

# No Animals Left Behind – Helping Them Escape Violence



*Building a Humane Canada Together*



Canadian Federation of Humane Societies

Fédération des sociétés canadiennes d'assistance aux animaux

## About the CFHS

Founded in 1957, the Canadian Federation of Humane Societies represents Societies for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) and Humane Societies nationwide. On behalf of our member organizations, CFHS drives positive, progressive change to end animal cruelty, improve animal protection and promote the humane treatment of all animals. We advance the welfare of animals, with a strong national voice promoting the interests and concerns of animal welfare to government, policy makers, industry and the public. Our current strategic impact areas are;

1. to improve animal welfare in Canada by reducing companion animal overpopulation and homelessness, improving the legal framework governing animals and improving welfare standards for farm animals;
2. to strengthen and support Humane Societies and SPCAs by providing them with resources, expertise and professional development opportunities for nationwide collaboration on policy development and public education to better serve the animals in their communities;
3. to increase animal welfare research that identifies current issues, emerging trends and key indicators with recommendations to build knowledge, awareness and action through public education, inform policy decisions and advance industry practices in Canada.

CFHS employs education and training, research and communications and stakeholder engagement to effect change and regularly consults and collaborates with representatives from government, industry and the non-profit sector to address key animal welfare challenges in Canada.

## Program Context

Animal violence is prevalent in Canada – Humane Societies and SPCAs across the country, just one of the agencies in Canada responsible for investigating and enforcing provincial and federal animal protection laws, respond to more than 100,000 complaints annually (CFHS, 2016). It is commonly concurrent with other forms of violence including intimate partner violence, gender based violence, child physical and sexual assault, gangs, drugs, pornography and violent serial crime (Ascione, 2007, Becker & French, 2004, DeGue & DiLillo, 2009, Crawford & Clarke, 2012, Ascione et al, 2000) Animal cruelty is also currently used as a diagnostic criterion for conduct disorder in the the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (American Psychiatric Association, 2013).

Recent Canadian studies from the University of Windsor (Barrett et al, 2017, Fitzgerald et al, 2016), Saskatchewan SPCA (Wuerch et al, 2016) and the Alberta SPCA (DeGue & DiLillo, 2009) all demonstrate and reinforce ongoing research into the close links between animal violence and interpersonal violence. The most recent study from the University of Windsor highlights a direct link between the severity of cruelty to the animal and the higher risk of severe psychological, physical and sexual abuse for the human victims (Barrett et al, 2017). Violent partners have been shown to use threats or actual violence and neglect toward companion animals as psychological weapons to ensure the compliance of vulnerable partners and victims. It has been shown consistently that women without a care giving solution for their companion animals delay leaving violent partners because of their fears for the animal's safety - 47% of victims of domestic violence with pets reported delaying leaving because of their pets, while a full 1/3 that had left indicated that they were likely to return because of their fears for the animals they had to leave behind. The number of women who are remaining in violent situations is unknown but 75% of participating domestic violence shelter staff report being aware of women in their

communities remaining in a relationship due to a lack of viable solutions for the safe keeping of their pet(s). This is an active concern because respite for companion animals is a consideration or service in a relatively small number of women's shelters across the country and lack of adequate solutions is proven to increase the vulnerability of women and children across the country.

Animal cruelty is also found as a concurrent crime alongside drugs, gang violence and pornography, and is recognized as an indicator and predictor of other violent acts (Flynn, 2011, Merz-Perez & Heide, 2004). Violent adult offenders are significantly more likely than non-offenders to have committed acts of cruelty toward animals as children (Merz-Perez et al., 2001), while individuals with the highest rates of victimization and perpetration of physical bullying exhibited the highest rates of involvement in multiple acts of animal abuse (Henry & Sanders, 2007). In 2016, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) started tracking animal cruelty through its Uniform Crime Report National Incident-Based Reporting System, a program that collects data from law enforcement agencies around the country in order to provide national statistics on the links between criminal activities.

Animal abuse also relates directly to child physical and sexual abuse. As in intimate partner violence, abuse or neglect of pets can be used as a psychological weapon against children. Furthermore, there have been 3 prosecutions in Canada in the last 18 months for sexual interference involving animals in which an animal was used as a tool of exploitation against the abused child or alongside child sexual abuse.

## Program Overview

In dealing with these varied but deep issues of violence, a gap has opened as professionals in legal services, law enforcement, social services and human and animal health care may not recognize animal abuse as a significant dynamic in their work. However, understanding the link between animal abuse and domestic violence, sexual violence, child maltreatment and violent crime provides professionals with important tools. This understanding will establish linkages between these justice stakeholders in concerted, collaborative prevention and intervention programs.

The No Animals Left Behind program will increase the effectiveness of services by increasing the professional and public awareness of the Violence Link which will lead to safer and healthier communities and more effective programs. By eliminating barriers and working to create a more effective cross reporting or service relationship between animal welfare and human welfare agencies and the justice system we can ensure that we are looking at welfare of the entire community. The program will provide tools and understanding to support early intervention to reduce overall violence.

Animal cruelty is a form of violence that is often addressed in isolation, and often as a relatively minor social ill. However, research demonstrates that animal violence regularly occurs in a context of intimate partner violence, gender-based violence, and child physical and sexual abuse, along with acting as an indicator crime for other violent acts. This program will counter criminal violence against these vulnerable populations and against domestic animals by closing the gaps between justice system stakeholders and developing new practices to increase multi-sectoral responses, foster innovation in the justice and social services system and reduce overall violence.

The distinctive feature of this program is that it will directly address a shared area of interest between the justice system, animal protection agencies and psychology and social services that has not been widely understood or acted upon. It will bring together child protection workers, victim-serving professionals, anti-violence coalitions, domestic violence shelter staff, animal care and control officers, veterinarians, adult protection personnel, law enforcement, prosecutors, academics, governmental and non-

governmental agencies and other concerned community members. It will highlight the latest research and emerging concepts, offer cross training in specific skills and explore promising new practices to advance the justice system and social service responses to the links between animal violence and human violence – also known as the Violence Link. The program will focus on the goals of cross training between sectors to advance the state of knowledge, identify gaps in services and understanding, promote innovations and develop multi-sectoral responses between justice stakeholders. It will bring together the field’s leading experts in the areas of law, enforcement, human and animal behaviour, interpersonal violence and social services.

#### Program Objectives

- Design and deliver to the legal and social services community and allied professionals education and training on the violence link and current best practices for integrating tools into their work.
- Collaborate with experts to ensure the most updated and innovative information is available and accessible to the legal social services community and allied professionals.
- Compile relevant reference tools to support effective cross sectoral integration.
- Launch and facilitate a National Task Force on the links between animal violence and human violence dedicated to increasing awareness of the issue across legal and social services.

#### Program Deliverables

- Two-day national education and training forum on the Violence Link with participants across 6 sectors to deepen their knowledge of animal violence and human violence and create a national network of professionals who can provide support in their province.
- Provide four 1-hour, on-line training modules each year that can be archived and viewed at convenience for Continuing Professional Development credits.
- Create a data bank of resource tools for legal and social services to use in incorporating the violence into their workplaces.
- A National Taskforce on the Violence Link with representatives from child protection workers, victim-serving professionals, anti-violence coalitions, domestic violence shelter staff, animal care and control officers, veterinarians, adult protection personnel, law enforcement, prosecutors, academics, governmental and non-governmental agencies and other concerned community members.

## Project Impact

The No Animals Left Behind program will make a tangible contribution to reducing violence toward vulnerable populations by improving the integrated response to animal violence linked to human violence and the delivery of justice services. The best way to stop multiple forms of violence perpetrated by the same abusers is for the agencies involved to communicate and collaborate. But in most cases child protection, domestic violence, animal care & control, justice and adult protective services operate in separate spheres, addressing one incident or type of maltreatment rather than seeing the larger cycle of violence that might be at work. To our knowledge there are no other education and training programs like this in Canada and we are not aware of any other national animal welfare group undertaking this.

## Organizational Capacity

The Canadian Federation of Humane Societies (CFHS) has a proven track record of national-level networking and action with a mission is to end animal cruelty, improve animal protection and promote

the humane treatment of all animals. As such, we have worked in the violence prevention and intervention area as an organization for 60 years including writing papers on the subject and hosting the first national meeting on the issue in 1995.

This program is based on a recommendation from National Center for the Prosecution of Animal Cruelty (NCPAC) - a program of CFHS since 2015 that provides tools and resources on the effective and efficient prosecution of animal cruelty cases. Steering committee members include Crown Prosecutors from the majority of provinces together with enforcement professionals and veterinarians. Each year CFHS hosts an Animal Cruelty Prosecution Conference and participating Crown Prosecutors and allied professionals identified a need for an extended conversation on the connection between animal and human violence.

CFHS employs two staff that manage this area of work: Dr. Toolika Rastogi spent years as a policy analyst for the federal government consulting stakeholders and advising on amendments to legislation. She holds a PhD from the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Toronto. Pierre Sadik is trained as a lawyer with 15 years of experience in strategic policy design and implementation and stakeholder engagement. CFHS employs an Event Manager who runs our annual National Animal Welfare Conferences and Animal Cruelty Prosecution Conferences. CFHS has an active Board of Directors with a Finance Committee and Controller who will provide financial oversight guidance.