

## The Humane Society Goes Hollywood

**Non-profit group plans to lobby entertainment industry on behalf of animals.**

*Maureen Kochan*

The HSUS is ready for its close-up.

This year, the nonprofit group, which already enjoys considerable lobbying power in Washington, D.C., will expand its Tinseltown operations in order to employ the successful tactics that make it such an influential lobby on Capitol Hill.

HSUS is a very big influence in the political front, says HSUS film and TV liaison Julie Lofton. They are experts at lobbies and getting laws passed. And now we want to have a similar effect on the media and the entertainment industry.

The new Hollywood initiative launches an extensive program to support the work of writers, directors, and producers. Services include script consultation, stock-footage photography, fact-checking research, and a resource library. Also in the works are plans to provide grants to film and TV productions that focus on animal issues.

Lofton already meets regularly with writers, executives, and producers to pitch stories that raise awareness about animal-related topics. For example, after watching a Today show story about remote-controlled hunting via a website, Lofton thought the controversial topic would work well for Law & Order. We provide the research for them, and we can also provide the stock footage, she says.

Gretchen Wyler, vice president of HSUS Hollywood, says she is excited about the new initiative. We've always had good standing in the community, says the former Broadway actress. We don't protest, picket, or ban. Our belief is to get people to come to us, so we must be their friend.

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