

## **Award Speech for Jill Barton – Julia Award 2023**

Vincent van Gogh asked once: “What would life be if we had no courage to attempt anything?”

The answer is clear. If we had no courage to attempt anything, life would be meaningless. There would be no positive change, no development, no achievement.

Standing up for the animals and fighting for a change for them requires courage. Courage to take a stand for the weakest, for the ones who cannot defend themselves. Courage to leave one’s own comfort zone. Courage to belong to a minority. Courage to defend the animals against economic interests. Courage to dig deeper where others look away. Courage to convince people that the animals’ feelings matter as much as ours do.

This is why in 2013, Animals’ Angels founder, Christa Blanke, created the Julia-Award-for-Courage. With this award, Animals’ Angels honors outstanding people, who stand up for the animals with great courage. Because extraordinary courage deserves extraordinary recognition.

For whom could this award be better tailored than for you, Jill?

An estimated number of three million ‘working’ equids live in Egypt. Many of those suffer from poor health and poor living conditions. They are overworked and undernourished. All too often their owners cannot afford veterinary treatment for them. With beaten bodies and souls, they are forced to keep going, to carry goods or tourists.

Most tourists would feel pity with those poor animals, but they would return to their countries feeling relieved back home at the sight of grazing horses on green pastures and rapidly they would forget the animals in Egypt.

Not so Jill Barton. When you saw the suffering of the horses and donkeys in Egypt, you made a tough decision: You gave up your life in Australia to be on the spot and help the animals and their owners in Egypt.

You left behind the comfort and safety of your home country. Day by day you have to deal with a totally different culture, with a foreign language hard to learn, with a rough environment, with high insecurity, with lack of medicines, lack of modern equipment, and lack of resources.

But despite all, day by day you help as many horses and donkeys as possible, you save lives, heal wounds and comfort souls. You educate owners aiming a pain-free life for the animals.

As if this wasn’t enough you train veterinarians, you teach them compassion and you awaken their passion for our fellow creatures for a better future for the animals in Egypt.

We admire your work, and your extraordinary courage inspires us. As a sign of this, today, we would like to dedicate the ‘Julia Award for Courage’ to you and wish you all strength to continue your important work for long time.