



**NATIONAL LINK COALITION**

*Working together to stop violence  
against people and animals*

**Proceedings of the National Link Coalition Roundtable  
Graduate School of Social Work, University of Denver  
June 10-11, 2010  
Denver, Colorado**

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The National Link Coalition Roundtable was held on June 10-11, 2010, at the Graduate School of Social Work at the University of Denver. The Roundtable, a strategic planning process that ensued from the historic 2008 National Link Coalition Town Meeting and Experts' Summit, was made possible through the generous financial support of American Humane Association, the Animal Assistance Foundation, the Latham Foundation and the ASPCA. We also want to thank the Institute for Human-Animal Connection at the University of Denver Graduate School of Social Work for providing the meeting space. In particular, we acknowledge the significant financial and in-kind support of American Humane Association, and the tireless work of Marie S. McCabe, D.V.M., for her leadership in organizing the Denver Roundtable.

Published by: The National Link Coalition

## NOTE ON THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE NATIONAL LINK COALITION DENVER ROUNDTABLE

The participants in the Denver Roundtable hope that all readers will find workable ideas in these Proceedings. The objective of the historic Denver Roundtable was not only to direct future actions of the National Link Coalition, but also to inspire individuals, organizations and community coalitions worldwide to implement the concepts and recommendations articulated herein and at the National Link Coalition's 2008 National Town Meeting and Experts' Summit. It is our hope that by using a multidisciplinary approach, numerous professions can find collaborative, effective strategies to reduce violence to humans and animals.



Sponsors of the National Link Coalition Denver Roundtable gather before the meeting. From left, Randy Lockwood of the ASPCA, Hugh Tebault of the Latham Foundation, David Gies of the Animal Assistance Foundation, Frank Ascione of the Institute for Human-Animal Connection at the University of Denver Graduate School of Social Work, and George Casey of American Humane Association prepare to kick off the Roundtable.



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# INTRODUCTION

In recent years, there has been a renaissance of research, public policy and organizational programming dedicated to what American Humane Association calls The Link®, the intersections of animal abuse and



other forms of violence, including domestic abuse, child abuse and neglect, and elder abuse. In addition to a growing sensitivity to the welfare of animals, a mounting body of evidence is informing such varied professions as veterinary medicine, psychology, the criminal justice system, law enforcement, social work, animal shelters, domestic violence prevention, and child and adult protective services. These professionals are addressing cruelty and abuse of animals with a newfound vigor, recognizing that acts of animal maltreatment often indicate, and predict, crimes against humans. Where animal cruelty issues were formerly relegated to the periphery of public and

professional concern, today there is growing recognition that when animals are abused people are at risk, and when people are abused animals are at risk.

The response to this increased awareness has taken many forms. Many communities now cross-train social service and animal care and control agencies on how to recognize signs of animal abuse as possible indicators of human violence — and vice versa. State laws are expanding the professionals mandated to report suspected forms of human and animal abuse. As pets become more recognized as vital members of families, the threat of violence to them becomes a powerful and effective intimidator to gain control over and exact revenge against other family members. Seventeen states, Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia now allow judges to include animals specifically in domestic violence protection orders. The corrosive effects of animal cruelty upon children who perpetrate or witness such acts are becoming widely accepted. Many communities and states have initiated coalitions focusing on The Link between animal abuse and other forms of violence.



On June 8-10, 2008, 111 people, representing a brain trust of researchers, practitioners and organizational leaders from a wide array of human and animal services, converged on Portland, Maine, to evaluate the current state of affairs in work surrounding The Link between animal abuse and human violence. They came to strategize future directions in research, programs and public policy, to identify challenges and opportunities facing the field, and to create mechanisms for local and national collaborations that might advance the Link agenda. The 2008 National Town Meeting and Experts' Summit followed earlier Link summits organized by American Humane Association in 1991 in Denver, Colo.,<sup>1</sup> and in 1992 in Herndon, Va.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Moulton, C., Kaufmann, M.E., & Filip, J., (Eds.). (1992). *Report on the summit on violence towards children and animals*. Englewood, CO: American Humane Association.

<sup>2</sup> American Humane Association. (1993). *Protecting children and animals: Agenda for a non-violent future. The summary of AHA's conference September 14-15 in Herndon, Virginia*. Englewood, CO: Author.

The New England-style National Town Meeting afforded representatives from 22 states, two Canadian provinces and the United Kingdom opportunities to identify Link issues. Participants commented openly about public policy concerns, research accomplishments and needs, and examples of and challenges facing successful and sustainable community Link coalitions. The perspectives of child welfare, veterinary medicine, adult protective services, animal control, law enforcement, the criminal justice system, and assessment and treatment providers were articulated. Challenges in public education, densely urban and remote rural environments, and confidentiality requirements were addressed. An extensive list of issues, public policy concerns, research agendas, strategies for starting and sustaining community coalitions, ideas on how various professions might become more engaged in The Link, and challenges for the future was generated.<sup>3</sup>

From the findings, we created a Vision Statement – a challenging but attainable common vision for a desired future that would form the framework for a National Link Coalition and other future Link efforts:

#### **Vision Statement**

**It is understood that there is a link between violence against humans and violence against animals. Through the recognition and integration of this understanding into policies and practices nationwide, people and animals are measurably safer.**

Implementation was left in the capable hands of a Steering Committee, a nucleus of 10 noted authorities (the “G-10”) representing both national and local organizations, to direct the National Link Coalition. The National Link Coalition would be an independent entity, not part of any existing organization. It would serve as a clearinghouse for information and an advisory council to work on the national level and serve as a model for local Link coalitions.

The G-10 Steering Committee held monthly telephone conference calls to keep the momentum going and the organization together; although some of the initial members dropped off and others experienced job changes, interest and commitment remained exceptionally high. The Portland Proceedings continue to be widely distributed to individuals and organizations interested in furthering the Link agenda. A listserv and website were developed, thanks to the Latham Foundation, to provide Link-related information and to encourage communication among those working in the field. A monthly Link e-newsletter is distributed to several hundred subscribers by American Humane Association to further disseminate news and information. The e-newsletter and imminent redesign of the website represent in-kind support for the Coalition from American Humane Association.

<sup>3</sup> Arkow, P. (Ed.). (2008). *Strategizing The Link: Summary report on the national town meeting and experts' summit on The Link between animal abuse and human violence, Portland, ME, June 8-10, 2008*. Englewood, CO: American Humane Association.

“This is incredibly important to American Humane Association. It’s a way to help us find ways for professionals to be more effective. Human-animal interactions are what we’re all about. Bringing the best minds together is the best thing we can do to advance Link efforts.”

-- George C. Casey, Interim President & CEO, American Humane Association

## THE 2010 DENVER ROUNDTABLE

Two years later, it was felt that there was a need to evaluate progress and determine if any course corrections were needed for the next phase of our evolution. A select group of 40 Link authorities — many of whom participated in the 2008 Portland events and others who



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were new to the group — were invited to come to Denver, Colo., for a two-day facilitated strategic planning session. They represented 14 states, Canada and Spain, and came from the nonprofit, government and philanthropic sectors. They were a multidisciplinary mix of social services, academic research, child protection, animal welfare and control, veterinary medicine, criminal justice, community coalitions and public health. They leveraged lessons learned and hoped to create a vision for the future, expand the network and share resources. They shared a common compassion and passion for ending violence in all its interrelated forms.

The 2010 Denver Roundtable featured a review of the field, including progress made and challenges encountered since 2008. Examples of successful Link coalitions in four states and descriptions of Link programs in Spain and Canada were presented. Architectural structure and design for a new website were discussed. A “Bring and Brag” session enabled participants to report on new activities in their respective fields and geographic areas.



The Roundtable was opened by Marie S. McCabe, D.V.M., meeting chairwoman and National Link Coalition convener. Guided by facilitators **Marsha Greenberg** and **Steve Schuit** of The Greenshoe Group — who had facilitated the 2008 Experts’ Summit in Portland — the Roundtable identified lessons learned, obstacles and best practices from the states to help determine how these models might be replicated elsewhere and what the National Link Coalition can do to help existing and start-up coalitions at the local and regional levels.

The facilitation process explored possible scenarios to help the National Link Coalition determine its next activities. The group explored these questions to direct future action planning:

1. What is the organizational structure for the National Link Coalition, and how does the Coalition interface with local, regional, other national and start-up Link groups?
2. What support is provided from the National Link Coalition to other organizations, and what support is provided from individuals and organizations to the National Link Coalition?
3. What is the current funding model for the National Link Coalition, and is it adequate?
4. What changes, if any, need to be made to the Coalition’s vision statement?

## PROCEEDINGS:

# “STATES OF THE ART” – FOUR COALITIONS THAT ARE DOING GREAT WORK

### THE LINK IN NEW MEXICO: FORMING POSITIVE LINKS



**Tammy Fiebelkorn** described the process by which the New Mexico Governor’s Office in 2004 began to set aside funding in the Department of Public Safety budget for an annual Link conference. Later, the state Children, Youth and Families Department also made funding available for travel scholarships. Today, seven highly successful Governor’s Conferences on The Link between Animal Abuse and Human Violence have been held.

In 2009, a steering committee was established to create the New Mexico Forming Positive Links Coalition to address education, outreach and cross-reporting legislation. Early successes included achieving a legislative resolution (Senate Joint Memorial 27) declaring Feb. 10, 2010, as Link Awareness Day, which achieved considerable publicity and made New Mexico the first state to have such a commemoration. Five

coalition members were trained to conduct presentations around the state to government agencies and community groups. Media awareness is high, with a dramatic news feature about The Link on KRQE-TV widely disseminated. The annual conferences are being videotaped and made available for statewide distribution. Discussions are under way with the New Mexico Children, Youth and Families

Department to attempt to initiate cross-reporting. Other future plans include enacting pet protection order legislation and seeking funding to allow the steering committee to have a part-time staff member.



The New Mexico coalition learned many lessons:

- A small group of people can make a big difference.
- The media are open to the topic of The Link.
- Legislative efforts require conducting extensive lobbying before the session begins.
- Volunteers need specific and discrete assignments.
- Achieving progress within government agencies requires lots of time and effort.

The coalition encountered many obstacles:

- Legislators are wary of animal issues and see them as emotional and not relevant to human needs.

- Obtaining funding is an ongoing challenge.
- Attrition among volunteers is a concern.
- Turnover at state agencies makes it challenging to maintain long-term relationships.
- The media need first-person stories, which may be hard to obtain from domestic violence victims.

Among the “best practices” identified by the New Mexico coalition are:

- Get support for legislative efforts early.
- Secure continual funding from state funds.
- Use all appropriate community connections to obtain free help wherever possible.
- Engage government agency leaders to make them your allies.
- Make friends with the news media by laying the groundwork for their interviews, help them get the full story, and prepare families who are going to be interviewed.
- Keep volunteers motivated by giving them clear goals and small, specific tasks.

Fiebelkorn suggested several strategies that might help other states replicate their success:

- Obtain state funding for training workshops and conferences. Such funding might come from the governor or lieutenant governor’s office, the state police or department of public safety, the children, youth and families office, or other state social work agencies.
- Network with state agency directors in order to garner top-level support for Link initiatives.
- Create strong relationships with a few legislators who will “champion” the cause.
- There’s no need to start from scratch: Use the New Mexico experience and other similar materials as starting points in other states.

Finally, Fiebelkorn addressed areas whereby the National Link Coalition could assist local efforts:

- Financial support



- Providing resource materials: fact sheets, brochures, information for the media
- Providing expert witnesses for legislative testimony and administrative rule hearings

## THE LINK IN MAINE: MOVING BEYOND THEORY



The Maine Linkage Project, which co-hosted the 2008 Portland National Town Meeting and Experts' Summit, is about raising awareness and changing policy and practice regarding The Link between animal cruelty and human violence. **Andrea Paul**, Senior Vice President for Advocacy and Strategic Initiatives at Youth Alternatives Ingraham, lead agency for The Linkage Project, told the Roundtable that these goals are being accomplished through partnerships with Maine philanthropies and by fostering collaborations, changing practices, initiating advocacy and legislation, and integrating Link concepts into various agencies.

A Statewide Advisory Committee addresses needed changes in law and practice, and advises on the overall Project's work. The committee includes representatives from the fields of adult protective services, child welfare, domestic violence, animal sheltering, community resources, families, schools, the judicial system, law enforcement and mental health. "This group is critical to our success so far," said Paul. The Advisory Committee has very strong support from several sectors but not all that could be involved, and the list of organizations that should be invited to participate is being constantly reviewed.

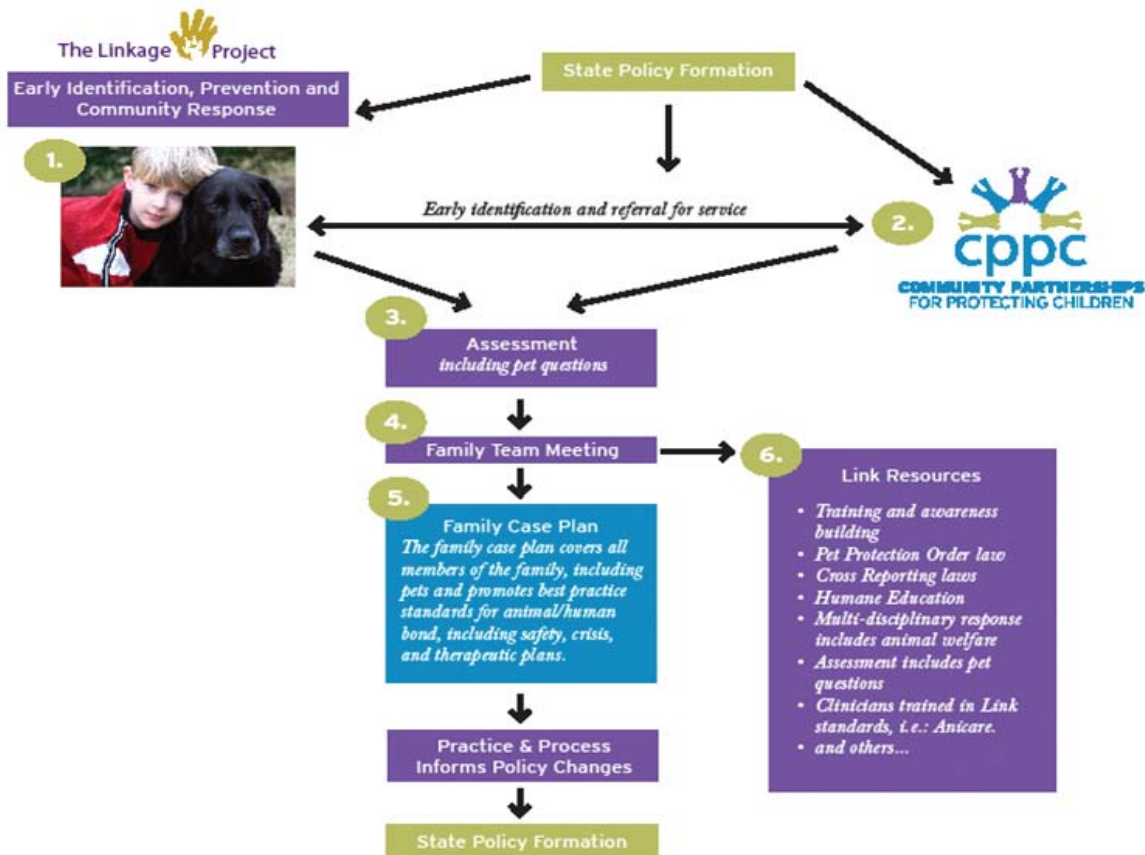


Maine is fortunate to have a very receptive climate to address Link issues. It is because of the collaborative support from governmental and community agencies that the state has been able to make significant changes in policy and practice by focusing on creating lasting changes to the systems — at the organizational, community, county, state and national levels.

The Linkage Project undertook a multidisciplinary response to hoarding and helped Maine become the first state to enact pet-protection-order legislation. Maine veterinarians are now mandated to report aggravated animal cruelty. There is active cross-reporting among all child welfare, juvenile corrections and adult protective services agencies statewide, with all state agencies conducting these services routinely integrating three questions into their intake, assessment and evaluation forms:

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

Trainings and workshops for groups, such as prosecutors, go beyond merely raising awareness, and instead discuss more specific issues, such as policy considerations, assessing and treating animal abusers, and developing foster home programs for the animal victims of domestic violence. The Link is included in the five-week orientation that all new child welfare workers receive.



Another reason for Maine’s success is that Youth Alternatives Ingraham, which serves as the lead agency for The Linkage Project, has been able to integrate Link work into the Community Partnerships for Protecting Children initiative. Some 35 Maine social and animal services organizations are partners in this initiative designed to broaden coverage for children. At the first sign of distress, the three assessment questions are asked, and the results help inform family team meetings and are used to develop family plans, including safety plans for parents, children and their pets.

The sustainability of Maine’s Link programs is due, in part, to its philosophy of seeking lasting change by integration within existing models and practices.

Paul described the many lessons learned over the years:

- Hire a coordinator with already-established relationships in human services at the state level.
- Working from outside government can work, provided you have people inside state government who can carry out policy decisions.
- Focus your energy where the interest is and then build coalitions from that point.
- Do your own advocacy, rather than using lobbyists, to change public policy.
- Be flexible and open to changing direction.
- Everything is relationship based.
- Embed the work in existing programs.

**STATEWIDE ADVISORY COMMITTEE -- MAINE LINKAGE PROJECT**

Norma Worley, Director, **Maine's Animal Welfare Program**, Dept. of Agriculture

Karen Elliott, Director, **Adult Protective Services**, Dept. of Health & Human Services

Ginny Marriner, Director, **Child Welfare Policy and Practice**, Dept. of Health & Human Services

Director, **Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence** (vacant)

Andrea Paul, Senior VP, **Youth Alternatives Ingraham** (YI)

Rick Fowler, Sgt., **Maine State Police**

Gretchen Ziemer, **Rape Response Services**, Piscataquis County

Katie Lisnik, **Maine Director, HSUS** and rep. of **Maine Federation of Humane Societies**

Marya Faust, Director of Policy, **Adult Mental Health Services**, DHHS

Tonya DiMillo, Coordinator, **Linkage Project**, YI

Ad Hoc members:

Anne Jordan Esq., **Commissioner, Dept. of Public Safety**

Lucky Hollander, **Legislative Director, DHHS**

Evert Fowle, **District Attorney, Kennebec County**

## THE LINK IN MINNESOTA: THE UPS AND DOWNS OF COALITIONS

**Jane Hunt**, Violence Prevention Specialist, and **Connie Skillingstad**, Executive Director of Prevent Child



Abuse – Minnesota, described for the participants the successes and pitfalls that occurred in launching not one, but two Link coalitions in Minnesota. She emphasized the needs to build relationships for coalitions to be successful, and to understand other persons' points of view and respect their agendas.

Link proponents often have a good idea, tremendous passion and are in a position to have influence. But then how do they move their awareness into action?

“Talk to anyone who will listen,” said Hunt. “It’s easy to introduce The Link into conversation.” She recommended that persons thinking of starting a coalition conduct a literature search through journals from multiple disciplines and become the expert. By connecting with other professionals and taking every opportunity to introduce the topic using their language and meeting their needs, you will find allies. Once interest is raised, be prepared to invite continued dialogue and provide resources for people seeking more information, she said.



The Link appeals to organizations that are trying to break down “silos.” So when child welfare organizations are trying to reach out to substance abuse, domestic violence, pregnancy prevention or faith-based organizations, The Link is a natural fit, said Skillingstad.

Prevent Child Abuse Minnesota launched its Link efforts in 2006 with an initial conference featuring keynote speaker Phil Arkow and other leaders in the field. The success of this offering led an organizing committee to stage a follow-up conference aimed at a multidisciplinary audience at the University of Minnesota College of Veterinary Medicine in March 2007. It soon became apparent that targeted invitees would include public health, human medicine, veterinary medicine, mental health, domestic violence victims and advocacy services, law enforcement, probation, legal services, child protection, adult protective services, social services and animal welfare.

The “Building a Bridge of Hope” interdisciplinary conference enjoyed wide sponsorship, and a video of the proceedings aired more than 20 times on public television. The success of this venture inspired the organizers to continue the work beyond the stages of gathering and disseminating information. The key, said Hunt, was “getting the right people on the bus.” A diverse group was assembled to:

- assess needs for action
- develop a structure to best meet those needs

- determine the best use of resources and organizational support, and
- create a vision, mission and focus for action

Internet research identified several community tool boxes (<http://ctb.ku.edu/en/>) (<http://www.preventioninstitute.org/>) that take a comprehensive, integrated approach to solving complex public health and social issues and that could be adapted to help design this new effort. The group decided a coalition approach was better for their purposes than an alliance, task force, network or other organizational model. “A coalition is a union of people working together to influence the outcomes of a specific problem,” said Hunt, noting that Americans’ tendency to organize themselves around a common problem is an age-old tradition.

Representatives from the targeted professions were recruited to serve on the new coalition. Personal meetings were held with “key players,” including the Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women (a statewide program with 92 agency members) and the Ramsey County District Attorney’s Office, where District Attorney Susan Gaertner is an advocate for introducing The Link to prosecutors.

An organizational structure was established in which a sponsoring agency provided facilitation and administrative support. Governance was to be by group consent, and a one-year timeline was created to give the group time to determine a name, vision, mission and focus.

The result was The Link Coalition of Minnesota, with two main priorities: increasing education and awareness about The Link, and providing safe housing for pet victims of family violence. The new coalition recognized the need to be flexible and to be responsive to changing trends and opportunities, and consequently adopted an additional project of supporting proposed legislation to include pets in domestic violence protection orders.

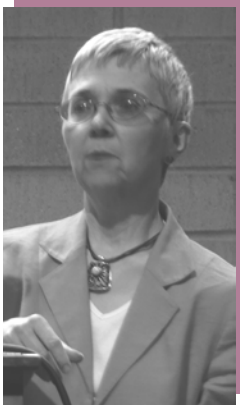
Changes at the original sponsoring agency, however, necessitated a change in the coalition’s plans, and the entire process had to be repeated. The group was reborn as the Minnesota Alliance for Family and Animal Safety with a new name, new bylaws, new focus, and a careful consideration of its organizational structure. Prevent Child Abuse – Minnesota became the new sponsoring agency.

In 2010 the Alliance achieved its first legislative victory when Minnesota became the 17<sup>th</sup> state to enact a law allowing judges to include pets in protection orders. Despite opposition that included the National Rifle Association, personal testimonials from victims and the ability to accept compromises with the statutory language achieved success.

“Because of the diversity and commitment of wonderful people, we’ve been able to come a long way,” said Skillingstad.

## THE LINK IN COLORADO:

### SAFE PETS, SAFE FAMILIES, SAFE COMMUNITIES



**Kathleen Schoen**, Director of Local Bar Relations & Access to Justice for the Colorado Bar Association, described the Colorado Alliance for Cruelty Prevention (CACP). Founded in 2003, CACP is an alliance of professionals educating themselves and other professionals about The Link between animal abuse and family violence. The Alliance's vision is to see humans and animals living together in a violence-free environment. Its mission is to establish a coalition of stakeholders that provides interdisciplinary leadership and methods in the prevention, intervention and treatment of human and animal cruelty in Colorado.

CACP established several workable goals:

1. Be a clearinghouse for data, resources and materials
2. Become self-sufficient
3. Enlist specialized partners
4. Create public awareness about CACP, The Link and solutions
5. Institutionalize Link concepts and resources in professions dealing with humans and/or animals
6. Provide legal advocacy



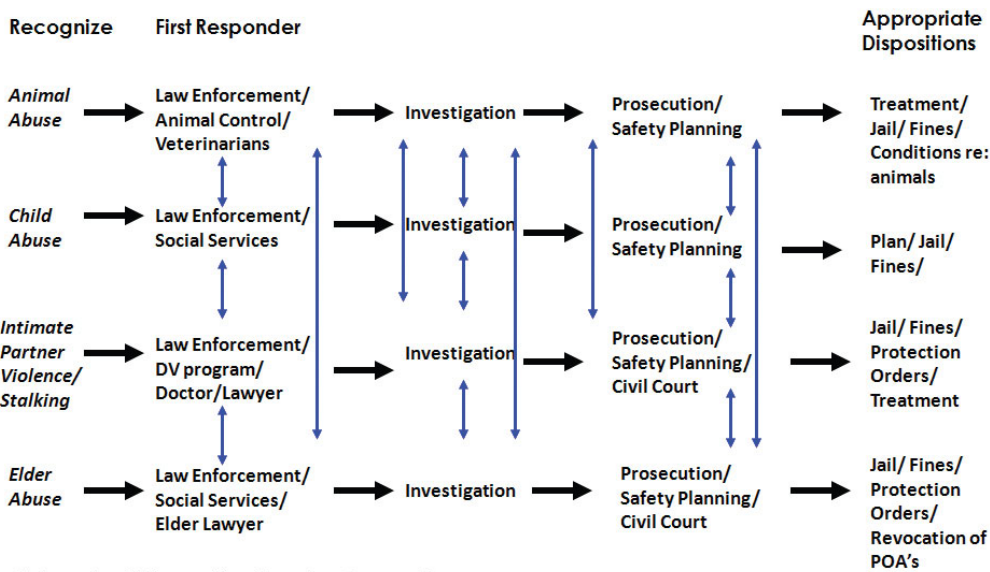
In the multidisciplinary approach so common in Link coalitions, a diverse group of professionals was targeted for participation:

- *Justice system* (law enforcement, civil and criminal lawyers and judges, probation officers, treatment providers)
- *Community-based service providers* (domestic violence and sexual assault victim service providers and treatment providers)
- *Human service professionals* (state and county child protection and adult protection service workers)

- Veterinarians and veterinary technicians
- Animal welfare and animal care and control professionals
- Educators
- Legislators
- Therapists (children and family, faith community, general)

CACP recognized that numerous agencies, including law enforcement, animal care and control, veterinarians, social services agencies, domestic violence programs and attorneys, may serve as first responders to various forms of family violence. While it is necessary for each case to work its way through the investigatory, safety planning and disposition stages, which might include prosecution, the first responders, investigators and prosecutors need to be trained to interact with each other when other forms of family violence are manifested. “Our systems were basically siloed,” said Schoen. “We’re trying to get people to work together. Sometimes that takes protocols, and sometimes it takes training.”

## System Response to Violence



Colorado Alliance for Cruelty Prevention

The CACP violence prevention model takes agencies that previously responded to only one form of abuse and trains them to recognize multiple forms of family violence and to interface with other agencies for referrals and case management.

CACP representatives offered the Roundtable several lessons learned over the years:

- Each profession has different needs and is starting at a different place. Link proponents need to work within each profession to meet their needs.
- Very knowledgeable allies are available for time-limited, specific projects — all it takes is an “ask.”
- The Link has a reputation of being solely an animal welfare issue. It is necessary to make an effort to include domestic violence, child and adult protective services, and others to help them understand the crossover among various forms of family violence. Many agencies commonly misperceive that animal welfare causes attract substantial funding and diminish funding that might otherwise be available to them. Collaboration with non-animal welfare entities is very beneficial to everyone, and will help in institutionalizing all components of The Link.
- Collaborating with a university, such as the University of Denver, adds a brick to the foundation of the work and provides an important resource and opportunity for research.
- There is a need for effective resources for all professionals, such as a list of properly trained treatment providers so courts have someone to whom they may refer perpetrators.
- Link advocates frequently focus on the “dark side” of how animal cruelty is often connected with other forms of violence. There may be more receptivity among audiences by presenting a more positive approach and demonstrating how healthy interactions with animals are beneficial.
- A successful coalition requires coordination. This involves a point person with authority and responsibility, and frequent, open communications among members and committees.
- Structure and programs are most effective when based upon a logic model. The logic model offers opportunities to assess quality and results at every juncture, thereby informing continuous improvement. It is a graphical and narrative description that lays out the underlying assumptions of programs, describes logical linkages among resources, activities, outputs, audiences and outcomes, and provides a common language for discussion of these programs. The logic model helps set up processes and parameters to answer such questions as “What differences are we making?”, “How will we know when or if we reach our goals?”, “Which program is working?”, and “If we do this, what will logically follow?”
- Collaboration across disciplines can be enhanced by identifying areas of convergence, such as protection orders.



- Having well-respected state and national organizations and individuals as members enhances the organization’s credibility.
- Enlist “champions” — prominent individuals who are well-connected who can advance the cause.

Finally, CACP representatives identified a number of areas in which the National Link Coalition could be of service to local coalitions:

- Serve as a clearinghouse for research information and a web portal with links to other major websites
- Offer outreach to multidisciplinary national partners
- Conduct a national social media campaign
- Provide a toolkit to help new coalitions get started
- Provide informational material for specific professions
- Create communication mechanisms for state and local Link coalitions
- Provide a person who can offer administrative assistance to the Coalition

## THE LINK IN COLORADO:

### A MODEL STATE FOR PEOPLE AND ANIMALS TO LIVE HAPPILY

**Philip Tedeschi** and **Jim Pyle**, of the Institute for Human-Animal Connection at the University of Denver Graduate School of Social Work, described their work with the Colorado LINK Project, funded by the

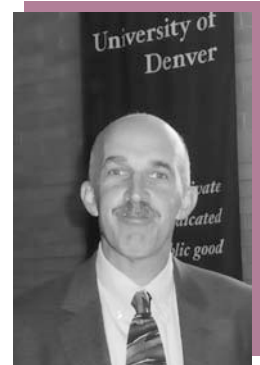


Animal Assistance Foundation. The mission of the Colorado LINK Project is for Colorado to become a “model state” with regard to the state’s awareness and response to The Link. The Colorado LINK Project’s priorities are:

- Data gathering
- Discipline-specific training curricula for such sectors as animal control, law enforcement, animal welfare, veterinary medicine, human services, mental health, education, prosecutors and judges
- Assessment instruments
- Intervention protocols

- Training and workshops
- Multi-system and multidisciplinary collaboration
- Resource dissemination

The first year of the Project focused on gathering information, networking and conducting needs assessments among the many disciplines that are affected by and must respond to The Link to learn how it is understood and addressed in Colorado. Working relationships were developed with such groups as the Colorado Alliance for Cruelty Prevention, Colorado Association of Animal Control Officers, Colorado Veterinary Medical Association, the Domestic Violence Offender Management Board, the Sex Offender Management Board and other disciplines including law enforcement, district attorneys and domestic violence agencies.



Currently, the Project is collaborating with multidisciplinary groups across Colorado to develop and implement training and educational activities to raise community awareness of The Link, build community collaborations, provide discipline-specific information and resources that support effective identification and assessment of animal cruelty, and develop effective intervention strategies.

The Project identified several challenges and learned numerous lessons to date:

- There is a lack of uniform data collection related to animal abuse.
- There are resource deficits in almost all public safety, law enforcement and human service sectors.
- There is a lack of awareness and agreement regarding the seriousness of animal abuse.
- There are challenges in outreach and service delivery to under-served populations.
- There is an absence of coordinated and institutionalized responses to animal abuse.

These problems can be solved through more education, improved data collection, multi-system collaboration and capacity building, and greater dissemination of information. Training and curricula must be designed with the recognition that each discipline has its own unique organizations, structure, standards, training requirements and language. A differential decision-making and response procedure is also indicated in Link assessment and intervention protocols.

The Colorado LINK Project is also working on:

- Animal Control / Law Enforcement

Field testing of instruments to establish user-friendly, reliable and valid decision-making tools to assist in the determination of the culpability, level of risk, motivation and requisite response.

- Domestic Violence and Sexual Offense Assessment

Integration of evaluation guidelines and tools into mandated evaluations by listed offense-specific evaluators.

- Prosecution and Judicial

Accurate disposition requires equipping judicial responders with tools to differentiate seriousness in animal cruelty cases.

- Mental Health, Child & Adult Welfare and Youth Corrections

Retrospective research established that animal abuse is often perpetrated by youths who were exposed to physical and family dysfunction. Animal abuse must become a standardized inquiry with associated treatment competencies.

“In 1984, only four states had felony animal cruelty laws. Today it’s 46.  
We’ve come a very long way. But politicians still don’t comprehend  
the breadth and depth of the research that confirms what we intuitively know.”

*-- Randall Lockwood, Ph.D., Senior Vice President for Forensic Sciences & Anticruelty Projects, ASPCA*

## WHAT DID WE LEARN?

Participants took the information gathered from the state coalition presentations, and in small groups added their own experiences and expertise, to arrive at information that can be helpful in establishing coalitions elsewhere. The information will also assist the National Link Coalition in identifying what it can do to help existing and start-up coalitions at the local and regional level. What follows is a sample of this brainstorming in the areas of lessons learned, obstacles encountered, best practices, how state models might be replicated and how the National Link Coalition can help.

### LESSONS LEARNED

- Experts who testify at court sentencing and hearings help educate judges about The Link.
- Legislators are often misinformed about The Link: Although there is considerable research and information available, the public and other professionals are not receiving it.
- Link advocates tend to think that more people know about the topic than is the case; the field needs more branding to raise public awareness.
- A prominent, respected “champion” who understands The Link can help get things done.
- Community coalitions should have a broad-based advisory committee representing many professions, cultures and geographic areas.
- The Link may appear to be more relevant among human services personnel who have pets than among those who do not. Pet owners may be primed to have a frame of reference in which animal cruelty is a potentially significant concern.
- Link coalitions are heavily dependent upon established and maintained relationships with people. Asking for favors and funding is easier when you know the individuals.
- A part-time staff person is a significant step toward making a coalition viable.
- Funding a coalition via annual grant requests is problematic and does not convey stability.
- Rather than continually promoting the “dark side” of The Link and the connections between animal cruelty and crime, a reframed Link message that promotes positive support for people and animals is more appealing to potential funders and gives people an opportunity to do something positive.

- Link coalitions may find greater success by embedding themselves within an existing network, such as a domestic violence coalition, that already has an infrastructure, rather than “reinventing the wheel.”
- Coalitions that utilize volunteers need to understand the intricacies of volunteer and organizational management, which require specialized expertise.
- The ultimate goal of the coalition should be to have institutionalized work processes related to The Link integrated into existing service delivery systems.
- A coalition needs to have visibility in the community.
- Coalitions should establish short-term, achievable goals that can be accomplished in a one- or two-year timeframe. Grant funding is easier to obtain for short-term projects with measurable deliverables, such as hiring a part-time director.
- Collaborating agencies need to be flexible, but there should be a Memorandum of Understanding among the participants.
- People feel good when they can see the accomplishments achieved.
- Personal connections with decision makers are keys to success.
- Intellectual property, such as intake forms or brochures, housed at government agencies are publicly accessible.
- There is no single model coalition; functioning as an independent nonprofit, or under the umbrella of an existing nonprofit or government agency, may be equally viable depending upon local conditions. Finding the best vehicle to deliver the product depends on what the product is. A needs assessment or gap analysis tool can help determine which structure is most appropriate and if the group has achieved a critical mass of readiness.
- Rebranding The Link as a public health/public safety issue may move the message forward.
- Funding requests should be aligned with the funder’s mission and values and fulfill funders’ identified interest areas.

## **OBSTACLES ENCOUNTERED**

- There are difficulties in finding sympathetic legislators and developing influential relationships.
- There is a need for funding to support dedicated staff, without causing conflict with other groups seeking the same funding.

- There is a need for more effective “branding,” as communication of the scope and definition of The Link is unclear, leading to misconceptions.
- There is a shortage of prepared/readily available “messages,” such as real stories (via testimony or video), scientific data and assessment tools.
- There are difficulties in recruiting, mobilizing and sustaining volunteer efforts.
- There are “silos” of discipline and profession that are obstacles to developing diverse coalitions and actions, such as cross-reporting.
- Coalitions do not always make plans to measure and demonstrate their success.
- The Link field has not attracted a significant number of physicians.
- Prosecutors may be reluctant to pursue animal cruelty cases vigorously because they believe these cases may be too costly , particularly if there are large numbers of animals that must be impounded as evidence or for their own welfare. Potential solutions to this dilemma include: enacting legislation that requires a mandatory arrest for animal cruelty charges, similar to some domestic violence offenses; creating a private right of action so members of the public can sue law enforcement agencies for failure to enforce anti-cruelty laws; training district attorneys to recognize that animal cruelty cases are also human safety and welfare issues; establishing funds to care for animals during prosecutions, similar to what some livestock boards have done; and preparing economic impact statements to help convince reluctant professionals that prevention is more cost effective than prosecution.

## BEST PRACTICES

- In setting goals for a coalition, an incremental approach toward implementation is most effective. Coalitions should have achievable goals and not try to do everything at once.
- Identify and target individuals, groups, organizations and agencies that can provide necessary resources.
- When trying to effect change within state government systems, find people who know those systems. It is difficult for outsiders to break in.
- Rather than “reinventing the wheel,” integrate Link programs and coalitions into existing services, systems and organizations with similar goals and resources. Mental health, domestic violence and elder abuse coalitions may be appropriate partners.
- Staging a short-term event may get media attention. Having a “Link Day” may seem more urgent and result in more coverage than a “Link Month.”
- Coalitions can provide tools that will help local organizations integrate The Link into policy and practice. These might include: flowcharts to demonstrate cross-reporting protocols, profession-

specific fact sheets with local contact information, and animal-related questions that can be integrated into referral, intake, assessment and treatment forms.

- Borrow from existing successful programs: there's no need to start from scratch.
- Generate Link awareness by involving the media. In addition to regular news coverage, the media may be interested in producing documentaries and public service announcements. Social networking is another way to communicate the message to the public.
- Making personal contacts is critical.
- Approach professionals from the perspective of "what this means to you." Make The Link relevant by presenting its concepts from their frame of reference.
- Awareness can be generated by providing widespread education access.
- Having the support of the state's governor can be invaluable.
- Find "champions" in government, participating organizations and the disciplines involved who can make things happen and advance the cause.
- Have a succession plan; groom successors to address inevitable turnover issues.
- Provide training materials that use the specific language and jargon of the disciplines involved. By showing you understand their needs and corporate values, you make the message more valuable to them.

## HOW STATE MODELS MIGHT BE REPLICATED

- Look at the existing coalitions, and their systems and processes, to identify which practices work best.
- Share protocols, assessment forms and materials that can be replicated by other coalitions.
- Share resources through information clearinghouses and listservs.
- Funding for coalitions may be available through a variety of sources, including the Department of Justice's Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) program, community foundations, "seed money" grants to start a coalition, and businesses whose "pet projects" include the many aspects of Link work.

## HOW CAN THE NATIONAL LINK COALITION HELP?

- Create a self-assessment tool to help state coalitions determine whether they are ready to organize and have the capacity for the work involved.
- Assist with forming and sustaining new coalitions. Create a tool kit explaining how to create an organization, lessons learned, best practices, and solutions for overcoming common obstacles. The kit could include sample bylaws, website templates, possible funding sources and FAQs.
- Serve as a clearinghouse for information. This information can be designed both for the general public and for specific professions. Information must be searchable and user-friendly, backed up by authoritative reference materials. Sample intake forms, assessment tools and veterinary forensic materials can be disseminated. A speakers' bureau can be made available, as can a bank of expert witnesses and consultants.
- Provide outreach to the field, and “reach in” within the National Link Coalition team of experts for resources. Encourage coalitions to collect data that can be compiled to determine national patterns. Hold ongoing meetings with key stakeholder disciplines on the national level and with other Link coalitions. Encourage universities to conduct needed research and to offer Link curricula in specialized training programs, such as schools of social work, colleges of veterinary medicine and police academies.
- Reach out to rural America.
- Encourage racial and cultural diversity in Link programs and leadership.
- Publish a master calendar of Link training opportunities.
- Utilize technology to conduct webinars and teleconferences.



## EFFECTIVE INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATIONS IN COALITIONS

Participants engaged in a facilitated exercise called “Zoom!” to better understand group dynamics and processes by which motivated individuals who share a common interest, but who come from disparate backgrounds, might work together more creatively and effectively. The exercise involved giving each participant a piece of a picture, with the objective being to collaborate only verbally and to create a narrative describing the full picture without showing the other team members any individual’s portion.

Participants described the following lessons learned from the exercise, which might be helpful to community groups trying to organize:

- It takes the input of the entire group in order for the process to be complete and to succeed.
- No one person can see the entire picture; each of us has only one piece of a large puzzle.
- We each have our own frame of reference. Success occurs when we get to know each other’s frames of reference and learn to describe our work in terms that are meaningful to others. Learning the language, concerns and jargon of other professions is necessary.
- Unless we communicate openly with each other and share information, we cannot see the entire picture.
- We need to ask questions when we do not understand what is going on.
- Leadership and coaching are essential in order for groups to work together cohesively.
- Don’t expect the same people to always be the leaders. Develop a leadership core and plan for succession.

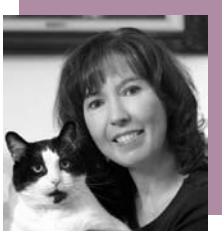
“This is a remarkable time of opportunity, with the federal government showing interest in Link work and animal cruelty for the first time. There is a critical need for quality research in the Link domain.”

*-- Frank R. Ascione, Ph.D., Professor and American Humane Association Endowed Chair,  
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## “BRING AND BRAG”

Participants were given an opportunity to showcase their programs and new developments in their areas of interest.

### The Link for Prosecutors



**Allie Phillips** unveiled a new publication by American Humane Association that outlines what prosecutors need to know about The Link and how to use Link evidence in the courtroom to help keep families and communities safer.

### The Link Coalition in Ohio



**Barbara W. Boat** described how the Domestic Violence and Animal Abuse Subcommittee was formed in 2009 under the umbrella of the Ohio Domestic Violence Network, the statewide coalition of domestic violence shelters and service providers. It was decided to form under the aegis of an existing and established 501(c)3 nonprofit until such time as there is a need for the group to exist independently. The subcommittee’s first activity was to survey domestic violence shelters to obtain baseline data: 79 percent agreed that providing pet support for persons facing family violence situations is a critical issue, and 14 percent already provide such services; 54 percent include pets in safety planning, but more than 75 percent do not routinely include information about pet safety in their written materials; 55 percent do not screen for the presence of animals in their initial contact with clients. Most shelters are not proactive in asking clients about pets and prefer to wait until the client raises the issue, as most shelters have few pet resources and are reluctant to bring up a topic for which they have no answer. The Link needs to be particularly addressed in rural areas.

### Animal Fighting Laws



**Angela Downes** of the National Center for the Prosecution of Child Abuse and the National District Attorneys Association reported that they are compiling a national directory of state animal fighting laws.

## Baltimore Animal Cruelty Task Force



**Caroline Griffin** reported on the Mayor's Anti-Animal Abuse Task Force, created in July 2009, by Baltimore Mayor Sheila Dixon. The task force is charged with making recommendations regarding:

- ways to eradicate animal abuse and dogfighting in Baltimore
  - increasing awareness of animal cruelty laws
  - legislation to protect animals and prosecute abusers
- training law enforcement officers to handle animal cruelty cases humanely and effectively
  - improved training for animal care and control officers, and
  - steps to foster improved responses to incidents of animal cruelty

Griffin noted that the task force engaged the general public and the news media to jumpstart the Link awareness effort and create a grassroots campaign. The group printed bookmarks to be distributed to the public to help individuals understand The Link and to whom reports of animal abuse should be made. She noted that in situations where agencies and organizations are reluctant to cooperate, securing the interest of the general public can make a big difference in raising public sentiment.

## Co-Occurring Violence Toward Children, Partners and Pets



**Sarah DeGue** presented findings from a research study of 860 college students, undertaken by herself and David DiLillo, that found that a substantial proportion of individuals who had experienced family or animal violence had also been exposed to at least one additional type of abuse. Approximately 60 percent of individuals who witnessed or perpetrated animal abuse also experienced family violence, whereas about 30 percent of family violence victims also experienced animal cruelty. The results highlight the need for professionals in school, medical and mental health settings to assess for exposure to family violence when presented with a child with a history of witnessing or perpetrating animal cruelty.

## Cruelty to Animals and Sex Offenders

**Dominique Simons** reported on ongoing research with the Colorado Department of Corrections in which the Sex Offender Management Board is including incidents of cruelty to animals among its procedures when conducting assessments of convicted rapists who wish to have access to their children.

## Rapid Response to Animal Cruelty



**Maya Gupta** described a new Rapid Response program of the Animals and Society Institute, which complements AniCare and AniCare Child psychological interventions for animal cruelty offenders, with extended outreach. The Institute monitors media outlets and animal cruelty websites to learn about cruelty cases and responds by sending letters to editors, presiding judges, prosecutors and the public. By noting the relationship between violence toward animals and other violence, and the need for specialized treatment for offenders, the Rapid Response program creates additional awareness of The Link while cases are fresh in the minds of the public and members of the court, and provides resources that can be used in sentencing to prevent recidivism. The campaign helps educate the public about the seriousness and larger implications of animal cruelty crimes.

## Veterinary Reporting of Animal Abuse

**Diane Balkin** reminded the participants that Colorado enacted a statute in 2007 mandating veterinarians, who during the course of treating an animal have reasonable cause to know or suspect that the animal has been subjected to cruelty or animal fighting, to report the case to a local law enforcement agency or the State Bureau of Animal Protection. Veterinarians who make such reports in good faith are immune from civil and criminal liability, and the veterinary/client/patient privilege is specifically waived. Colorado veterinarians are also mandated to report suspected child abuse and neglect.

## Repository of Link Articles



**Hugh Tebault** alerted participants to the Latham Foundation website ([www.latham.org](http://www.latham.org)), on which an extensive collection of more than 135 articles published in *The Latham Letter* since 1992 are archived. The website also maintains a calendar of Link training opportunities.

## The Link and Preventing Child Abuse

**Barbara Shaffer**, Director of State Programs for Prevent Child Abuse America (PCA), described her organization's network of 47 statewide chapters and invited participants to explore ways in which Link programs could be integrated into PCA's work.

## Assessment and Diversion Programs for Youth



**Chris Risley-Curtiss** described her Children and Animals Together (CAT) program at Arizona State University for troubled children who abuse animals. A clinical social worker completes a thorough assessment of the child and family, including the child's involvement in animal abuse, and an appropriate plan is designed for the child. Sessions are held at CAT's animal welfare partner, the Arizona Animal Welfare League, where the children engage in experiential therapeutic activities that foster empathy toward animals.

## INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE LINK

While much of the Link work to date has taken place in the U.S., the movement is gaining traction in other nations as well. Participants at the National Link Coalition Roundtable were introduced to some of the developments affecting The Link in the global arena.

### SPAIN



**Dra. Nuria Querol i Viñas** described the organization she founded in 2000, Grupo para el Estudio de la Violencia hacia Humanos y Animales (GEVHA), the Group for the Study of Violence towards Humans and Animals. The group formed due to a lack of information about The Link in Spanish and in the wake of increasing awareness of animal issues in Spain. In response to a highly popular public initiative, the Parliament of Catalonia moved to ban bullfighting in that province and several cities have approved symbolic bans against what has long been a national cultural icon.

Some animal cruelty crimes are now felonies due to changes in Spain's penal code.

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 researches the phenomenon of violence and develops violence-prevention educational programs.

She summarized a research study of prison inmates in which 41 percent had a history of animal cruelty. The study reported that the more violent the crimes against humans, the more sadistic were the crimes against animals.

GEVHA recently created an Observatory of Violence to Animals, a multidisciplinary group to provide research, education, consulting and advocacy for such issues as pet protection orders, cross-reporting and a public registry of animal abusers. Police officers will be receiving training on animal ethics, animal law, ethology, animal handling, and The Link.

The group introduced a questionnaire regarding animal violence that is given to domestic violence victims in hospital emergency rooms, and has seen its work publicized in print and TV media. She will be directing a new animal protection commission established by the city of Barcelona.

### CANADA



**Tim Battle**, Education Director for the Alberta SPCA and the initiator of numerous Link programs in that province, described how many Canadian humane groups, which originally had dual functions in animal and child protection, are "returning to their roots" by addressing The Link. Humane societies, SPCAs and community coalitions in Alberta, Ontario, New Brunswick and British Columbia, in particular, have been involved in Link work, but sustaining funding, staffing and commitment over time has

been a challenge and many Link programs have gone by the wayside.

Canadian researchers have likewise been interested in The Link. Deborah Doherty and Jennie Hornosty reported connections between family violence and pet abuse in rural households in Saskatchewan, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island, particularly in homes where firearms are positively valued. Cheryl Currie of the University of Alberta's School of Public Health found that children who have been exposed to domestic violence are significantly more likely to be cruel to animals than children who have not been so exposed.

Sue McIntosh's survey of battered women in Calgary domestic violence shelters reported substantial numbers of them had delayed leaving home out of fear for their pets' welfare and the adverse impact that animal cruelty would have upon their children; many women were also aware that their abusers had childhood and adolescent histories of abusing animals. Similar studies were conducted in Winnipeg, Manitoba, and in Hamilton and Owen Sound, Ontario. Rochelle Stevenson of the School of Criminology at Simon Fraser University found that over half of women's transition houses in British Columbia, Alberta and Saskatchewan offer safe pet fostering programs. Cross-reporting has been implemented between the humane society and family and children's services agencies in Guelph, Ontario.

The Alberta SPCA held several Link conferences to build momentum and public awareness. The SPCA was invited to participate in the Community Initiatives against Family Violence program for the 2011 Family Violence Prevention Month, the theme of which will be The Link.

The SPCA authored a guidebook on *The Link for Albertans*, a chapter about animal abuse in a manual for prosecutors, and a Link-based humane education curriculum for teachers. Battle presented to social workers, foster parents, victim services agencies and police departments. A survey presented during Family Violence Prevention Month revealed that 97 percent of Albertans recognize animal abuse as family violence.

## CHARTING A COURSE FOR THE FUTURE



On Day Two, the participants began to explore numerous scenarios to create an optimal, effective, successful and sustainable future that fulfills the vision statement during the next stage of the National Link Coalition's evolution. The group was charged with exploring four key questions:

- What is the organizational structure of the National Link Coalition and how does it interface with local, regional, other national and start-up groups?
- What support is provided from the National Link Coalition to other organizations, and what support comes to the NLC from individuals and organizations?
- What is the current funding model and is it adequate?
- What changes, if any, need to be made to the vision?

Participants were broken out into five groups, each to present a scenario. Although the discussion focused largely on issues facing the organizational structure of the National Link Coalition, many of the concerns and strategies raised were applicable to the start-up and sustainability of community and state



Link coalitions as well. While no consensus was reached during this facilitated discussion as to future infrastructure and mechanisms for the National Link Coalition, the ideas brought forth were highly enlightening.

## **SCENARIO 1: A FORMAL ORGANIZATION**

One scenario describes the National Link Coalition, currently a loose affiliation of interested individuals and organizations who meet monthly by telephone conference calls and stage intermittent conferences, as becoming a separate, independent, tax-deductible, nonprofit organization. Such a structure would require formal articles of incorporation, bylaws and recognition under Sec. 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. It would need a board of directors selected on a diversity of characteristics, including professional representation, cultural and racial backgrounds, gender, geographic dispersion and interest in a variety of animal species. Such a board must be committed to the “3 Ws” of effective composition: select experts in organizational governance who are committed to providing Wealth (making personal contributions to the organization and securing donations from others), Wisdom (expertise in specific areas of organizational administration and programming) and Work (willingness to get the job done). Such a scenario would likely require the hiring of at least a part-time executive director, and it might require engaging the contracted services of a grant writer, fund development specialist, and persons who can provide technical assistance to organizations in the field. Revenues to support such an organization might come from individual and organizational membership fees, sales of products, support from “champion” national organizations, targeted grant writing and registration fees from conferences and events.

In such a scenario, the coalition might set goals of attempting to establish at least one coalition in every state; to maintain an active and informative website; to provide toolkits to assist in the formation of local groups; to provide technical assistance on a range of professional topics and issues; and to not duplicate what other organizations are doing.

The group felt that rather than try to do everything at once, setting achievable short-term goals, such as a two-year timetable, would be more effective. These might include: holding another national conference, building coalitions across the country, advocating for specific public policy and legislative initiatives, and creating the website.

## **SCENARIO 2: AN INFORMAL INFORMATION AND SUPPORT NETWORK**

In this scenario, the coalition remains rather informal. Funding appears to be adequate to meet current needs, so the additional stages of organizational incorporation and bureaucracy necessary to secure tax-deductible donations are seen as unnecessary. Representation on the steering committee is expanded to include volunteer representatives from specific professions identified as core constituents whose input to date has been lacking. Such representation, however, is invitational but not mandatory. The need for a part-time staff person is likewise seen as important, presuming that the coalition can depend upon the kindness of “champion” organizations to provide funding to pay for such staff.

The coalition functions primarily as a clearinghouse for Link information to assist local organizations in forming and in achieving their goals and missions. The coalition may choose to have additional interface with universities that offer a neutral, apolitical environment and that have students, libraries, faculty and other capabilities to support research on The Link.

### **SCENARIO 3: A RESOURCE NETWORK FOR STATE AND LOCAL COALITIONS**

Similar to Scenario 2, in this configuration the coalition serves as a resource and network for local groups, a “brain trust” and a conduit to help local coalitions get the information they need. By providing the benefit of their own experiences, coalition members can share their successes and strategies to overcome challenges and facilitate the development of new groups nationwide. As in Scenario 2, the organization lacks a formal governance structure and branding; it is not “owned” by any other organization and is what one participant described as “truly turfless.”

It is recognized that the existing steering committee is working well, with self-set voluntary terms of service; its strength lies in the individuals who have stepped up to serve on it. Specific projects, such as community toolkits, management of the listserv, searchable database and information archives, RSS information feeds or website content (such as abstracts of monographs and copies of sample forms and memorandums of understanding) should be delegated to task-focused, time-limited work groups. Again, the need for a dedicated staff coordinator was seen as important.

Given the difficult economic times and a plethora of existing nonprofits competing for limited dollars, this scenario does not envision the coalition as becoming its own tax-deductible entity; rather, depending on national organizations for the provision of in-kind services is more feasible. The coalition can seek sponsorship for specific projects and events on an ad hoc basis.

### **SCENARIO 4: KEEP IT SIMPLE**

As with Scenarios 2 and 3, this group favored keeping the coalition informal, recognizing that the application for tax-exempt status, formal board development and bylaws processes offered more headaches than benefits. The group felt that the coalition’s creativity comes from its lack of structure, and the bureaucratic regimens of a more formal organization might impede this creativity. The watchword for this group was “K.I.S.S.” — Keep It Simple Stupid — and also Kindness Is Structured Support.

In this scenario, subcommittees are created as needed to address targeted tasks and deliverables. The group felt the concerns of the current committee structure were too broad and vague. Although governed informally, this scenario envisions somewhat more organization than currently exists, such as the setting of specific goals and milestones, and the crafting of a mission statement.

Again, the group posited that an individual should serve as a single-entry portal into the group and serve on at least a part-time basis to handle public inquiries and organizational matters. Funding for coalition

activities could be obtained by securing buy-in from major organizations, corporate support and in-kind contributions.

This group saw the coalition's primary function as being to create a model that could be replicated by local coalitions. Mentoring the field was seen as the biggest priority, and it was suggested that a needs assessment of local coalitions be undertaken to identify what the field needs. It is unknown, for example, whether the field needs experts who can testify before legislatures, a national campaign to build legitimacy for The Link, formal conferences, more activity in the listserv, or more specific single-topic information dissemination strategies.

The National Link Coalition could work to stabilize local and state coalitions by working with other national organizations, serving as a connector for local groups, providing letters of support for grant applications, giving members the opportunity to cite their affiliation with it on their letterhead and materials, providing speakers for local coalition workshops and conferences, and creating a repository of successes in many professional disciplines.

## OTHER SCENARIOS

The fifth work group did not envision a single scenario, but rather presented a number of options for consideration. These included:

- Not having a coalition at all, and depending on existing organizations to accomplish the work.
- Serve only as a group that updates and disseminates best practices among participating organizations, convening periodically only to update the community in an informal capacity. Such meetings might be tagged on to the conferences of existing constituents. The group might author proceedings and original white papers on a variety of topics.
- Serve as an online clearinghouse, loosely organized solely for information dissemination. The group could be housed in an existing nonprofit organization, government agency or university program.
- The coalition becomes a separate organizational entity with its own staff, membership and fees. This configuration avoids the potential conflicts of interest and vulnerability that may occur if the coalition is closely linked with another organization that becomes too dominant or that changes its interest areas.
- The coalition becomes just a concept that is housed and nurtured within another organization. Its goal is to embed and institutionalize Link concepts within existing agencies and professions.
- The coalition becomes a recognizable element of a government agency.

“If you bring the appropriate people together in constructive ways with good information, they will create authentic visions and sustainable responses to issues and opportunities within their communities and organizations.”

-- David Crislip, Management Consultant

## NATIONAL LINK COALITION DENVER ROUNDTABLE

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Janet Mickish  
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## NATIONAL LINK COALITION DENVER ROUNDTABLE

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## ABOUT THE SPONSORS

### About American Humane Association



Since 1877, the historic American Humane Association has been at the forefront of nearly every major advancement in protecting children, pets and farm animals from cruelty and abuse and neglect. Today we're also leading the way in understanding human-animal interaction and its role in society. As the nation's voice for the protection of children and animals, American Humane Association reaches millions of people every day through groundbreaking research, education, training and services that span a wide network of organizations, agencies and businesses. You can

help make a difference, too. Visit American Humane Association at [www.americanhumane.org](http://www.americanhumane.org) today.

### About the Animal Assistance Foundation



The Animal Assistance Foundation was founded in 1975 by Louise C. Harrison, granddaughter of brewer Adolph Coors and Colorado railroad pioneer Harry Collbran and a passionate animal advocate, to prevent cruelty to domestic animals. The Foundation envisions Colorado as a

superior place for people and animals in which to live and is committed to making Colorado exemplary in animal welfare and philanthropy for animal welfare. The Foundation offers charitable grants to organizations that advance its goal of establishing Colorado as a model state for the care and humane treatment of animals. The Foundation brings a scientific focus to the work of animal welfare through advocacy and funding for data collection, and fosters a culture of stewardship for animals through education initiatives. The human-animal connection is the primary focus of AAF's grantmaking, and the LINK™ between human violence and animal abuse is a main goal under this umbrella. Since its inception, AAF has invested more than \$50 million in the well-being of animals in the State of Colorado and has provided leadership for numerous collaborative efforts on behalf of animal welfare. Visit [www.aaf-fd.org](http://www.aaf-fd.org) to learn more.

## About the ASPCA



The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) was the first humane organization in the Western Hemisphere. Its mission, as stated by founder Henry Bergh in 1866, is “to provide effective means for the prevention of cruelty to animals throughout the United States.” The ASPCA was founded on the belief that animals are entitled to kind and respectful treatment at the hands of humans, and must be protected under the law. Headquartered in New York City, the ASPCA maintains a strong local presence, and with programs that extend the anti-cruelty mission across the country. The ASPCA provides local and national leadership in three key areas: caring for pet parents and pets, providing positive outcomes for at-risk animals, and serving victims of animal cruelty. Recognized as a national animal welfare organization, the ASPCA is a privately funded 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation with more than 1 million supporters across the country. Visit [www.aspca.org](http://www.aspca.org) to learn more.

## About the Institute for Human-Animal Connection



The Institute for Human-Animal Connection (IHAC) is an internationally recognized center for research and training in the varied facets of human-animal interaction across the lifespan. A respected source of scientific and scholarly information on human-animal connections within the fields of social work and social sciences, IHAC is believed to be the world’s first such academic center housed in a school of social work. IHAC is grounded in evidenced-based practice for implementing diverse and ethically responsible animal-supported educational and therapeutic interventions. Housed at the University of Denver, IHAC’s efforts focus on educating Master of Social Work and social work Ph.D. candidates to use best practices in animal-supported programs and interventions, and to learn and implement effective community collaborations. Students are encouraged to contribute creatively to our understanding of human-animal connections and to join a new cadre of future academic leaders in this field. IHAC’s programs include The Colorado LINK Project, with a goal of making Colorado a “model state” in regard to the state’s awareness and response to The Link. Visit [www.humananimalconnection.org](http://www.humananimalconnection.org) to learn more.

## About The Latham Foundation



The Latham Foundation for the Promotion of Humane Education is a unique institution, founded in 1918 by brother and sister Milton and Edith Latham. Based in Alameda, Calif., the Foundation's purposes are: to foster a deeper understanding of and sympathy with man's relations — the animals — who cannot speak for themselves; to inculcate the higher principles of humaneness upon which the unity and happiness of the world depend; to emphasize the spiritual fundamentals that lead to world friendship; and to promote the child's character through an understanding of universal kinship. Latham serves as a clearinghouse for information about humane issues and activities, the human-companion animal bond, animal-assisted therapy, and the connections between child and animal abuse and other forms of violence. Latham publishes books and the quarterly *Latham Letter* magazine, produces and distributes affordable videos, and sponsors the "Search for Excellence" Video Awards. As a private operating foundation, Latham does not make cash grants; rather, it works in many non-partisan roles including publisher, producer, facilitator, sponsor and colleague. Visit [www.latham.org](http://www.latham.org) to learn more.