

*Animal Abuse and Human Violence:*

# **TOOLKIT FOR STARTING A LINK COALITION IN YOUR COMMUNITY**

**By PHIL ARKOW**

**Coordinator, National Link Coalition**

**and**

**RANDALL LOCKWOOD, Ph.D.**

**Senior Vice President for Forensic Sciences and Anti Cruelty Projects, ASPCA**



**NATIONAL LINK COALITION**

*Working together to stop violence  
against people and animals*

*Animal Abuse and Human Violence:*

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# THE LINK: A COMMUNITY PROBLEM

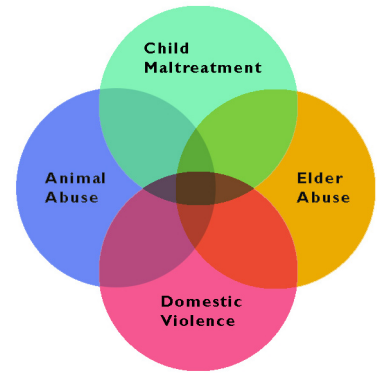
Accumulating evidence is demonstrating strong links between animal cruelty and other crimes, including interpersonal, family and community violence. Researchers have learned:

- Children’s witnessing or participation in animal cruelty is a significant marker for their developing aggressive and anti-social behavior and a predictor of future domestic violence (Ascione, 2001; Ascione et al., 2006; Arkow, 2007).
- Batterers often kill and abuse pets to orchestrate fear, violence and retribution in homes marked by domestic violence (Ascione, 2007).
- Severe animal neglect in the form of hoarding often indicates individuals needing social services or mental health assistance (Patronek, Loar & Nathanson, 2006; Lockwood, 2002).

We call the areas where animal cruelty, child maltreatment, domestic violence, and elder abuse intersect “The Link.”

With a majority of homes having pets and 98% of Americans considering pets to be companions and family members (AVMA, 2007), animal abuse does not occur in isolation. It is one component of interrelated family violence and dysfunction and a “red flag” for other violent behaviors.

Not all children who hurt animals become violent adults, and not all adult animal abusers hurt their other family members. But professionals in child welfare, domestic violence, adult protection, other social services, law enforcement, social work, and behavioral, human and veterinary medicine who routinely ask about the presence and welfare of animals in their investigations, intakes and assessments can quickly determine patterns of violence and risks to the safety of all family members.



Animal cruelty rarely occurs in isolation: it’s usually “the tip of the iceberg” and frequently the first opportunity for social services or law enforcement intervention. The old attitude of “It’s just an animal” is being replaced with a new awareness: “If he’s hurting animals, someone else in the home or neighborhood is next!”

Although the history of child protection is rooted in animal welfare organizations, in many communities today there is minimal communication between animal, child, domestic violence or eldercare protective services. The National Link Coalition and a growing number of local and regional link coalitions are working to change this. Communities should recognize that various forms of family and community violence are interrelated, and that law enforcement, social services and animal protection professionals often deal with the same offenders and victims. Focusing on The Link has the potential to better inform many aspects of violence prevention and intervention. By viewing violence through the Link lens, human and animal services agencies can transcend disciplinary boundaries with effective collaborations to break the cycles of violence and protect all vulnerable members of society.

**Healthy communities need to include the welfare of their animal residents. As Stephanie Rawlings-Blake, Mayor of Baltimore, MD, has said, “Animal cruelty is more than just a legal issue. It’s a community issue. If you improve animal welfare in a community, you improve public safety for everyone.”**



# LINK COALITIONS: A COMMUNITY SOLUTION

“Americans are a peculiar people... If, in a local community, a citizen becomes aware of a human need that is not met, he thereupon discusses the situation with his neighbors. Suddenly a committee comes into existence. The committee thereupon begins to operate on behalf of the need, and a new community function is established. It is like watching a miracle.”

*Alexis de Tocqueville  
Democracy in America (1840)*



We have become a “nation of silos,” with specialized agencies responding to specific issues but having little overview of overarching patterns or integrative approaches that might be more effective when several agencies’ client bases overlap. By thinking in more generalized terms, and embracing interdisciplinary and interagency collaborations, community organizations and governmental departments can make more progress in achieving their missions.

For example, a recent report on the status of animal protection organizations observed that a focus on human issues is a more effective way to address animal problems:

**“The philosophy in the animal welfare community is switching to addressing human problems that underlie crises with animals. Animal shelters’ service philosophy is evolving to recognize that treating symptoms of animal welfare problems, such as animal homelessness, abuse and neglect, is only a stopgap solution: to be truly effective, underlying causes such as community and family dysfunction and violence must be addressed.”** (PetLynx, 2010).

Similarly, veterinary and human medical professionals are recognizing that a “One Health” collaboration among multiple health science professions can transcend institutional boundaries and transform the way that human and animal disciplines work together to attain optimal health (Arkow, 2013).

Apparently isolated incidents handled by separate agencies can often add up to a problem,

which demands a problem-oriented solution. In law enforcement, Problem-Oriented Policing looks upon a problem as the basic element of police work, as opposed to an isolated incident, crime, case, or report. Problems are usually defined as things that concern or cause harm to citizens, not just violations of a law. Successfully addressing problems means more than quick fixes: it means dealing with the conditions that create problems (Lockwood, 2011).

Similarly, if the overarching goal in child protection is to resolve problems and restore the child to a healthy, competent family, does it not make sense to include the presence and welfare of animals as potential problems within the family’s ecosystem and dynamics? Pets are a common element in homes with small children and an important factor in childhood identity, experiences and emotional development (Melson, 2000; Jalongo, 2005). Pet abuse is not a peripheral incident but part of the overall problem.

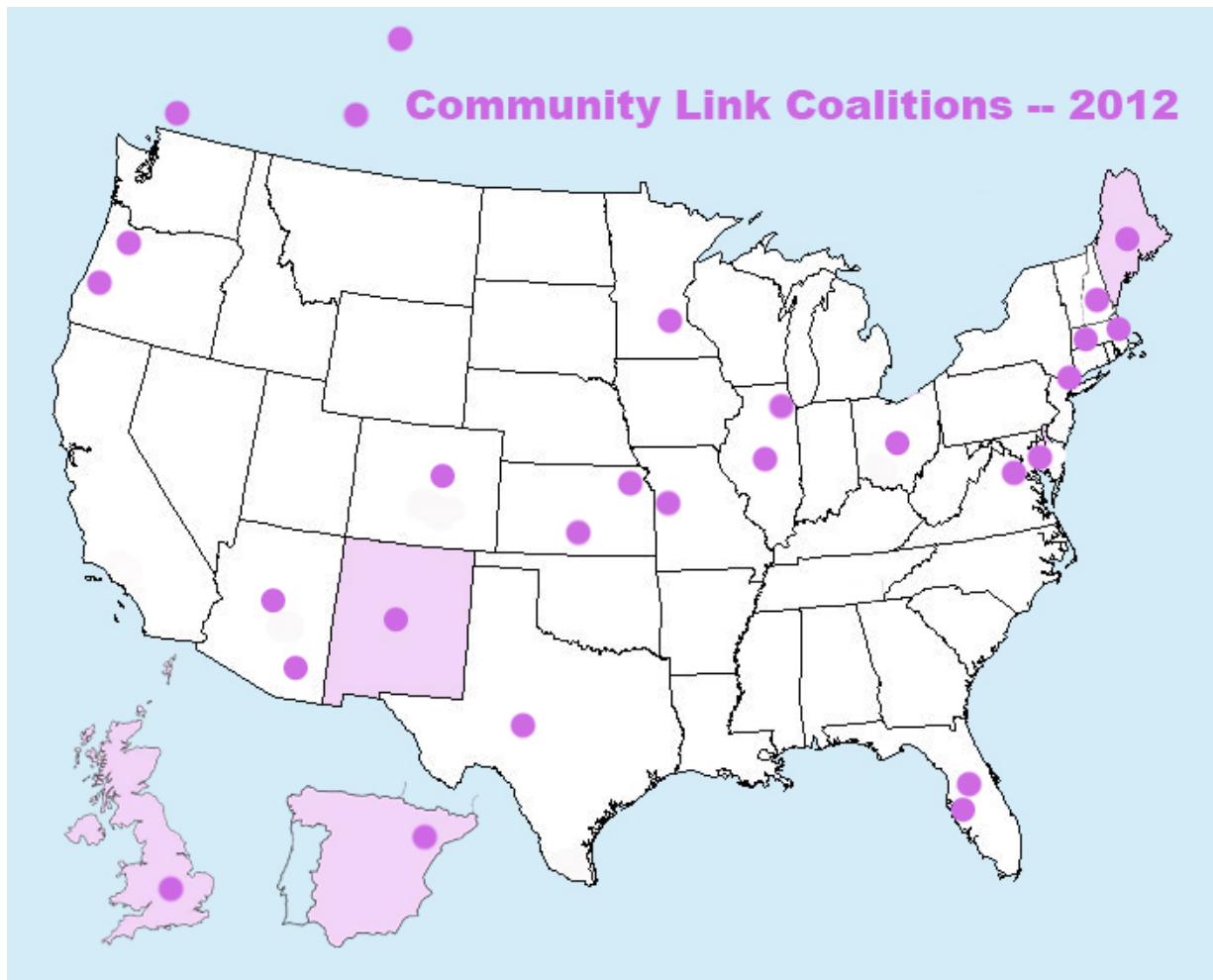
Link Coalitions can integrate disparate prevention, response, intervention and treatment systems for more comprehensive coverage and resolution of community violence issues. They can facilitate the exchange of information in the form of training, case management and referrals across institutional boundaries. They can utilize the synergy of group responses to:

- improve agencies’ effectiveness in achieving their missions;
- increase each organization’s visibility in the community

- deliver additional resources to each participant
- reduce duplication of services, and
- provide more comprehensive case management that results in better conditions for victims and the community at large.

Problems that affect the entire community are best addressed by approaches that involve the resources of the entire community, particularly

when multiple populations are affected and multiple agencies are responsible for resolving these issues. No one agency can solve the problem of community and family violence alone. No one agency has adequate resources, particularly in an era of funding cutbacks. A collaborative approach may be more effective. This Toolkit will present suggestions for applying collaborative methods to the establishment of a Link Coalition in your community.



Local, regional, statewide, and national Link Coalitions have been organized in many communities and several countries. This map reflects community coalitions known to the National Link Coalition as of May 14, 2012. For the most recent list of Link Coalitions, visit [www.nationallinkcoalition.org](http://www.nationallinkcoalition.org). Use this Toolkit to help you establish a multidisciplinary task force in your region to address the areas where animal abuse and other forms of family and community violence intersect.

# WHO WILL START THE PROCESS?

Recent studies in crime prevention have repeatedly demonstrated that strategic crime-control partnerships with a range of third parties are more effective in disrupting drug problems and other crimes than law enforcement-only approaches. (Mazerolle, Soole & Roombouts, 2007) The approach that has proven to be effective in combatting animal abuse in many communities is to establish a multi-agency Anti-Cruelty Task Force or Link Coalition to deal with animal cruelty issues in general or, more specifically, animal abuse's links with other forms of family and community violence. This approach is often what is needed when several conditions are present:

- The problem involves multiple crimes that can be violations of laws involving multiple unconnected investigation and enforcement systems — domestic violence (police and sheriffs), child abuse (child protective services), elder abuse (adult protective services), and animal cruelty (humane societies, SPCAs and animal control).
- Many different aspects of community life are affected, including public safety, public health, social services providers, and animal services.
- Solutions require the coordinated activity of agencies that may not currently be sharing information or resources (e.g., police with little animal handling experience; animal control or humane groups without arrest authority; child protection services whose priority is children and not animals; domestic violence shelters without animal housing capabilities).

All of these conditions are usually found in most communities where animal cruelty, child abuse and neglect, domestic violence, and elder abuse are present and handled by separate governmental agencies and nonprofit organizations.

Ideally, the Coalition process should begin at the highest possible level of authority to insure the greatest impact and continuity. Successful task forces have been started by Governors, Attorneys General, Mayors, and Chiefs of Police. Local Coalitions have also been organized by animal care and control or humane organizations, domestic violence groups, and law enforcement agencies with the endorsement of higher authorities.

The objectives of the Coalition should include:

- Providing a setting for direct, regular contact between agencies and a diverse set of stakeholders;
- Providing a forum for agencies and stakeholders to understand the competing needs and requirements of the government, affected agencies and communities;
- Providing a forum for discussing citizen and agency issues and concerns, thus enabling the development of a more complete and satisfactory solution;
- Broadening consideration of issues to include differing values as well as facts;
- Providing a system for generating collaborative responses; and
- Providing a framework for assessing outcomes, sustaining progress and changing direction if necessary.



**“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”**

*– Margaret Mead,  
anthropologist  
(1901 - 1978)*

# STEPS IN STARTING A COALITION

Whoever initiates the process should know there are several key steps in building an effective collaborative community coalition:

## Step 1 – Identifying the Stakeholders



The first assignment for those responsible for organizing a Coalition should be to determine the groups or individuals who should be invited to participate. Since The Link affects so many elements of the community, the list of potential stakeholders is likely to be very large. *See the list of local Link Coalitions beginning on Page 18 for examples of the diverse agencies that can be involved as stakeholders.*

Attempting to include all interested parties in the group initially can be counterproductive. Do not expect everyone who might have a relationship with The Link to be interested: the most important commodity in people's lives today is time, and trying to find a productive group who are willing to commit the necessary time to make a Coalition work is challenging. *Start with a small working group and build from there.* The first members of a Coalition typically represent a smaller nucleus of the most interested and committed stakeholders, whose influence and connections in the community can be counted upon to inform other organizations and individuals and expand the group over time.

Finding the right individuals can be a challenge. They should represent a variety of fields so diverse points of view are included. You should also strive for gender, ethnic and geographic diversity where possible. Most importantly, you need to find people who can rise above the inevitable personality clashes, political and philosophical differences, and territorial turf wars that will emerge. You want people who can “agree to disagree” on certain issues and focus objectively on the common problem and

long-range goals. *You want people who can leave their egos at the door and work together for the common good.*

In general, representatives to the Coalition should be decision-makers drawn from the highest levels of the organizations to ensure the strongest possible support for the mission of the group. *Don't count the people you reach: reach the people who count.* This process is most effective when it is initiated at the highest possible administrative level (Governor, Mayor, Chief of Police) to underscore the importance and priority of the process.

Perhaps the most important criterion is finding people with strong leadership skills. Coalitions are frequently represented by the “animal lovers” within the represented organization. But passion for one's cause is not a substitute for the ability to bring diverse, if not conflicting, organizations with widely varying agendas together for a common objective.

It is not necessary to include all stakeholders in all meetings and decision-making as long as all have an opportunity to voice their interests and are kept informed about Coalition activities. It may be useful to structure the Coalition into Primary Stakeholders, who will serve as a steering committee and participate in all meetings, and Advisory Stakeholders, whose information, opinions, and advice will be integrated into Coalition planning. Primary Stakeholders typically are those agencies that have direct and frequent exposure to the problem or are responsible for responding to public concerns and reports.

Suggested stakeholders can include:

- Representatives from the agency that will have the primary authority for the Coalition, such as the Governor’s Office, the Office of Attorney General, the Mayor’s Office, City Council, District Attorney, or the Chief of Police.
- Policy makers in key state agencies (e.g., animal welfare, child welfare, elder and adult protection, domestic violence, and public safety) who are critical to implementing statewide change within their agencies. Identify those policy makers who love animals and engage them in your work.
- One or more representatives from law enforcement agencies responsible for responding to animal cruelty, domestic violence, elder abuse, and child maltreatment. Several agencies may be represented — police and sheriff’s departments, of course, but also specialized units within these departments, such as victims services, juvenile crimes, gang units, and arson investigators.
- Representatives from the court system, such as the local district attorney’s office. Other court personnel, such as family or children’s court judges, justices of the peace and magistrates, CASA (Court-Appointed Special Advocates), guardians ad litem, and representatives from probation, parole or corrections can also be included.
- One or more representatives from Animal Control/Animal Services and/or the local Humane Society/SPCA, particularly if these agencies have responsibility for enforcement of cruelty laws.
- A representative from local government (Mayor’s Office, City Council, County Commissioners, etc.).
- Representatives from local organizations involved in crime prevention and response (Crimestoppers, Neighborhood Watch, etc.)
- A representative from the Health Department, which might have responsibility for tracking dog bites, zoonotic diseases and other human/animal public health issues, especially animal hoarding.
- Representatives from other local government entities that get brought in to these cases, such as the Housing Authority, Code Enforcement, military family services agencies, or a variety of Social Services departments.
- A representative from the state or local Veterinary Medical Association, particularly if your state mandates veterinarians to report animal abuse or dogfighting or protects them from civil or criminal liability for good-faith reporting of cruelty. Local veterinarians, veterinary technicians, colleges of veterinary medicine, and veterinary public health personnel are valuable participants.
- One or more representatives from the domestic violence field. This may include a domestic violence shelter, women’s advocacy groups, and other interested service providers and government services agencies.
- Representatives from the child abuse prevention and/or child protective services fields. This may include city or county Child Protective Services, nonprofit child welfare and child abuse prevention agencies, school counselors, teachers and administrators, children’s hospitals, child care providers, behavioral health assessment and treatment providers, and others with children’s best interests at heart.
- Representatives from eldercare agencies, such as Adult Protective Services, long-term care facilities, seniors’ services centers, or homemaker services.
- One or more members from the community at large.



In addition, it is helpful to include – as either primary or advisory stakeholders – representatives from agencies or organizations with occasional or peripheral exposure to The Link who can play an important role in community prevention, education and action and add additional support to the Coalition’s work. These members might include:

- Community groups involved in outreach to children who are potentially at risk for involvement in gang or dogfighting activity (e.g., Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Police Athletic League, etc.).
- Community religious leaders involved in anti-violence or anti-crime efforts.
- News media, particularly those with an established interest in crime prevention and/or animal-related issues.

- Breed rescue groups, organizations caring for unusual species (e.g., horses, farm animals, exotic pets) and other animal protection and animal therapy groups that can address the special needs of people and animals that may require services.

- Members of related community collaboratives, such as domestic violence coalitions, children’s justice task forces, child abuse fatality review teams, ethnic organizations, faith-based aid groups, and civic improvement committees. In some situations it may be more effective to insert The Link into their existing curricula and work rather than forming a new Coalition.

- Local businesses and foundations that might support community violence prevention and intervention programs.

These lists are by no means exclusive and each Coalition will be shaped by the degree of connectivity and the personal/professional relationships of its core members, the dynamics and needs of the community, and the strength and creativity of the Coalition’s leadership.



Community nonprofit agency leaders got together in Kansas City, Mo., to brainstorm ideas that led to the launching of a community Link coalition. Among its many projects, the group is helping the Rose Brooks shelter to build kennels as part of a shelter expansion that will house animal survivors of domestic violence.



## Step 2 – Coalition Logistics



### Where to Meet

It is advantageous to have Coalition meetings at a location easily accessible to the stakeholders, such as the conference room of an agency that can accommodate the group. Since some participants may not be able to attend all meetings, a facility with speaker phones and conference calling capability is an asset. Access to audio-visual equipment for PowerPoint presentations or videos is also important.

While there may be benefits to meeting regularly at a consistent location, there may be even more educational and networking advantages to rotating meetings among participant organizations so that representatives can see the resources and facilities of each other. Each meeting can have a guest speaker describing his or her agency and its systems, resources, challenges and responses to community violence.

### When to Meet

In the initial stages of formation, the Coalition should meet monthly to work out any early difficulties that might arise. Once programs are underway, it may be sufficient to meet every other month or even quarterly.

Trying to find a universally convenient meeting time is an ongoing challenge, and participants will determine whether an early morning, workday or after-work schedule is most practical. Several successful Coalitions have found it convenient to schedule meetings as a working lunch of 90 minutes to two hours maximum; this can be a “brown bag” event or pizza, sandwiches, or other simple food can be brought in to help establish a spirit of community effort.

Other groups have found early evening meetings are less disruptive to participants’ work schedules but require a greater time commitment.

Meetings should be set on a regular basis and scheduled as far in advance as possible in order to get on busy persons’ calendars. Meetings should have specific agendas, expectations of participants, defined time frames, and anticipated outcomes.

### Who Pays for Task Force Activity?

A Coalition need not incur significant costs since it will consist mainly of people doing their existing jobs but in a more cooperative and efficient way. If the group decides to prepare flyers, brochures, posters, or other material, it may be possible to have these costs absorbed by a participant agency or donated by local businesses or funders.

Should the group decide to become a separate nonprofit organization or hire paid staff, legal, operational, human resources, and capital expenses may be incurred. An alternative is to have the Coalition operate under the fiscal sponsorship of an existing nonprofit to receive grants and tax-deductible charitable contributions.

## Step 3 – Defining the Problem – Scanning



The initial meetings of the Coalition should begin the process of scanning. Organizers should first introduce the purpose of the group and review the basic process that will be used to review and analyze the problem, suggest possible responses, and analyze the results. Stakeholders should be introduced and allowed to identify their interest in and familiarity with Link issues, the parts of the problem that affect them directly, and the resources they have that are or could be used for a response. Any professional jargon, abbreviations and terms that other organizations are not familiar with should be avoided or explained.

The scanning process begins with a preliminary inquiry to determine if animal abuse and neglect, child abuse and neglect, domestic

violence, and elder abuse are problems in the community from the perspective of the stakeholders, and what might be gained from a collaborative approach. They should be asked to identify cases and experiences in which multiple forms of violence occurred, and situations that were not resolved satisfactorily due to inadequate information or interagency cooperation. Participants should be encouraged to take the initial inquiry back to their organizations for internal discussion and to gather additional information for analysis at the next meeting.

It can be helpful if the Coalition makes use of an outside trainer who can introduce the topic of The Link to participants at the initial meeting. It can also be useful to utilize an outside facilitator to keep the process moving smoothly.

|   |  |  |  |
|---|--|--|--|
|  <p><b>Hands are for holding and helping, not for hurting.</b></p> <p>Abuse hurts <u>everyone</u>.</p> <p>Please report suspected abuse.</p> |  <p>Animal Abuse <u>IS</u> Family Violence.</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 10px auto;"> <p>In a home that hurts, no one is safe.</p> </div> <p>Please report suspected abuse.</p>  |  <p><b>Suspect Abuse?</b></p> <p>You don't have to fix it – <b>just call.</b></p> <p>You could save a life.</p>  |  <p><b>If you THINK your friend, a child, an elder, or an animal is being abused,</b></p> <p>You may be right.</p> <p><u>Make a call.</u></p> <p><b>You could save a life.</b></p> |
|---|--|--|--|

To increase community awareness, the Leavenworth County (Kansas) Link Coalition created colorful bookmarks that were widely distributed. The bookmarks introduced The Link – and the Coalition – to area residents, organizations and government agencies.

## Step 4 – Understanding the Problem – Analysis



The next meetings of the Coalition should focus on analysis of the information gathered in the initial scanning and start brainstorming possible responses. In the analysis process, problems must be described accurately and broken down into specific aspects. Individuals and organizations are affected in different ways by a problem and thus will have different ideas about what should be done about it.

The analysis should also review the way the problem is currently being handled. The limits of the effectiveness of current approaches must be openly acknowledged in order to come up with suggestions for a better response. The group's analysis should include reviewing the following questions:

- What kind(s) of abuse are taking place in the community?
- What do we know about the problem?
- Where is it occurring?
- When is it happening?
- Who is involved?

- How closely is it tied to other criminal activity?
- Are there other questions we need to answer before moving against the problem? If so, where can we get that information?
- Does the problem need to be redefined in some way?

If additional information is needed, or if the group wants to solicit direct participation from the Advisory Stakeholders, it may be advisable to hold subsequent analysis meetings to review this input. This should be done as quickly as possible so as to not lose momentum.

In preparation for the next critical planning stage, participants should be asked to begin clarifying their view of what should happen next. They should be prepared to discuss:

- What do we want to stop happening?
- What do we want to start happening?
- What do we want to see change?
- What resources and information can we provide to make this happen?

## Step 5 – Planning the Course of Action – Response



Once the Coalition has identified the scope of the community problems associated with The Link, the stakeholders interested in changing the situation, and the desired changes, it can set goals and proposed methods for reaching short and long-term objectives. Many resources for achieving these changes may exist within the community: others may be best practices or lessons learned from other communities. The Coalition should review these options and prioritize several possible short- and long-term responses. The group should consider:

- Has a particular response been tried before in the community or elsewhere and with what result?
- What obstacles (institutional, legal, financial, etc.) might impact the chosen response and how can they be overcome?
- What other problems (human resources, caseloads, equipment, funding, space, inter-agency communications, community resistance, etc.) might be encountered and how might they be overcome?
- How rapidly can this response be instituted?
- What measurable changes can be used to assess the effectiveness of the response?

It is unlikely that adequate resources will exist to implement all the suggested responses immediately. The Coalition should initially focus on small, achievable steps as it begins to develop those that show the greatest promise for addressing Link problems in the community.

It may be useful to designate several subcommittees to develop details for different proposed responses. For example, one working group might develop plans for community and inter-agency outreach while a second focuses on issues related to the organizational or policy changes needed to implement a rapid coordinated response from several agencies.

Here are some suggested response methods that can be implemented:

### Collaborations with other agencies

- Establish memoranda of agreement between animal care and control/humane law enforcement agencies and child/adult protective services. These can coordinate: interagency referrals and assessments of suspected abuse; rapid response to threats to humans' or animals' welfare; and removal of abandoned or abused animals or those that threaten the safety of family members or caseworkers.
- Establish memoranda of agreement between domestic violence shelters and animal protection organizations for foster care of animals, or for building kennels at the women's shelter, for pets displaced by domestic violence situations (Phillips, 2012).
- Establish protocols for including animal control or humane society participation on multidisciplinary teams (MDTs) and domestic violence/child abuse fatality review teams.
- Redesign crisis line questions, intake and assessment forms, referrals, and site inspection reports to add questions regarding the welfare of others in the home. For example,

such questionnaires can ask three basic questions:

- Are there pets in the home?
- How does each family member treat them?
- Do you worry about something bad happening to them?

Have volunteers create a database of pet-friendly apartments that can be accessed by domestic violence survivors seeking transitional housing, and by individuals adopting from animal shelters.

Create a directory of animal shelters, breed rescues, boarding kennels, veterinarians, and other groups that can provide foster care and services for the animal survivors of family violence.

Schedule regular roundtables whereby agencies can identify cases in which a high risk of lethality exists and for which a multi-disciplinary intervention is indicated.

Establish a Neighborhood Watch program and a dedicated hotline for reporting animal abuse or dogfighting cases.

Initiate a Court Watch program to track and publicize animal abuse cases.

Create a resource directory of community agencies working in child abuse, domestic violence, elder abuse, and animal protection.

Encourage Coalition members to serve on the boards of participant organizations to cross-fertilize ideas and programming.

Redesign domestic violence safety planning materials to include provisions for the rapid and safe removal of pets from the home. These materials can also recommend that a survivor obtain pet records (e.g., vaccinations, license, veterinary bills, pet food receipts, etc.) in her name to help establish ownership in the event of custody disputes over the animals.

## **Collaborations with other professionals**

Open up lines of communication with individuals who encounter various forms of family violence (e.g., veterinarians, social workers, police, medical professionals, prosecutors, judges, etc.) to increase community concern and action.

Develop behavioral health assessment and treatment programs for animal cruelty offenders and animal hoarders.

Provide therapy animals to survivors of violence and youth identified as being at risk of committing antisocial behaviors.

## **Provide Training / Cross-Training for Professionals**

Create opportunities for ongoing in-service cross-training of agency staffs on the operational policies, programs and resources of other community agencies, and on how to identify and report the basic signs of suspected abuse, neglect and risk. Offering CEUs is an effective way to increase attendance.

Provide training on the basics of animal cruelty enforcement and safe animal handling for all police officers.

Train agencies likely to assist in dog/cock fights, hoarding investigations, puppy mill raids and disaster services operations on the basics of Incident Command Systems that will be needed in large-scale responses.

Compile digests of state-specific animal cruelty, child abuse, domestic violence, and elder abuse statutes and regulations. These should be disseminated among staffs of Coalition participants.

□ Create a Speakers' Bureau of representatives from member agencies who can train authoritatively on The Link and on their organizations' philosophies, programs, policies, and procedures. These individuals can also write articles for other agencies' newsletters and websites.

### **Public policy action**

- Advocate for increased penalties for individuals involved in dogfighting and other forms of animal cruelty, abuse and neglect.
- Work for legislation enabling courts to issue protection-from-abuse orders that include animals in the household.
- Seek laws granting reporters of animal cruelty and dogfighting (e.g., veterinary professionals) immunity from civil and criminal liability.
- Seek legislation mandating or permitting child welfare and other professionals to report all forms of suspected abuse to appropriate law enforcement and animal protection agencies without fear of violating confidentiality restrictions.
- Seek to enact or strengthen laws establishing procedures for expediting disposition hearings and requiring bonds for the costs of caring for animals removed from situations of abuse and neglect.
- Work to increase funding for greater enforcement of animal cruelty, child abuse, domestic violence, and vulnerable adult statutes.

### **Educate the Community**

- Use the news media, social media and public awareness materials to educate target communities about The Link and its impact on community well-being.
- Establish partnerships between agencies to distribute literature in each others' offices, shelters and community events.
- Create a Coalition website, Facebook and other social media pages, newsletters, brochures, posters, and other communications tools to reach participants, their stakeholders and the general public.
- Conduct community-wide events for professionals and the public. Such events can be linked to National Domestic Violence Awareness Month, Be Kind to Animals Week, National Child Abuse Prevention Month, and other commemorations.
- Develop skills-building materials to help parents become better pet caregivers.
- Establish relationships with humane societies, SPCA's and animal services agencies to support humane education programs that foster positive relations with animals.

### **Target those Responsible**

- Establish a "zero tolerance" approach to incidents of all forms of family violence.
- Treat animal abuse and dogfighting as the serious, violent, major crimes that they are. Work with prosecutors to encourage charging offenders with all crimes (e.g., animal cruelty, drugs, weapons, gambling) occurring in association with dogfighting.

## Step 6 – Keeping Things Going

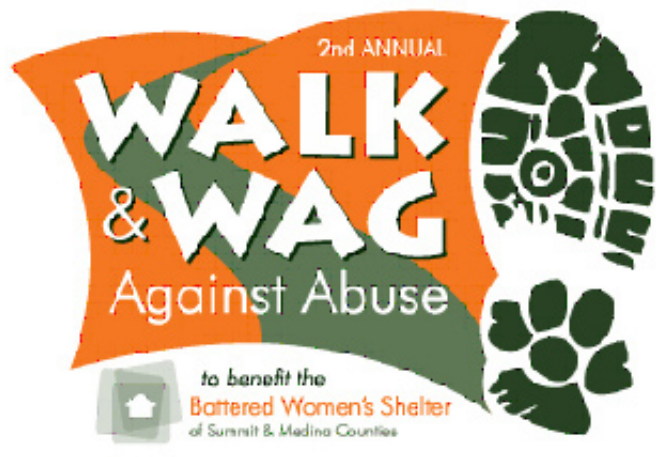


The activities of the Coalition should be an ongoing process, with succession planning established to continue operations if any individuals depart. Flexibility should be built into its programs, enabling the group to change strategy and direction as community needs change. Strategic planning should be undertaken periodically to make course corrections and address emerging issues.

The Coalition should periodically renew the process we have outlined here, by scanning new developments involving The Link, by reanalyzing the information that is gathered, and responding in a different way if necessary. The group should document and share its successes and challenges with other communities' Link Coalitions so that all can learn from each other.



Wonderful synergies can occur when community groups pool their resources. In Orlando, Fla., Harbor House conducts an annual Paws for Peace fun dog walk as the premier event in its fundraising campaign to build and operate animal housing facilities at the domestic violence shelter. The mile-long stroll is followed by a “Dog-On-It” agility competition. In northeast Ohio, the Battered Women’s Shelter of Summit & Medina Counties holds annual Walk & Wag Against Abuse fun walks to kick off Domestic Violence Awareness Month. In the adjoining county, the Domestic and Sexual Abuse Coalition of Medina County partners with the Medina County SPCA for an annual Walk With Your Best Friend Against Abuse event.







## Step 7 – Evaluating Effectiveness – Assessment

After Coalition responses have been devised and implemented, it is essential to assess how well these responses are meeting the desired goals. Some changes may be visible immediately, while others can take longer to have noticeable impact.

### When to Assess

The assessment of some responses can begin as early as 3–6 months after they have been launched. This may provide enough time to see if there are unforeseen obstacles or unintended consequences that might require changing the plan. A more detailed assessment should be done after 6–12 months. For long-term projects, scheduling an assessment every 6–12 months should be sufficient.

### Where to Assess

The original scanning process should have identified areas of interagency linkage, as well as areas at risk of becoming a problem. The assessment should look at these issues to see how specific agencies and their populations have been affected by the collaborations. Certain measurements (e.g., extent of media coverage) may apply to the entire community.

### How to Assess

There are numerous methods for assessing change and impact, including community and staff surveys, crime statistics, community response, and statistics enumerating cases handled, individuals charged and calls for service. The specific techniques you choose will depend on the goals you have set and the measurements you have defined. While evaluations often include anecdotal stories, empirical data can be more effective in documenting progress.

### What to Assess

The planning process will have defined several specific measurable goals, such as: reducing call response time on animal complaints; increasing numbers of cases referred by other agencies; changes in homicides or animal cruelty deaths; delivering a certain number of trainings to staff and partners, etc. For each goal, you should attempt to determine if the target was met and, if not, what the obstacles were and how they might be overcome in the future.

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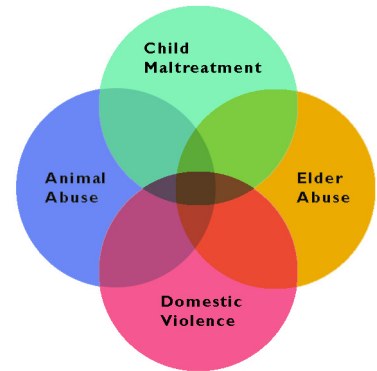
## CONCLUSION

Animal abuse, child maltreatment, domestic violence, and elder abuse have always been part of the human condition and will not vanish overnight. However, community concern about these issues has never been greater and the tools available to law enforcement and social services agencies to combat these forms of family and community violence have never been

stronger. In striving to end these violent crimes, we move closer to a truly humane community. By collaborating, we pool limited human and financial resources. By applying multidisciplinary solutions, we have the potential to achieve more effective prevention, intervention and response mechanisms to the overarching problems of family and community violence.

# CASE STUDIES: THE NEED FOR LINK COALITIONS

*The following are some of the many incidents that the National Link Coalition has in its files. Perhaps better communications, cross-training and cross-reporting protocols among agencies in these communities would have averted tragedies:*



Neighbors called Upper Dublin Township, Pennsylvania police on a bitterly cold night to rescue a Great Dane observed freezing in a doghouse. Inside the house, police found a dead 4-year-old boy who had been beaten to death. Six of the seven children in the home and the mother had been beaten at various times by the father who, four years previously, had been convicted of domestic violence. Four years prior to that case, he had been convicted of animal cruelty.

A Michigan Humane Society case report noted, “The accused returned home to find his beagle had destroyed the new venetian blinds. Suspect became enraged, got his shotgun, and shot the dog twice in front of the children. Suspect’s wife told interrogators her husband had been under much stress recently because he was under investigation for alleged child abuse.”

Neighbors contacted South Bend, Indiana Animal Control regarding a heavy stench of dog excrement coming from a trash-filled back yard. A gaunt pit bull was observed near a cage filled with feces and soaked with urine. Unbeknownst to neighbors and animal control officers, young children were allegedly being tortured by their father inside the house. Five months later, a 10-year-old boy would be found dead.

An Arkansas man with a history of animal cruelty was killed by sheriff’s deputies in a shootout after allegedly kidnapping his three children and killing his ex-wife and her new husband.

In a case that the prosecutor called “outright depravity,” a police officer from Moorestown, New Jersey and his former girlfriend were convicted on 22 counts for repeatedly sexually assaulting three girls and a boy between the ages of 12 and 17 over an eight-year period and videotaping the attacks. Investigators also found videos of the policeman engaged in sex with calves on a farm, but a judge dismissed those charges saying there was no evidence that the animals had been tormented by the acts.

A Chicago man was charged with homicide, and his girlfriend charged with covering up the crime, for allegedly beating her son to death on his fourth birthday. Horrified relatives discovered the toddler’s body wrapped in a comforter, his bruises disguised with makeup concealer. The man was reported to have severely beaten a dog two weeks prior to the boy’s murder.

The discovery of seven dead animals in what officials described as one of the worst cases of animal neglect ever seen in Anderson, South Carolina, led to the arrest of a man for criminal domestic violence and seven felony charges of animal cruelty. The woman alleged that her ex-boyfriend, the father of her child, hit her eight times, threw a newspaper vending machine at her car, and allowed three dogs and four puppies to starve to death. The man had been arrested at least 10 times previously on multiple criminal charges.

A 4-year-old boy was mauled to death in his Brooklyn, New York apartment by a Cane Corso Italian mastiff that the boy's mother's boyfriend was attack-training. Child welfare agency caseworkers had visited the home but apparently had not reported the enormous dog or other animals in the home as potential risks to the children's safety.

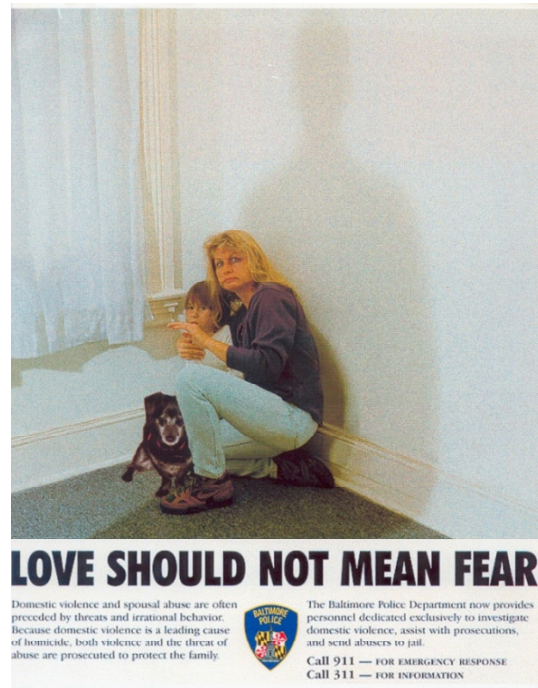
The father of an Oxford, Florida toddler who was strangled to death in her crib by a starving pet Burmese python brought a wrongful-death suit against the state Department of Children and Families. The 8' snake was grossly underweight when it slithered from its terrarium.

A social worker with the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families recalled two Link cases involving severe domestic violence. The first involved three children who were placed in foster care. The oldest, a 6-year-old girl, killed a cat. During the child's trauma evaluation, she described how she tied a rope around the cat's neck, strangled it, and shook it until she was sure it was dead, then threw it in the bottom of a trash can so no one would find it. The girl showed no remorse for her actions. The second case involved a 7-year-old girl who killed a cat by crushing it in a sliding screen door. When she was eventually removed from her home and placed in foster care, she killed a pet bird. The girl laughed about her actions, obviously showing no remorse.

A law school student saw a 10-year-old girl systematically crushing the skulls of newborn puppies with a rock in her driveway. When she stopped her, the child tearfully explained that only she could give them a good death because she loved them. The student took possession of the puppies, called the police and Child Protective Services, and eventually learned that the child was being physically and sexually abused by her father. The girl also had a history of watching her father kill puppies by beating them to death.

Angry that the family dog had defecated and urinated on the floor, an Erie, Pennsylvania man allegedly brutally kicked the dog to death, then shook his 5-month-old daughter when she began crying. The dog died of massive internal injuries, and the girl died two days later. The father was charged with homicide and cruelty to animals.

Link awareness is high in Baltimore, where a number of anti-violence programs include animal abuse. For example, the Baltimore Police Department produced this poster promoting its domestic violence unit -- and made sure to include the family pet as being among the potential victims.



# MODEL PROGRAMS: HOW CAN A COMMUNITY LINK COALITION BE STRUCTURED?

There is no uniform model for the many community coalitions that have emerged. The organizational structure is often dependent on the nature of the initial interest groups that come together and is based upon the resources that these agencies have available. Representative models include:

## ARIZONA Animal Cruelty Task Force of Southern Arizona (ACT), Tucson



In 1999, Arizona amended its statutes to upgrade some of the penalties for committing animal cruelty from a misdemeanor to a felony. ACT was created to help law enforcement personnel understand and successfully use this new law. ACT also works as a public information and training organization to raise community awareness and help prevent violent crimes toward animals. The organization is one of the largest consortiums of local agencies united around a common concern about the violence associated with animal cruelty, animal fighting and interpersonal violence. More than 60 groups are represented, including: the Pima County Sheriff's Department, Pima County Attorney's Office, Arizona Child Protective Services, Arizona Department of Agriculture, Arizona Department of Game and Fish, Arizona Department of Health Services, Humane Society of Southern Arizona, Tucson City Attorney's Office, Tucson Police Department, Tucson Fire Department, United States Border Patrol, United States District Court, and many local police, sheriff's, and animal control departments throughout southern Arizona.

**Website:** [www.act-az.org](http://www.act-az.org)

## The Humane Link, Phoenix

Organized in 1999, The Humane Link is a registered 501c3 nonprofit organization comprised of professionals who link together toward a common goal of promoting the understanding of the relationship between human violence and animal abuse. Its members work in health and social services organizations where they see victims of household violence who often report their pets are abused, and in animal care and welfare organizations where they see abused animals in families with histories of violence. The Humane Link's mission is to promote awareness of the link between child and family abuse and to demonstrate intervention strategies. The organization holds conferences in the Phoenix area, conducts trainings and publishes a newsletter in support of that objective. Key participants include representatives from humane societies, animal control, the Arizona State University School of Social Work, juvenile probation, animal-assisted therapy, children's hospital, the Arizona Coalition Against Domestic Violence, prosecutors' offices, police crisis intervention section, and social services agencies.



**Website:** [www.thehumanelink.com](http://www.thehumanelink.com)

## **COLORADO** **Colorado Alliance for** **Cruelty Prevention,** **Denver**

The Colorado Alliance for Cruelty Prevention is a statewide alliance of multidisciplinary professionals addressing the Link between animal abuse and family violence. Working out of the Colorado Bar Association's Family Violence Programs office, CACP is a coalition of stakeholders that provides interdisciplinary leadership, methods and tools in the prevention, intervention and treatment of human and animal cruelty in Colorado. Members work in the state and nationally to develop tools for their respective professions that incorporate Link concepts. Members include lawyers, judges, animal welfare professionals, law enforcement, fire fighters, therapists, prosecutors, clergy, researchers, Department of Human Services professionals, domestic violence/sexual assault service providers, and veterinarians. The organization holds regular meetings and publishes newsletters.

**Website:** [www.cobar.org/CACP](http://www.cobar.org/CACP)



tion; and facilitating similar coalitions elsewhere, such as its sister SNAAP in Chicago. Community partners include the Washington Animal Rescue League, Survivors & Advocates for Empowerment (SAFE), District Alliance for Safe Housing (DASH), The Big Bad Woof, Sheltering Animals and Families Together (SAF-T), Georgetown University Student Animal Legal Defense Fund, Medical Society Taskforce on Family Violence, Columbus Community Legal Services, and the Montgomery County Family Justice Center.

**Website:** [www.safeanimalssafepeople.org](http://www.safeanimalssafepeople.org)

## **FLORIDA** **Orange County** **Animal Services,** **Orlando**

While not a traditional coalition, Orange County Animal Services has established a series of innovative partnerships with community agencies in a coordinated approach to ending family violence. Through the Crimeline program, citizens can report animal abuse anonymously and earn up to a \$1,000 reward if their tip leads to an arrest. The partnership with Harbor House aims to end domestic violence in Central Florida for both two- and four-legged victims: together, the organizations are building the region's first on-site kennel for animal victims of domestic violence, thereby ensuring that no one gets left behind in an abusive situation.

**Website:** [www.ocnetpets.com](http://www.ocnetpets.com)



## **DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA** **Safety Network for Abused Animals** **and People, Washington, DC**

Created by two law students in 2011, SNAAP was founded to help domestic violence victims with pets. Although there are several domestic violence shelters around the nation's capital, none of them currently accepts pets. The organization works to raise awareness about domestic violence and animal cruelty in the Washington metropolitan area and to provide assistance to both human and animal victims. By recognizing the connection between domestic violence and animal cruelty, SNAAP hopes to build a safety network that better identifies violent homes in order to prevent future abuse. SNAAP's main program is the Safe Haven Foster Program, a partnership with the Washington Humane Society and DC Survivors and Advocates for Empowerment (SAFE), which temporarily shelters pets of domestic violence victims by placing them in confidential foster homes. Other programs include a pet crisis hotline; court monitoring of domestic violence and animal cruelty cases; community outreach and edu-

## **Manasota Violence** **Link Task Force,** **Sarasota**

The Manasota Violence Link Task Force is a collaboration of organizations dedicated to breaking the cycle of child and animal abuse and family violence. Its mission is to educate and raise awareness of family/partner violence, neglect, abuse and exploitation of children and animals. As of April 2012, the Task Force is in the process of reorganizing.

**Contact:** Danielle Hughes, [dmshtler@yahoo.com](mailto:dmshtler@yahoo.com)



**ILLINOIS**  
**Safety Network for**  
**Abused Animals and**  
**People - Chicago,**  
**Chicago**



SNAAP-Chicago is a sister network to the original SNAAP founded in Washington. Founded by fellow law school graduate Jessica Katz, SNAAP-Chicago addresses the intersection between animal abuse and domestic violence. It partners with local animal protection services in a Safe Haven Referral Program to provide temporary housing options for the pets of domestic violence victims. It encourages domestic violence responders and service providers to be more conscious of the prevalence of animal abuse in domestic violence and its role in a victim's decision to escape or stay. SNAAP-Chicago is working to build a network of veterinarian partners to provide gap-filling services such as a neutral drop-off zone for victims' pets and short-term boarding while temporary shelter arrangements are being made. SNAAP-Chicago is also planning to form its own network of foster homes and hopes to work with domestic violence shelters to find kennel space for the pets of their domestic violence victims.

**Website:** [www.snaapchicago.org](http://www.snaapchicago.org)

**KANSAS**  
**Leavenworth County Link,**  
**Leavenworth**

Leavenworth County Link was launched in October, 2010 at a National Link Coalition training session organized by the Leavenworth County Humane Society and the Alliance Against Family Violence. After a series of six monthly organizational meetings, the multidisciplinary group began meeting quarterly. Members developed and distributed printed materials, including bookmarks, posters and brochures, about the signs of domestic violence, elder abuse, animal abuse, and child physical, sexual and emotional abuse and neglect. The group no longer holds formal meetings, but shares information and resources through e-mail and Facebook. The Link Coalition led to integration of Leavenworth County Humane Society representatives with leading human services and protection groups including the Council

on Aging, the Human Services Council, the Child Abuse Prevention Council, and the Multidisciplinary Child Protection Team.

**Website:** [www.lchsinc.org](http://www.lchsinc.org)

**Animal Justice Coalition**  
**of South Central Kansas, Wichita**

The Animal Justice Coalition was started in March, 2011 by a group of concerned law enforcement officers from several departments in the Wichita area. The group recognized the need for law enforcement personnel, animal control officers, prosecutors, veterinarians, other animal welfare professionals, and residents of Sedgwick County to come together to combat animal cruelty, neglect and organized animal fighting. Coalition members meet monthly to discuss training opportunities, current trends and adjudicated cases, and to build partnerships to better help animals. The group's mission is to create a multidisciplinary team of professionals and other individuals who advocate for educational opportunities, cohesive investigation and prosecution, and furthering other issues that impact animal cruelty and neglect in the community. Members include city and county police and sheriffs, city and county animal control, city and county prosecutors, local veterinarians, and other agencies. The Coalition recognizes the importance of having representatives from all these agencies because each offers unique perspectives and information on how to streamline the criminal justice system for cruelty cases. Through strong teamwork, proper preparation, training and networking, the Coalition hopes to make a positive impact for Sedgwick County animals and ensure that their abusers are prosecuted appropriately.



**Website:** [www.animaljusticecoalition.com](http://www.animaljusticecoalition.com)

## MAINE

### The Linkage Project, South Portland

The nation's oldest Link coalition, The Linkage Project is a statewide



coalition of representatives from health and human services, law enforcement, and child, adult and animal welfare. It increases community awareness of The Link through education and advocacy. As a result of fostering policy, practice and legislative change, in Maine there is no longer a separation between those who focus solely on animal protection and those who focus solely on human services.

The Linkage Project teamed with a wide variety of public agencies and community organizations to change Maine laws and the ways that animal welfare and human service agencies do their work. It led the effort to allow for cross-disciplinary reporting between agencies serving animals and serving people. It supported the nation's first law that enables courts to prevent a domestic violence abuser from having contact with the family pet. Pet questions are now included in intake and assessments in child welfare, juvenile corrections, domestic violence, and human services agencies, supporting early identification, intervention and response strategies.

The Linkage Project built upon these successes to move beyond theory into everyday practice: asking pet questions and recognizing pets as family members are encouraged. Systemic change is addressed by including pets in family safety plans, humane education, and intervention and response strategies of community child welfare, family violence, elder care, animal welfare, and mental health practitioners.

The Link has been integrated into schools, teen centers, community recreation programs, the University of Southern Maine School of Social Work, juvenile corrections facilities, and a pilot Community Partnerships for Protecting Children system, where 39 partner agencies now use a single safety planning document that includes pets as family members.

The State of Maine has moved beyond theory and continues to drill down into the everyday practices of community programs and agencies. The Linkage Project is poised to offer guidance to others on successful coalition building. The Linkage Project hosted the 2008 National Town Meeting and Summit that were the launching pads for the National Link Coalition.

**Website:** [www.linkageproject.org](http://www.linkageproject.org)

## MARYLAND

### Mayor's Anti-Animal Abuse Advisory Commission, Baltimore



This task force was created in July, 2009 after a young pit bull terrier was doused with gasoline and set on fire. In response to this crime, the Mayor formed this commission and asked it to report back in one year with recommendations for eradicating animal abuse in Baltimore. The Commission issued a comprehensive report with recommendations in July 2010. The Commission continues and meets regularly to increase awareness of animal cruelty laws, to advocate for laws that protect animals and prosecute abusers, to train law enforcement and animal control officers, and to improve responses to incidents of animal cruelty.

**Website:** <http://baltimorecity.gov/Government/BoardsandCommissions/MayorsAntiAnimalAbuse-AdvisoryCommission.aspx>

## MASSACHUSETTS

### Safe People Safe Pets, Boston

Safe People Safe Pets started



out as the Link-Up Education Network, incorporated in 2003 as a 501c3 Massachusetts nonprofit. The organization combines the resources of human and animal services professionals to increase awareness of the connection between animal abuse and other types of violence. A board of directors and advisory board include prominent officials from local, state and national organizations representing several disciplines. The Foster Program provides temporary, loving housing for pets whose owners are leaving domestic violence situations. Educational workshops are offered to provide insights on abuse and how to keep people and animals free from harm. The group supports policy and legislation to prevent violence against people and their animals. The organization has had as many as 40 participating agencies and a paid executive director.

**Website:** [www.safepeoplesafepets.org](http://www.safepeoplesafepets.org)

**HAVEN (Human/Animal Violence Education Network), Berkshire County**



HAVEN is a coalition of Berkshire County residents and professionals who come together to identify the connections between animal cruelty and human violence. They represent such fields as education, animal protection, human services, law enforcement, and veterinary medicine. HAVEN’s mission is to make Berkshire County a safe and humane place for animals and people through convening a broad-based coalition concerned about The Link, informing and educating the public, and fostering communication and collaboration among professionals to address violence in all its forms. HAVEN: develops and implements general and profession-specific educational programs; promotes programs that encourage compassion, tolerance and preparing children for healthy relationships with animals and people; provides support for cross-reporting systems between human services and animal welfare organizations; establishes professional networks; and researches relevant policy issues. The SafePet program provides shelter and respite for pets from families escaping domestic violence. HAVEN has produced an educational video and has a website with extensive resource links.

**Website:** [www.havennetwork.org](http://www.havennetwork.org)

**Franklin County Link Coalition, Greenfield**



Clinical & Support Options, Inc., a full-service behavioral health agency, is the lead agency sponsoring this new coalition, organized in 2012. The coalition’s participants include representatives from the Department of Children and Families, the District Attorney’s Domestic Violence Task Force, The New England Learning Center for Women in Transition (NELCWIT), Elder Protection, Juvenile Court Clinic, Dakin/Pioneer Valley Humane Society, MSPCA Law Enforcement, schools, veterinarians, dog trainers, and Family and Probate Court Probation.

**Contact:** Amy Olson, [AOLson@csoinc.org](mailto:AOLson@csoinc.org)

**MISSOURI Kansas City Caring for All Network, Kansas City**

The Kansas City Caring for All Network (KC-CAN) was started in 2011 as an offshoot of a program to train therapists and counselors in the AniCare and AniCare Child methods of assessing and treating adult and juvenile animal cruelty offenders. Using the Rose Brooks women’s shelter’s plans to add animal kennels as an initial focus, the group of animal welfare, child welfare and domestic violence professionals are addressing the prevention of animal abuse and introducing assessment and treatment protocols for animal cruelty offenders to the criminal justice system. Efforts are under way to create Spanish-language materials and to develop a Facebook page. The group meets periodically.

**Contact:** Heddie Leger, [Heddie.leger@animalsandsociety.org](mailto:Heddie.leger@animalsandsociety.org)

**NEW HAMPSHIRE Governor’s Commission on the Humane Treatment of Animals, Concord**



The Commission was established by an executive order with a charge to “evaluate animal abuse in New Hampshire; analyze all statutory and administrative rules; assess state, community and private programs that address animal abuse; and provide recommendations to the Governor on better ways to prevent and address animal abuse in New Hampshire.” The Link is included in the Commission’s rationale for focusing on animal abuse. Current priorities are educating the public, law enforcement and prosecutors about animal cruelty issues and current laws, evaluating legislation and finding financial and other resources for large scale investigations and prosecutions. Commission members include representatives from: the state Attorney General’s office; State Veterinarian; NH Fish & Game; Cooperative Extension; NH House and Senate; state sheriffs, police chiefs, bar, veterinary technicians, dog breeders and sled dog owners associations; national and state humane, boarding kennel and cat fancier organizations; animal control officers; and the general public.

**Website:** [www.nh.gov/humane](http://www.nh.gov/humane)



## NEW MEXICO

### New Mexico Forming Positive Links Committee, Albuquerque

This group is currently reorganizing after the Governor's Annual Conference on The Link Between Animal Abuse and Human Violence, that trained

personnel from government departments and anti-violence organizations on the cycles of violence impacting people and animals, was discontinued after seven successful conferences due to a change in administration. Sponsoring organizations had included the offices of the Governor, Albuquerque mayor and Bernalillo County sheriff; and the state Departments of Public Safety and Children, Youth & Families.

**Contact:** Tammy Fiebelkorn, tammy@e-solved.com



## NEW YORK

### Alliance for the Safety of Animals and People, New York City, NY

ASAP was created in 2007 with funding from A Kinder World Foundation to form a coalition of human service and animal welfare advocates. ASAP works collaboratively to raise awareness about The Link. ASAP seeks to create a model program to best serve the needs of women, children and companion animals in families experiencing domestic violence by establishing a pet-friendly shelter and supporting foster care programs for pets of domestic violence victims. ASAP is a program of CONNECT, whose multi-level approaches deal with both the systemic and individual roots of violence. CONNECT believes that domestic violence is not a woman's problem or a men's problem, but rather a cultural and societal problem. Consequently, its solutions must be diverse, multi-dimensional and comprehensive, based on early intervention, community involvement, legal advocacy, batterer intervention and support for victims and survivors.

**Website:** [www.connectnyc.org/program/connect-intersection](http://www.connectnyc.org/program/connect-intersection)



## OHIO

### Ohio Domestic Violence Network, Columbus

In the Spring of 2010, members of the Ohio Domestic Violence Network's Steering Committee

on Domestic Violence and Animal Abuse surveyed Ohio's domestic violence programs to assess the needs and resources available to victims of domestic violence who are concerned about the safety and well-being of their pets. Although the results established a strong connection between the safety of domestic violence victims and their animals, they also revealed only a sporadic response to these needs across Ohio. The committee identified Ohio counties with on-site, off-site, limited, or no services for pets: the entire southeast portion of the state was without any services. Educational programs on the need for enhanced pet support for clients have been presented to domestic violence shelter directors. The ODNV website includes pet information in the resource section and a Domestic Violence Guide to Pet Support, including forms that can be used by shelters. Plans are under way to offer assistance with program development in those areas currently without services.

**Contact:** Lesley Ashworth, ashworth306@gmail.com



## OREGON

### Washington County Animal Protection Multi-Disciplinary Team, Hillsboro

The Washington County District Attorney's Office and the Bonnie L. Hays Small Animal Shelter co-chair the Washington County Animal Protection Multi-Disciplinary Team of social service agencies, law enforcement and animal advocates in the Portland suburbs. The team investigates the link between domestic violence and animal abuse and identifies tangible ways to protect victims and animals. The team was organized by Whitney Kubli, a victim assistance specialist for the DA's office. District Attorney Bob Hermann offered to approve the concept if other community partners agreed there was a need. Zeigler pitched her idea about a joint task



force fighting domestic violence on multiple levels to the Domestic Violence Intervention Council, which made the team an official subcommittee. The team helped build five kennels and housing for pets at Monika's House, the county's only domestic violence shelter. At bimonthly meetings, the team staffs cases and works toward multidisciplinary team goals. The team organizes an annual day-long training for law enforcement officials, and has developed the "Protect My Pets Program" to temporarily house the animals of domestic violence victims. The team was instrumental in helping to pass Senate Bill 616 which includes a provision for pets in protection orders. They also collaborate on all aspects of hoarding cases from initial investigation through prosecution. One member founded "Little Dog Laughed," a nonprofit using therapy dogs to work with at-risk children and youth. Goals include: cross-training county agencies to identify animal cruelty, domestic violence and child abuse; educating the community about The Link; advocating for stricter sentencing guidelines in felony animal abuse cases; and creating a program for trained service dogs to accompany domestic violence victims in court.

**Contact:** Whitney Kubli,  
whitney\_zeigler@hotmail.com

### **Purple Paws & People, Klamath Falls**

Klamath Falls has organized a Link coalition called Purple Paws and People under the auspices of Klamath Child Abuse Prevention. CAP uses animal welfare incidents for early identification and protection of children and families at-risk. Violence Prevention Coordinator Michael Kaibel based the coalition upon reports that animals are often the targets of threats and acts of violence to control family members, and that cruelty investigations are often the first point of social services intervention for at-risk families. In the schools, CAP has blended the award-winning program, "Hands & Words Are Not For Hurting®," with PP&P to prevent bullying and animal cruelty. Purple Paws & People keeps pets and people safe by providing empathy skill-building materials to parents and caregivers and promotes public education on The Link. It also includes Klamath Animal Watch, a neighborhood watch for pets program registered with the National Sheriffs' Association.



**Contact:**  
Michael Kaibel, michaelkaibel@centurytel.net

## **TEXAS**

### **The Link Committee, San Antonio**

This informal multi-disciplinary network of professionals addresses Link issues. Participants have included the San Antonio Police Department Domestic Violence Unit; Battered Women's Shelter; District Family Court; Metropolitan Health District; Animal Care Services; Child Protective Services; Bexar County Sheriff's Department; Veterinary Medical Association of Bexar County; P.E.A.C.E. Initiative; Family Assistance Crisis Team; San Antonio Victims Advocacy; and the Child Advocacy Center of San Antonio.

**Contact:** Sallie Scott, salliescot@sbcglobal.net

## **CANADA**

### **ALBERTA**

### **The Cruelty Connection, Edmonton**

The Alberta SPCA is working with a number of agencies to address the problems of caring for pets of domestic violence victims. This follows from a study initiated by the Alberta SPCA of women's shelters across the province to quantify the impact of animal ownership on victims' decisions to leave abusive situations, and other aspects of family violence dynamics. A published report describes these issues. The Alberta SPCA has published several key pamphlets and web pages on The Link targeted to specific professions, service providers and the general public.



**Website:** [www.albertaspca.org/cruelty](http://www.albertaspca.org/cruelty)

## Violence Prevention Program, Calgary

The Calgary Humane Society's Violence Prevention Program



is responsible for raising awareness about The Link and running the Pet Safekeeping and Emergency Boarding programs. For several years, the humane society ran a “No Excuse for Abuse” initiative to stop animal cruelty and reduce incidents of family violence and abuse through community education and early intervention. In its early Link programs, the society received federal funding. It undertook collaborative research in 2001 with the YWCA Family Violence Prevention Centre, the Sheriff King Home and researcher Sue McIntosh that was supported by RESOLVE Alberta, a multi-university research network aimed at ending violence against women and girls. Some 20 community agencies in social work, domestic violence, health services, violence prevention, fire prevention, homelessness, law enforcement, animal shelter, and other services are collaborating agencies.

### Website:

[www.calgaryhumane.ca/page.aspx?pid=549](http://www.calgaryhumane.ca/page.aspx?pid=549)

## BRITISH COLUMBIA

### The Violence Link, Vancouver

The BC SPCA,

along with the

Victim Services Division of the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General, BC/Yukon Transition Houses, BC Veterinary Medical Association, and the BC Institute Against Family Violence, has created awareness materials on the animal-human violence link. The BC SPCA conducts presentations on the violence link and provides materials to promote and support cross-reporting between law enforcement, animal care and social agencies in the province.

### Website:

[www.sPCA.bc.ca/cruelty/the-violence-link.html](http://www.sPCA.bc.ca/cruelty/the-violence-link.html)



## SPAIN

### CATALUNYA

### Grupo para el Estudio de la Violencia hacia Humanos y Animales, Barcelona

In the wake of increased awareness of animal issues in



Spain, GEVHA was founded in 2000 by Dr. Nuria Querol i Viñas due to a lack of information about the Link in Spanish. GEVHA sees violence toward animals not only as a possible preamble to violence against humans, but also as part of a phenomenon of global violence. GEVHA has conducted research programs, provided training to police officers, introduced questionnaires about animal abuse to domestic violence survivors in hospitals, and has seen its work publicized in the media. The group has an extremely active, 58-language website and Facebook page. GEVHA is actively bringing Link training to several countries in Central and South America.

**Website:** [www.gevha.com](http://www.gevha.com)

## UNITED KINGDOM

### The Links Group

The Links

Group came into being following the historic 2001 “Forging the Link” conference which brought

The Link to British veterinary audiences. The committed multi-agency interest group promotes the welfare and safety of vulnerable children, animals and adults so they are free from violence and abuse. Key achievements include enhanced communication and cross-reporting between human and animal health professionals; amendments to the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons’ Guide to Professional Conduct regarding breaching confidentiality when abuse is suspected; publication of booklets on veterinary responses to The Link; more widespread pet fostering services; the first successful British and Scottish prosecutions of non-accidental injury; and inclusion of non-accidental injury concepts in veterinary training. A 2012 initiative linked with



Medics Against Violence, the Strathclyde Police Violence Reduction Unit, Scotland Crimestoppers, Pet Fostering Service Scotland, Scottish SPCA, and OneKind to assist Scottish veterinarians and the public in reporting suspected abuse, to provide foster care for the animal victims of domestic violence, and to gather data on the incidence of animal abuse. The Links Group's extensive list of supporting organizations includes the British Veterinary and Veterinary Nurses Associations; Brighton & Hove Children and Family Services; Dogs Trust; MSD Animal

Health; Greater London Domestic Violence Project; Kirklees Primary Care Trust; National Animal Welfare Trust; National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children; Paws for Kids; PDSA; Refuge; RSPCA; Society of Companion Animal Studies; Surviving Economic Abuse; Sussex Community NHS Trust; Surrey Safeguarding Children Board; The Blue Cross; The Mayhew Animal Home; and Wood Green Animal Shelter.

**Website:** [www.thelinksgroup.org.uk](http://www.thelinksgroup.org.uk)

**Pet Fostering Service Locations**

- Pet Fostering Service Scotland**
- Dogs Trust Freedom Project**
- Wood Green Animal Shelter**
- Paws for Kids**
- PetRetreat**
- RSPCA PetRetreat**

**the linksgroup**  
vulnerable children, animals, adults

## Pet fostering services

for women fleeing domestic violence

[www.thelinksgroup.org.uk](http://www.thelinksgroup.org.uk)

**Dogs Trust** **Paws for Kids** **RSPCA** **WOOD GREEN**

Community Link coalitions unite community groups concerned with family violence. One common approach is to assist domestic violence shelters by providing temporary foster care for animals, thereby facilitating survivors being able to leave abusive situations. The Links Group in the United Kingdom has pioneered such an approach with collaborations in place that cover much of the country.

# LESSONS LEARNED

## Strategic Advice from The Linkage Project, South Portland, Maine

Excerpted from *“One State’s Experience in Addressing the Connection Between Animal Cruelty and Human Violence.”* While The Linkage Project addressed these organizational issues from a statewide perspective, the guiding principles are equally effective for coalitions operating on a city, county or regional level.



The Linkage Project has much to share with other organizations seeking to alleviate animal cruelty and human violence. Among the lessons we’ve learned are:

- Public services are often categorized exclusively for people or exclusively for animals — an “animal world” and a “people world.” There is often a clear delineation in funding and public policy separating these animal services and people services. You will gain the most benefit if you strive to bring the two worlds together, showing them how their missions intersect.
- The facilitating organization must have staff able to bridge any gap between the animal and human services communities and must be comfortable within both communities. Staff need to work with organizations on both a statewide and a local level. You can offer support to local coalitions as they meet the community goals they set for themselves and bring to the Advisory Board those issues requiring policy changes.
- Much of our success has come because our Project Coordinator brought to The Linkage Project established relationships in human services at the state level and considerable experience in setting public policy. The Project Coordinator, who had worked at many levels of state government, gave us entrée to the government system and legitimacy among key public policy makers. We suggest that you look for staff who have access to those in upper management and executive levels of state government and who have been involved in legislation, public policy setting and implementation.
- One-to-one contact is vital. All stakeholders — staff to advisory committee members — need to reach out to inform and recruit others to participate in and support the initiative. In our case, we found people in human services also had personal relationships with people working or volunteering in animal welfare. Encouraging participants to think outside their professional network is essential. You can ask everyone in your network, “Who do you know?” and “How can they help us?”
- An effort such as The Linkage Project can successfully be established outside of government, but it needs champions within government. In our case, The Linkage Project is sponsored by a community-based, nonprofit organization. However, The Linkage Project includes advisors from government — those who set and carry out public policy. For The Linkage Project, the inclusion of the state’s leading animal welfare official and other state agency representatives gives us visibility and a voice when and where vital public policy decisions are made. Those champions exist in every community; you can find them and offer them meaningful involvement.
- An organization can be established without money. At its earliest stages, a project needs only to make connections, find intersecting missions among collaborators, and set mutual goals. The current Linkage Project began with volunteers; grant money came later. You can begin by seeking out volunteers.
- Focus attention where the interest is and then build coalitions from that point. The Linkage Project built the County Committees with individuals and agencies already concerned about either animal cruelty or human violence. Initially the Project wanted to engage all of Maine’s Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Councils that would, in turn, spur action on the local level. However, the councils in two counties had little interest in participat-

ing, each deciding to stay within their clearly defined missions of serving children and families. In some counties, the Project first approached domestic violence organizations, but found stronger support among animal welfare organizations. These animal welfare groups were then willing to reach out to human services organizations. You may find that either a human services agency or an animal welfare organization could be the starting point for your project — whichever has the greatest interest and commitment.

- Look for partners that can help the project achieve the biggest impact and seek out those that have resources. Although The Linkage Project has activities going on in rural, low-income areas, much of our work is in Maine's more populous areas. You know your community best and can assess where you will have the greatest impact.
- A project should guide local communities in dealing with their priority issues. We've found success in assisting County Committees to identify their priority needs and determine how and where each committee will effect change locally. As a result, while all County Committees share the same goals and receive staff support from the project, each County Committee has the freedom to work in the way that is most effective for its region. As County Committees achieve the tasks they have set out for themselves, interest may decline. You may find that staying in touch with the latest news, scheduling less frequent meetings, and periodically reviewing possible activities will keep engagement when committees are lagging. However it is okay to let committees end when there are no planned activities.
- Do your own advocacy to change public policy rather than rely on hired lobbyists. Members of The Linkage Project's Advisory Committee and its County Committees have been instrumental in promoting legislation by contacting members of the Maine Legislature, testifying at public hearings, and sending action alerts to other citizens when important issues on animal cruelty/human violence are under debate. These citizen advocates have a vested interest in and credibility on the issue of animal cruelty/human violence. This grassroots advocacy is an important way for people to be part of the effort and is more effective in promoting change because it comes from the field.
- Be flexible and open to changing direction. The Linkage Project's original vision was simply to raise the awareness of the public and professionals about the connection between animal cruelty and human violence. It soon became apparent that many people were already concerned about that connection. To broaden our scope, one of our primary goals then became system change: breaking down barriers between human services and animal services and encouraging a multidisciplinary approach to the issue. System changes included adding pet questions to social service agencies' intake and assessment forms, creating a mechanism to coordinate multidisciplinary response to hoarding situations, and advocating for changes to laws.
- Work with the resources you have and don't overextend your project. Given our current human and financial resources, The Linkage Project is currently limited on how much we can expand. With the geographic breadth of the state, a part-time Project Coordinator, and the necessary close involvement of the Project Coordinator in each County Committee, we are cognizant of stretching ourselves too thin. Clearly define the limits of your organizations and keep to those boundaries.
- A project that limits itself to one or two priority needs can still foster major change. Training for professionals, for example, may be one action area you can focus on. The Linkage Project has found that whether an agency serves animals or people, its professional staff always needs training. Most government and community-based organizations welcome any information and skill building that will enable them to better serve their constituents. You can provide training directly to staff, or you can develop a train-the-trainer program that agencies can use themselves.
- Look for and seize unanticipated opportunities. Sometimes the people, resources and opportunities line up in a way that allows something to happen that otherwise would be very difficult to do. Always look for these possibilities.

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Training is a critical element of community Coalition work. In Denver, the Colorado Alliance for Cruelty Prevention co-sponsored a training for forensic evaluators, criminal justice personnel and mental health professionals on incorporating animal abuse into the assessment and evaluation of family violence offenders.

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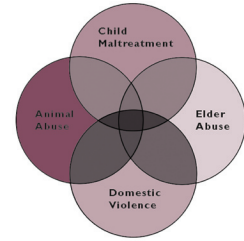
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## NATIONAL LINK COALITION

*Working together to stop violence  
against people and animals*



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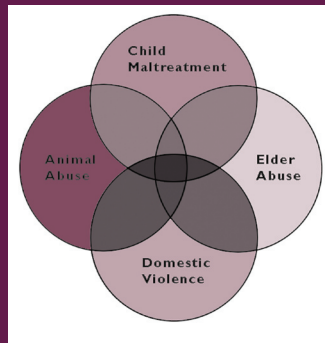


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**The National Link Coalition is an informal, multidisciplinary, collaborative network of individuals and organizations in human services and animal welfare who address the intersections between animal abuse, domestic violence, child maltreatment and elder abuse through research, public policy, programming, and community awareness. We believe that human and animal well-being are inextricably intertwined and that the prevention of family and community violence can best be achieved through partnerships representing multi-species perspectives. The National Link Coalition's vision is:**

**The Link between violence against humans and violence against animals is widely known and understood. We believe that through the recognition and integration of this understanding into policies and practices nationwide, humans and animals will be measurably safer.**



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