

# HUSSON UNIVERSITY

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## Office for Public Affairs

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## HUSSON UNIVERSITY TO PRESENT LINKAGE PROJECT

### *Tie between animal cruelty and human violence to be discussed*

On April 1, 2010, the Husson University Criminal Justice program will sponsor the Linkage Project. That presentation, "Spotlighting the Link Between Animal Cruelty and Human Violence" will take place in the Libra Lecture Hall in the Robert O'Donnell Commons building from 3:30-4:45 p.m.

The Linkage Project, a program of Youth Alternatives Ingraham, is a state-wide coalition of representatives from health and human services; law enforcement; and child, adult and animal welfare, whose mission is to increase community awareness of the link between animal cruelty and interpersonal violence through education and advocacy.

"The Criminal Justice Program at Husson is very excited to host the Linkage Project," said Assistant Professor Cornel Plebani. "Their work in the field of human aggression, specifically the relationship between animal cruelty and domestic violence, has revealed a sobering connection between these criminal activities. Students studying the law and forensic psychology will benefit greatly from exposure to this information because it has applicability across a range of professions in law enforcement, the judiciary, and clinical practice."

The goal of The Linkage Project is to spur community action through training, legislation, and other activities; and to foster systems change that alleviates animal cruelty/human violence. As a result of their work, in several communities in Maine there is no longer a separation of those who focus solely on animal protection and those who focus solely on human services. Individuals and organizations are recognizing how closely the lives of people and their pets are intertwined.

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They are collaborating with Community Partnership for Protecting Children, a multi-disciplinary group working in Greater Portland neighborhoods to prevent child abuse and strengthen families. The groups are working together to influence and shape the inclusion of all living beings into the prevention and intervention work.

In addition, the Linkage Project has teamed with a wide variety of public agencies and community organizations to change Maine laws and the way that animal welfare and human service agencies do their work. There are now cross reporting laws, and Pet Protection Orders and foster home programs to house the pets of families staying in domestic violence shelters, and they hope to bring humane education to our state's schools and communities.

“We are delighted to be invited to present the Linkage Project’s work and the Link between animal abuse and people violence at Husson University,” said Tonya Dimillo, the coordinator of the Linkage Project. “Connecting with students before they enter the professional world and encouraging faculty and staff to include the Link in course curriculum is a wonderful opportunity that we have been given.”

For more information on the Linkage project, please visit [www.linkageproject.org](http://www.linkageproject.org)

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