

# The Linkage Project



## Newsletter

### Coming Soon—LD 1881

### Protecting Pets from Domestic Violence

Did you know that domestic violence victims are sometimes reluctant to leave an abusive home out of concern for leaving a pet behind to suffer unknown consequences? In a Utah study of women's shelters an astounding 71% of women reported that their pet was threatened or actually harmed. Maine is the first state in the nation to address this issue with the enactment of LD 1881, the law that will allow pets to be included in protection from abuse orders. Members of the Linkage Project Advisory Committee are working to develop

material and workshops that will inform domestic violence agencies and humane agencies about the new law. Safety planning for pets has often been one of the issues that domestic violence agencies address when working with a victim of domestic violence. This law, however, will give legal protection to the family pets. There are some pet safety programs already operating in Maine. Programs, such as PAWS through the Animal Welfare Society in Kennebunk, provide foster homes for pets when the pet's owner seeks safety in

a domestic violence shelter. However, often, with a little advance planning, a pet can be housed with a friend or family member. The Linkage Project is proud to be involved with this along with the Maine Coalition for Domestic Violence and Maine's Animal Welfare program



Always remember to include pets in domestic violence safety planning

### When Someone Has Too Many Animals Early Intervention

Many of us know of someone who has a lot of animals. Often communities can identify a "cat lady," or the "dog man." It can be a neighbor, a family member, or simply a Good Samaritan who takes in

unwanted pets. You may not have thought about how many animals are too many. And the answer can vary - but sometimes it is important to ask the question about the difference between just having

a lot of animals, and a situation that has gotten out of control. We all hear or read stories of animal hoarding (sometimes called "collecting.") These

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#### Special points of interest:

- ☺ LD 1881 will go into effect in September
- ☺ Early intervention needed for animal hoarders
- ☺ More resources at [www.linkageproject.org](http://www.linkageproject.org)

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# When Someone Has Too Many Animals – Early Intervention

reports talk about starving cats, dead dogs and neglected horses or donkeys or pigs. These newspaper articles appear several times a year throughout Maine. Take, for example, the recent case in Sydney. There was even a boa constrictor along with dogs, cats, pigs and more. We all wonder how the living situation could get that bad. The person who is hoarding the animals often lives in unimaginably filthy, unsanitary conditions and buildings are often in such poor condition that they are condemned.

How does this situation develop without anyone noticing? The answer is that it doesn't happen overnight. This problem usually builds gradually as more and more animals are collected and the owner's mental and/or physical capabilities decline. Often, with early intervention, these situations can be minimized if not totally avoided. Here are some tips for recognizing a potential problem:

- The owner continues to take in animals even though financial resources are not able to keep up with the demand for food, veterinary care, registration, etc.
- Family members are beginning to worry that this will become an even bigger problem.
- The owner does not seek outside assistance to help maintain the animals. Animals may not be going to the vet so shots are not up-to-date and medical conditions worsen.
- The owner is becoming less and less willing to have anyone come into their house or the living conditions are becoming more and more unsanitary.
- Neighbors report strong odors, lots of animals are roaming in and around the house, lots of barking, howling, etc.
- Family members are concerned about the apparent mental and/or physical decline or isolation of

their loved one.

Remember in these situations both pets and people are suffering from neglect and declining living and health conditions. Once you recognize a problem or potential problem, don't ignore it or write it off as a lifestyle choice. Early intervention is critical.

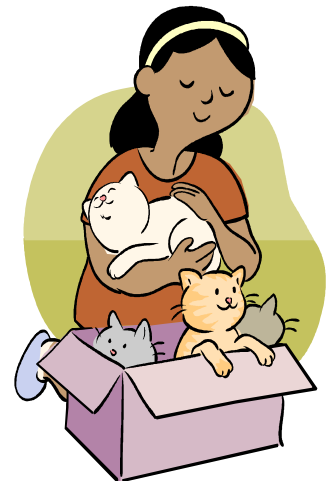
Here's what you can do if you are a concerned friend, neighbor, public official, or family member:

- Talk with the individual. Find out who their veterinarian is, call the office and express your concerns.
- Offer to help the individual address his/her own medical issues. Arrange appointments if needed. A mental health assessment may also be helpful.
- Begin a discussion about reducing the number of animals in the home. People who have lots of animals usually care about the welfare of their pets but have simply become unable to care for them.
- Request assistance from the local animal control officer or shelter. If this is a pet drop off home, devise a strategy for curtailing this. For example, set up a routine visit by the town's Animal Control Officer (ACO) where animals are counted and examined. Have an agreement that any new animals are only temporarily living there and make arrangements for moving animals on to other homes. Involve the individual in these decisions.
- If you are a concerned community member ask the ACO or State Animal Welfare program to look into the situation. They can determine whether or not more intervention is needed.

The earlier these situations are addressed the better the likelihood of a positive outcome for both people and pets.

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## The Mission

The connection between violence against animals and violence against humans is well-documented. Many studies have shown that violence within a family often includes animal cruelty. Whether the violence is towards the family pet, children, partner or another family member or dependent adult, violence is violence. The Linkage Project raises awareness of this link through training, brochures, posters, web-site and by supporting the development of county committees that address the specific needs of the county including training strategies, media relations and other collaborative projects or programs.

"One of the most dangerous things that can happen to a child is to hurt and animal and get away with it".

Margaret Mead

To Report Abuse:  
Child Abuse 1-800-452-1999  
Elder Abuse 1-800-624-8404  
Animal Abuse 1-877-269-9200  
Domestic Violence 1-800-799-7233  
Sexual Assault 1-800-871-7741

The Mission:

The Linkage Project is a privately funded, statewide coalition of representatives from health and human services, law enforcement, and child, adult and animal welfare. The mission of the Linkage Project is to increase community awareness of and response to the link between animal cruelty and human violence through education and advocacy.

## Project Activities

The Linkage Project is supporting the work of three county committees. The Cumberland County committee is working on developing a "Safe Haven" project. "Safe Haven" is a program that provides for pet sheltering when a domestic violence victim enters a domestic violence agency's shelter. Kennebec County's focus is on developing a hoarding response team and community training. Penobscot County is aiming to get

more information about the link out to the community through developing a cadre of trainers who will be available to talk with various community groups.

The county committees have cross-disciplinary participation including humane societies, adult protective, child protective, public health, mental health, domestic violence, animal control officers and more.

The Statewide Advisory Committee meets

monthly to address policy and legislative issues from a statewide perspective. For example an up-coming legislative effort proposes to add permissive language enabling social service agencies to report animal abuse.

The Project also provides training to individuals who would like to become trainers or to community groups who have an interest in starting up a collaborative effort.

## AniCare—Treating People who are Cruel to Animals

AniCare is a treatment model for addressing animal cruelty with two separate but related models; one for juveniles and one for adults respectively. Kenneth Shapiro, Co-Executive Director at the Animals and Society Forum will be in Maine in late October to conduct a workshop for policy-makers and committee members. A second day is planned to

train more in-depth with case managers and clinicians working with juveniles. The Animals and Society Forum (formerly Psychologists for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) developed the AniCare model and conducts



**In Maine treatment for juveniles convicted of animal cruelty is required.**

training nationally.

The Linkage Project is pleased to sponsor this event to further our knowledge of treatment models to use with people who have abused animals. Stay tuned for more information coming later this summer on the

## Linkage Project

Children's Advocacy Council  
Youth Alternatives  
PO Box 596  
Portland, Maine 04112

Phone: 207-874-1175

Fax: 207-874-1124

Mailing Address Line 1

Mailing Address Line 2

Mailing Address Line 3

Mailing Address Line 4

Mailing Address Line 5

Working to Help Communities  
Protect Pets and People



# *The Linkage Project*



## Resources

For more information on the Linkage Project and for other resources, please log on to [www.linkageproject.org](http://www.linkageproject.org).

For more information on the link between animal cruelty and human violence, log on to the Humane Society of the United States at [www.hsus.org](http://www.hsus.org) and search the site for First Strike. Publications that cover many aspects of this link are available to download or to order.

HSUS has an on-line university course on integrating humane education in the classroom. Go to [www.hsusonline.org](http://www.hsusonline.org) for more information.

Do you have a group of community or agency members who want to become

trainers on the link? Contact the Linkage Project to arrange training and consultation.

For information about teaching empathy in schools or at home, log on to the Doris Day Animal Foundation at [www.ddaf.org](http://www.ddaf.org) and search for the publication titled "The Empathy Connection".

For more information contact:  
Linda Jariz, Project Coordinator  
[Ljariz@youthalternatives.org](mailto:Ljariz@youthalternatives.org)  
207-874-1175 ext 230



**Over 65% of families in the US  
have a pet!!!**