we want to imagine a society in which animals are not exploited in those ways, so that they can live their lives freely, enjoy their lives, live their lives to the full, then we would need to think very carefully about how we could restructure or reconstruct society. But I hope that this experience of being at Hillside today has made you think about how we can make society a kinder place, a more compassionate place for all the animals we share it with.