

# NM FORMING POSITIVE LINKS COMMITTEE

Works to raise awareness about The Link Between Animal Abuse and Human Violence. A yearly conference is held to educate and train representatives from various government departments and antiviolence organizations on the cycle of violence in our society impacting both people and animals. Additionally, the conference aims to promote and facilitate cooperative action within New Mexico's communities so that the appropriate professionals can respond promptly to incidents of animal cruelty and human violence and assist all victims immediately.

The NM Forming Positive Links Committee also works year-round to spread the word about The Link via community presentations, advocacy within government departments, and lobbying for appropriate laws to identify and stop violence within families.

Please contact Tammy Fiebelkorn, Chair of the NM Forming Positive Links Committee, for any of the following:

- To arrange a presentation on The Link to your community, school or workplace group
- To volunteer on any aspect of the committee's work, including:
  - State legislature lobbying
  - Governmental advocacy
  - Media outreach
  - Community outreach
  - Governor's Conference on the Link organizing committee
  - Administrative tasks



POSITIVE LINKS

NM Forming Positive Links Committee  
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Note: NM Forming Positive Links Steering Committee is a volunteer-based group working on education and outreach. If you suspect abuse of any form, contact the appropriate authorities. The steering committee cannot assist with legal matters.

# FORMING POSITIVE LINKS

The Link Between Animal Abuse  
and Human Violence in New Mexico



# OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH ANIMALS MATTER

Over the ages and in all cultures, animals have been woven into the fabric of the community and family. Over 63% of all U.S. households currently have at least one companion animal (APPMA National Pet Owners Survey, 2007-2008). Research supports the notion that healthy human/animal relationships enhance physical and psychological health and teach us how to understand another being and how to express compassion, empathy, and nurturance. Unfortunately, though animals are valued, protected, and cared for by some; the abuse of animals is committed by others. Some scholars suggest that an individual's mistreatment of an animal parallels unhealthy, and sometimes, even violent, relationships with other humans.

## THE LINK

For the past several decades, there has been documentation of a link with domestic violence, child abuse, elder abuse, and animal abuse.

"IN OTHER WORDS, OUR RELATIONSHIPS WITH ANIMALS TEACH US ABOUT NONVIOLENCE."



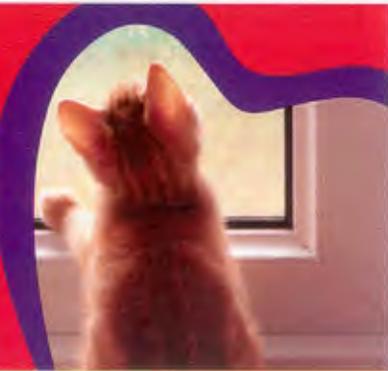
**Domestic Violence** is a pattern of behavior used to establish power and control over a household member through fear and intimidation often using threats and violence. Often, companion animals are caught in the cycle of family violence. Among those patterns of perpetrators that commit violent acts against their partners and/or family is the incidence of animal maltreatment and abuse

(harming, killing, or threatening them). It has been documented that many women will hesitate leaving an abusive partner because the animals have been threatened with harm.

In some cases, it is not uncommon to see children defend or attempt to protect family members or their companion animals by intervening in domestic disputes, thus placing the children in greater danger.



UNLESS ALL FORMS OF ABUSE, INCLUDING CHILD ABUSE, ELDER ABUSE, DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND ANIMAL ABUSE ARE TAKEN SERIOUSLY... WE ARE MISSING OPPORTUNITIES TO INTERVENE AND DISRUPT THE CYCLE OF VIOLENCE!



Animal abuse in the home has also been an indicator of potential **child abuse**. "Animal cruelty committed by any member of a family, whether parent or child, often means child abuse occurs in that family" (Ward, 2008). There is a family violence cycle: if the family animals are being abused, often the children are being abused and if child abuse is occurring, the family animals may also be abused.

Lastly, the link between animal abuse and **abuse of the elderly** is also emerging. Studies suggest that abuse in the elderly population may be at the hands of those individuals who also abuse animals. The relationship between animals and elderly persons may be quite special as it represents companionship, comfort, humor, and attention. Considering this strong bond, elderly persons' pets are more vulnerable to abuse if the perpetrator wants to exert control over the elderly person in some way.

**Report all forms of abuse:** If you see or suspect child abuse, elder abuse, domestic violence or animal abuse, REPORT IT. Call your local police department, child protection agency or animal control agency with your concerns. There are a number of reasons why people don't want to report. Apart from not wanting to get involved, believing that the report will do no good, or being afraid of retaliation- you yourself may know the abuser well. Despite these fears and concerns, you may be the only help a victim of abuse can rely upon for their ultimate wellbeing and safety.