



NATIONAL LINK COALITION

Working together to stop violence against people and animals

The LINK-Letter Vol. 6, No. 5 May 2013

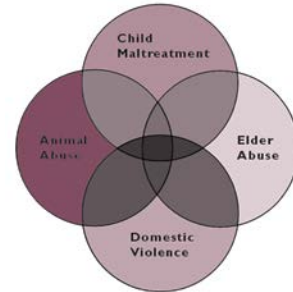
A monthly report of news about the connections between animal abuse, cruelty and neglect and other forms of violence



www.nationallinkcoalition.org



[Phil Arkow](#), Editor



SPECIAL REPORT: SOCIAL WORK AND THE ANIMAL ABUSE/HUMAN VIOLENCE LINK

Proponents of The Link have frequently met considerable resistance from individuals in the social work fields who have yet to make the connection that issues affecting animal well-being frequently impact the physical and emotional health of their clients. Of some 550 Schools of Social Work in the U.S., only six (Arizona State University, University of Denver, University of Tennessee, Michigan State University, Simmons College, and University of Texas/Pan-American) are believed to include animal issues in their curricula. Social workers frequently claim that their work is only about people. Faculty and dissertation review teams discourage students from pursuing Link and human-animal interactions programs by claiming there will be no jobs waiting for them in this area and that such topics will damage their reputations and careers.

INTERNATIONAL
VETERINARY
SOCIAL WORK
Summit 2013



Despite these obstacles, a growing number of pioneers are slowly but steadily increasing recognition of the impact of the human-animal bond in social work. The recent Veterinary Social Work Summit at the University Tennessee – a unique collaboration between the College of Social Work and the College of Veterinary Medicine – attracted 135 participants, more than double the attendance at the 2011 Summit. Ten American veterinary schools have social workers on staff to help clients resolve difficult issues over pet loss and grief, find social services in the community, do crisis intervention, and cope with compassion fatigue. Opportunities abound for creative social workers who can apply their skills in animal shelters and veterinary clinics, and address animal issues in

the lives of elderly clients, children and families needing social work interventions.

The Veterinary Social Work Summit featured 10 workshops incorporating The Link, part of a broader package of 46 programs that discussed compassion fatigue, animal-assisted interventions, pet loss, and ethical dilemmas in veterinary and human-animal interaction contexts. This issue of The LINK-Letter highlights many of these programs in our ongoing effort to build greater collaborations among social work and animal care and control professionals.

Adding Human-Animal Relationships to Social Work Education and Practice

“It doesn’t matter if you, as a social worker, are animal-friendly. If your clients are, it’s an issue. And addressing animal issues is one more way to help humans.”

This is the advice of [Dr. Chris Risley-Curtiss](#) of Arizona State University’s School of Social Work. Speaking to the 2013 Veterinary Social Work Summit, she offered results of a study of social workers’ awareness of families’ interactions with their animals, and strategies to incorporate this awareness into social work assessment, observation, treatment planning, and school curricula.



Chris Risley-Curtiss, Susan Cohen, and Tracy Zaparanick discuss strategies for integrating animal issues into social work education.

Her [study of 1,649 social workers](#) reported that most of them had some knowledge of both The Link and the positive impact of animals. But only one-third included questions about animals in their intake assessments, 23% included animals as part of their interventions, and 12% asked their clients about animal cruelty. These gaps may stem from a lack of training: 96% of respondents did not have special training about including animals in their practice, and 63% could not recall any course content regarding animals. Of those who did recall such materials, 22.4% had had information on animal abuse, 25.7% on the positive benefits of animals on people, and 12.6% on animal-assisted therapy.

Risley-Curtiss said social workers should ask questions about the presence of, and relationship to, animals among all family members when conducting assessments because of animal abuse’s status as a risk factor and indicator of conduct disorder. “But if you don’t look and you don’t ask, you won’t know,” she said. Assessments should include histories of animal loss, fears of animals, types of animals owned, and desires to have other animals.

“It doesn’t matter if you, as a social worker, are animal-friendly: if your clients are, it’s an issue. Addressing animal issues is one more way to help humans. But if you don’t look and you don’t ask, you won’t know.”

-- Chris Risley-Curtiss, MSSW, Ph.D.

Observing the interactions of other family members with pets, signs of animal cruelty or neglect such as hair matting, filth, poor body condition and cowering behaviors, or lack of food, water, shelter, sanitation or veterinary care, can be highly informative clues. Social workers can also use these observations and assessments to help identify clients’ needs for assistance with animal care, including whether keeping or relinquishing the animals is the optimal outcome.

Understanding the importance of animals in some clients’ lives needs to be taken into consideration when devising treatment plans, she said. Where will the animals go if the client leaves home in a domestic violence, assisted living, homelessness or foreclosure situation? When might a new animal provide beneficial emotional support for a child or elderly person?

Such issues can be introduced into social work studies through the addition of an elective course or by integration into current courses. “Integration is especially critical as animal-human relationships permeate the ecologies of many of our clients’ lives. In order to maximize our ability to help our clients we need to have at least basic knowledge and skills in this,” she said.

Administrators and faculty members who themselves may not have had such training might be swayed by the social justice implications of human-animal relationships. Humans' connections with animals have been linked to such issues as racism and oppression, homelessness, low incomes and health disparities. Human-animal interactions are significant in the study and response to violence prevention, diversity issues, spirituality, grief and loss, and compassion fatigue.

Risley-Curtiss listed nine activities that social work educators can undertake:

1. Share students' animal experiences in class warm-up exercises to begin the process of recognizing the roles of animals in human ecologies.
2. Model the inclusion of animals in ecologically based assessments, genograms, ecomapping, and in definitions of families and their support systems. This raises awareness and legitimizes the need to ask clients about animals.
3. Incorporate the growing number of texts that address The Link and animal issues in courses covering human behavior, social work practice, families and children, domestic violence, and child welfare.
4. Weave both The Link and the therapeutic impact that animals can have for children, families and the elderly into human behavior and mental health coursework through the use of guest speakers, articles, case studies, class discussions, and exercises.
5. Include animals' roles as sources of social support and their impact on physical and emotional health into evidence-based individual and agency-wide interventions.
6. Incorporate animals as members of families, neighborhood environments and potential adjunctive interventions into class assignments.
7. Classes on policy and program development can discuss laws that empower pet-keeping or serve as barriers for clients' having pets.
8. Discuss the need for early identification, prevention and intervention regarding animal abuse among children, youth and adults.
9. Encourage students interested in human-animal social work issues to follow through via their dissertations and theses.

"The definition of 'family' varies cross-culturally, but most people consider their pets as family members," she said. "Since animals are important in the lives of our clients, social work has to consider them within the client's environment. The health of a human may well depend on the health of the animal."

Social Workers for Animals Add Link to Agenda

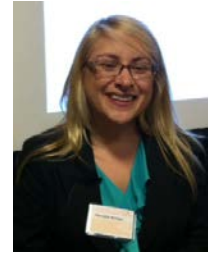
Social Workers for Animals
Transforming social work for all.

A new Canadian-based advocacy group to increase awareness of animal welfare issues among social workers has been formed. Among

the many campaigns of [Social Workers for Animals](#) is the encouragement of cross-reporting of animal abuse and other forms of violence. SWA encourages professionals working with victims of abuse to include questions about the welfare of animals whenever they conduct an interview, intake or assessment. Cross-reporting may prevent other forms of violence. National Link Coalition Steering Committee member [Chris Risley-Curtiss](#) serves on SWA's Board of Advisors.

Building Greater Collaboration Between Social Workers and Animal Welfare Professionals

Insufficient collaboration between social workers and animal welfare professionals does a disservice to both fields, says [Meredith Rettner, MSW](#). A general understanding of the human-animal bond, indicators of animal well-being, and safety planning for pets could improve rapport between social workers and their clients and better protect animals. Meanwhile, a greater understanding of human behavior would benefit animal care and control personnel who often lack knowledge of the motivations underlying animal abuse. And greater collaboration would enhance the lobbying strength of both fields.



Meredith Rettner, MSW

Unfortunately, numerous barriers prevent such interdisciplinary cross-fertilization, Rettner told the 2013 Veterinary Social Work Summit. These include: differing professional incentives; misconceptions that the two fields are competing against each other for scant resources; further misconceptions that because they work with one population they don't care about the other; and the failure of the National Association of Social Workers to address animal issues.

Rettner, consultant on domestic violence and animal abuse issues for Humane Society University, said that the patterns, rituals and objects of the social work profession establish a narrative framework of care that encompasses all members of the family. Since more than half of social workers' clients have pets, the animals need to be included.

Closer collaborations offer many benefits to agencies that are now segmented and responses that are currently fragmented. These include:

- Increased reporting of family violence and animal abuse cases
- Greater insight into family dynamics by examining pets and their care
- Sharing of important information between social workers and humane officers
- Expanding the pool of trained personnel to improve rates of success and earlier interventions
- Pooling of limited resources
- Stronger policies and programs

Acknowledging reciprocal relationships strengthens social work practice, she said. "And asking about animals increases clients' comfort and willingness for open communications."

Rettner presented social workers with a "toolkit" to incorporate animal issues into their work, including:

- Discussing clients' grief over the death or loss of pets
- Recognizing how clients' emotional attachments to pets are used as intimidation by batterers
- Including the presence and welfare of animals in risk assessments and intake interviews
- Helping battered women maintain possession of their pets during custody battles by having a safety kit for animals and making sure all records are in the survivor's name
- Develop working relationships and resource lists of local animal care and control agencies and pet-friendly domestic violence programs

A "toolkit" for animal care and control agencies to include social work includes:

- Hiring social workers to provide counseling, education and resource services at shelters
- Creating local Link coalitions
- Establishing domestic violence pet support services



Susan Cohen

Social Work Field Placements: An Unexplored Resource for Animal Organizations

Students in schools of social work who are required to take field placements are valuable resources for animal shelters and veterinarians. [Susan P. Cohen, DSW](#), told the 2013 Veterinary Social Work Summit that social workers doing field placements can provide: communications training for staff; wellness education; telephone calls; pet loss support; informing clients about low-cost services; research; compassion fatigue counseling; assistance with animal-assisted interventions; aid for clients with service animals; resolution of animal behavior problems; and administrative tasks.

Selecting a suitable intern for this type of work is critical. The intern has to like all kinds of animals and people, can't be allergic, and has to agree with the organization's philosophies. She noted that it may be extremely difficult for students to get their schools to approve such field placements as most schools of social work do not yet regard animal-related interventions as appropriate in social work practice.

Frame the assignment in terms relevant to school administrators and faculty advisors, Cohen said. By starting with the concept that social workers help the "family," advisors may be more easily convinced that pets are considered significant family members by many clients who are in need of social services, mental health, or community resources. "Don't make them think too far outside the box," she advised.

Cohen also encouraged forming local groups such as New York City's SWAHAB. [Social Workers Advancing the Human-Animal Bond](#) was started in 2004 to recognize that the interactions of people and animals profoundly affect the lives of both in ways that are largely unacknowledged and undervalued in common clinical and policy planning situations. SWAHAB is a special interest group of the [New York City chapter](#) of the National Association of Social Workers, and other communities could follow this model.



Mental Health in Children Exposed to Intimate Partner Violence and Animal Abuse: An Interest for Social Work

Children's exposure to co-occurring animal abuse and intimate partner violence are potentially significant issues for social work educators and practitioners. Knowledge of these factors can inform therapeutic interventions to promote mental health and the well-being of youths exposed to family violence.



Samantha Brown

That's the premise underlying a research study at the [University of Denver Graduate School of Social Work](#). Ph.D. candidate Samantha Brown told the 2013 Veterinary Social Work Summit that 31% of pet-owning women receiving services from domestic violence agencies reported their partner had hurt or killed pets; 37% indicated their children had seen or heard pets being hurt or killed. The study also measured these children's callous and unemotional traits, PTSD and internalizing and external behavior problems against youth who had not been exposed to animal abuse.

The results lend support to previous research linking children's exposure to co-occurring animal abuse and intimate partner violence to mental health problems and antisocial behaviors. The findings support the importance of assessing histories of animal abuse to better inform the therapeutic process and to provide effective resources, she said.



Iman Turner, MSW

How Should Social Workers See Human-Animal Bonds in Homes with Domestic Violence?

While actual or threatened animal abuse is now widely recognized as an obstacle to domestic violence victims' leaving abusive situations, little is known about the types of human-animal bonds that form between companion animals and people in these homes. [Iman Turner, MSW](#) described for the 2013 Veterinary Social Work Summit the correlations between the woman's perceived importance of her pets and the likelihood that the abuser will seek out these animals as additional targets for abuse.

Pets can be projective personalities, she said: the choice of animals in a home may say something about the owner's personality. Pets impact family sociability, serving as social lubricants for persons who would otherwise be introverted. They can also serve as surrogates, either as positive emotional supports for isolated women or as negative replacements for human contact, thereby exacerbating jealousy and resentment from batterers.

In the highly charged and stressful environment of domestic violence anxiety, the calming influence and consistent positive regard offered by pets may increase women's feelings of acceptance, reduce depression, and promote a reliable, stable relationship.

Turner reported that in violent homes where the batterer perceives the woman places greater importance on the human-animal bond, there is more likelihood that he will attack the animals as a means to exert control over her.

Another relatively unexplored concern involves the potential detrimental effects that can occur when women in these homes are forced to abruptly end their comforting relationships with their pets, often from violence or the necessary surrender of the animals as a means of seeking refuge.

Social workers need to be cognizant of these powerful dynamics when working with these families, she said, and recognize the possible triangulations among batterers, victims and their companion animals.

News from Local Link Coalitions

Kansas City Holds Link Training

More than 25 social workers, law and animal control enforcement professionals, family therapists, humane and domestic violence officials, psychologists, and students turned out to attend a two-day training on The Link and the AniCare assessment and treatment programs for animal cruelty offenders. The workshop, sponsored by the Animals & Society Institute, featured Maya Gupta (standing) and Phil Arkow of the National Link Coalition and Nancy Bell. The K.C. Caring for All Network (KC-CAN) organized the training, which had been rescheduled from February due to a blizzard.



U.S. Department of Justice Addresses The Link in Historic Meeting

Recognizing established intersections between animal cruelty, other types of violent behavior and organized crime, and their impact on public safety, the U.S. Department of Justice held a “listening session” on May 1 as the first step in exploring and learning more about these connections.



Acting Associate Attorney General Tony West and Acting Assistant Attorney General Mary Lou Leary were among the participants.

The session, the first of its kind in the department, was called “part of a broader dialogue that we will continue to have about preventing animal cruelty and better understanding its intersection with interpersonal violence and organized crime.”

The Animal Cruelty Working Group of the Department’s Office of Justice Programs organized the event, which attracted federal and state prosecutors, forensic scientists and veterinarians, judges, law enforcement officers, research and policy advisors, and representatives from the elder abuse, domestic violence, children’s services and animal welfare fields. The National Link Coalition was represented by steering committee members Randall Lockwood, Allie Phillips and Phil Tedeschi.

“Investigators have documented child abuse cases where perpetrators threatened to kill the child’s pet in order to enforce the child’s silence and compliance. Surveys of domestic violence shelter residents reveal that batterers sometimes harm or threaten to harm pets as part of their strategy for controlling the behavior of family members. And research suggests that acts of animal cruelty committed by young people may predict violent behavior in the future,” wrote session organizers in a [blog](#). “Intervening to address animal cruelty may be key to changing patterns of conduct for positive long-term effects.”

Connecticut Law Seminar Discusses The Link and Case Prosecutions

The Connecticut Bar Association’s Animal Law Section teamed up with the University of Connecticut School of Law with a seminar on May 3 to educate officials about the link between animal cruelty and human violence. “Animal cruelty statutes have been in the books for centuries now. And while society has become progressively more supportive of animal rights, some attorneys say the issue is more far-reaching than many people realize,” the [Connecticut Law Tribune](#) reported.

Growing awareness of The Link has resulted in stricter enforcement of animal abuse statutes, cross-reporting protocols between child protection and animal control agencies, and a [bill that would provide animals with advocates in court cases](#), said Colette S. Griffin, co-chair of the Animal Law Section. Courts no longer ignore animal cruelty cases by claiming they are too overburdened. “Essentially, cruelty to animals is now a felony in the state,” she said.

Conference goals included giving participants “a heightened sense of what cruelty is, why it matters – both to animals and humans – and how to better handle issues of cruelty in the legal system so that we can stop animal cruelty for the benefit of animals and the benefit of involved humans,” said UConn Animal Law professor Jessica Rubin.

Speakers included State Rep. Diana Urban, animal behaviorist Jonathan Balcombe, social worker Kate Nichols, state animal control supervisor Ray Connors, prosecutor Joseph LaMotta, and Superior Court Judge Raymond Norko.

Domestic Violence Batterers Intervention Program Heals Abusers through Horse Rescue

Winston Churchill's statement that the outside of a horse is good for the inside of a man seems to be true in Owensville, Ind., where an equine rescue program has found an unusual way to raise funds for abused horses and teach empathy to batterers. Tony Caldwell, co-founder of [Indiana Horse Rescue](#), started the Amends Program three years ago after he noticed a connection between animal abuse and domestic violence.



Caldwell is certified through the Indiana Coalition Against Domestic Violence to teach a 26-week batterers intervention program that costs \$650, or \$25 per class. The money goes back into the horse rescue. Batterers who cannot afford it can work off their payments at the facility.

"The class is abuse education. It doesn't matter if you're a victim, a perpetrator or both, because we see a lot of cases where someone has been victimized and gotten to a point where they've decided to return and retaliate," Caldwell told [WFIE-TV](#) in Evansville.

David Morris is an enthusiastic participant. Morris had been charged with domestic battery after an altercation with his girlfriend; the court mandated him to complete the Amends Program. He not only did that, but now volunteers at the rescue – where he works side-by-side with his girlfriend.

"I've seen a big improvement in myself, attitude-wise and basically holding myself accountable," Morris said. "I have a healthier relationship with my girlfriend and I come up here and help out and just pretty much a better life in general. I've learned that I actually have a conscience now and how to use it."

The Link in the Literature

Study Examines Social Workers' Attachments to Pets



Aki Sato

To examine why most social workers ignore the importance of assessing the roles pets play in clients' lives, [Aki Sato](#) surveyed 472 Connecticut social work professionals to determine their attachment to their own pets and the degree of formality and complexity of their organizations. Higher attachment levels and the inclusion of pet-related questions in the assessment protocol significantly increased the frequency with which pets were included in client assessments; neither organizational formalization nor complexity predicted pet assessment frequency. Social workers' positive and personal experiences with their own pets can broaden their perspectives as helping professionals dealing with the needs of clients with pets. Findings suggest that social work practice theory should strongly emphasize the roles of pets as relevant environmental factors and as important family resources for clients with pets.

-- Sato, A. (2011). *Social workers' attachment to their pets, organizational structures, and their impact on professional assessment regarding the roles pets play in clients' lives*. Ph.D. dissertation, University of Connecticut School of Social Work.

Complex Roles of Pets in Homes with Domestic Violence Explored

Companion animals play complex roles in families impacted by domestic violence, serving as outlets of emotional support for victims, objects of jealousy by batterers, and targets for physical abuse. This survey of 767 domestic violence shelters identified improvements and gaps in providing services for domestic violence survivors and their pets, and obstacles to survivors successfully seeking shelter. Expansion of services and awareness is needed to create viable safety planning strategies and reliable alternatives to improve the likelihood that battered women and their children and pets will seek escape.

-- Krienert, J.L., Walsh, J.A., Matthews, K., & McConkey, K. (2012). *Examining the nexus between domestic violence and animal abuse in a national sample of service providers. Violence and Victims, 27(2), 280-295.*

The Link in the Legislatures

Reporting and cross-reporting:



Alabama HB51 would require a wide range of human and veterinary health professionals, teachers, law enforcement officials, social workers, mental health professionals and others to report suspected animal cruelty or torture. Good-faith reporters would have immunity from civil and criminal liability. Failure to report would be punishable by a fine. Law enforcement agencies receiving such reports “shall process the case in the same manner as any other criminal investigation.” The bill has cleared the House and is in the Senate Judiciary committee.



District of Columbia B20-0153 would amend the DC Official Code to incorporate veterinary medicine as a health profession. Under this new classification, veterinarians and veterinary technicians would become mandated reporters of suspected child abuse and neglect.



Missouri HB 890 would give veterinarians, teachers and school personnel immunity from civil liability for reporting suspected animal abuse. The bill would also allow courts to impose psychological assessment and treatment for convicted animal abuse offenders.




New York A3766 would require any person charged with enforcing cruelty to animals laws to report suspected child abuse or maltreatment, and any person mandated to report child abuse or maltreatment to file a report of suspected animal abuse or maltreatment. The bill is in the Social Services Committee.




New York A3283 would require any employee of a veterinary hospital or clinic, boarding kennel, shelter or rescue center, or facility that provides services for animals to report an animal’s injury, illness, or condition to the police if animal cruelty or abuse is suspected. Employees who reasonably and in good faith file such reports would be immune from civil or criminal liability. The bill is in the Agriculture Committee.




North Dakota S2211 would require veterinarians who determine that there is reasonable cause to believe that an animal has been neglected, abused or treated cruelly to report the incident to law enforcement officials. Veterinarians could retain protective custody of the animal. The bill adds felony penalties for animal abuse and cruelty. It passed the Senate 43-3 and the House 80-12 and is awaiting the Governor’s signature.


 **Washington HB 1186** and **SB 5102** grant immunity from civil and criminal liability for veterinarians who report suspected animal cruelty in good faith. They have passed each house and await the Governor's signature. **SB 5204** and **HB 1202** would create new categories of failing to provide care and of leaving an animal unattended in a motor vehicle, both civil infractions that do not meet statutory requirements for cruelty, and would permit law enforcement officers, fire personnel, and animal control officers to intervene. It would also amend state cruelty and animal fighting language.


Abuse Registries:

 **Michigan HB 4535** and **4534** would require individuals convicted of animal cruelty to register for five years with the State Police, who would create a statewide database of offenders. Animal shelters that adopt to individuals on the registry would be guilty of a misdemeanor.


 **Washington HB 1786** would direct the attorney general to maintain a publicly available registry of persons convicted of animal abuse. The bill is in the House Judiciary Committee.


Pet Protection Orders

 **Kentucky HB 195** would allow a court to direct the care, custody or control of pets in domestic violence protection-from-abuse orders. It is in the House Judiciary Committee.


 **New Mexico SB 473** which would have allowed courts to grant possession of animals and order any party to stay away from the animal during a protection-from-abuse order, died.


Animal Abuse in the Presence of a Child


 **New York A706** would include animal cruelty in the presence of a child as an element in endangering a child's welfare, and within the definition of a neglected or maltreated child. It has been referred to the Codes Committee.


 **Oregon SB6** defines animal abuse as a felony if the incident is part of an act of domestic violence or occurs in the presence of a minor child. The bill is in the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Other

 **Connecticut HB 5677**, **HB 6690** and **HB 6310** would appoint a State Department of Agriculture veterinarian to act as an animal advocate in family relations matters, civil cases, and criminal proceedings (including cruelty cases) that involve the care, custody and well-being of animals.

 **New Mexico SB 459** which would have appropriated \$50,000 to provide training for social workers and law enforcement personnel regarding animal cruelty laws and the social and legal consequences of animal cruelty, died.

 **New Mexico SB 83** and **HB 224** which would have allowed psychological counseling for offenders of the new crime of "extreme" animal cruelty, and for children convicted of animal cruelty, has died.

 **New Mexico SB 473** which would have defined animal abuse used to coerce or control an intimate partner as meeting the statutory definition of domestic violence or stalking, died.

The Link in the News

Children Rescued from Triple Homicide Site Linked to Suspected Dogfighting and Drug Operation



Three people were found shot to death in this home, site of suspected dogfighting and drug operations

Authorities in remote Oneida County, Idaho are [investigating the deaths of three individuals](#) found shot to death at a home where 64 pit bulls, suspected of being part of a dogfighting operation, had to be rescued. Sheriff's deputies found Brent L. Christiansen, 62, Trent Jon Christensen, 32, and Yavette Chivon Carter, 27, inside the house one mile west of Holbrook. Two toddlers and 38 marijuana plants were also at the scene. Meat from the carcass of a dead pit bull found in a freezer was apparently being fed to the other dogs. Sheriff Jeff Semrad speculated that the dogs, who have been transported to several animal shelters for evaluation and possible rehoming, were part of a dogfighting ring. The two young girls, who were apparently left alone with the three bodies for more than 12 hours, were unharmed and are being cared for by family members.

Domestic Violence/Animal Abuse Link Gets TV Coverage

The ABC-TV affiliate in Grand Junction, Colo., KJCT Channel 8, aired a [news segment](#) on April 30 describing The Link and how it impacts Latimer House, the regional domestic violence shelter, and Mesa County Animal Services. Reporter Gina Esposito interviewed Latimer House Program Coordinator Karla Kitzman and Animal Services Director Penny McCarty, and cited National Link Coalition steering committee members Diane Balkin and Randall Lockwood. "There is a direct link between animal abuse and domestic violence, abuse of elders and abuse of children," said McCarty.



Man Pleads Guilty in Dragging Ex-Girlfriend's Dog

A Knoxville, Tenn. man accused of dragging his ex-girlfriend's dog behind his truck pleaded guilty on April 11 to animal cruelty and drug charges, and received a three-year sentence with all but six months to be served on probation. Jimmy Lovell, 48, had been arrested in 2009 in the incident, but jurors deadlocked on the animal cruelty charges in 2012. Knoxville police later arrested him on charges of selling oxycodone from his home and re-tried him on the cruelty charges. Animal lovers had raised \$13,000 to care for the "Little Brown Dog" as the wounded dog was known and set up a Facebook page in its honor.



The "Little Brown Dog"

Man Who Killed Raccoon Charged in Sex Assault



Nicholas Foti

Nicholas Foti, 21, of Boulder, Colo., on probation for killing a raccoon with a machete, was scheduled to be extradited back to Colorado from Hawaii to face charges of allegedly assaulting a 19-year-old woman in her home. The woman told police that Foti and another man entered her home without permission looking for her roommate, and that Foti assaulted her when he realized she was alone, vandalized the kitchen and smashed a bicycle. In 2011 Foti and three others beat a raccoon to death with a machete because it was getting into their trash.

Link Training Opportunities

Coming Soon to a City or Computer Near You...

May 13-15 – Orlando, Fla.: The [International Veterinary Forensic Sciences Association](#)'s 6th annual conference features numerous speakers addressing Link issues.

May 14 – Seattle, Wash.: Allie Phillips will present on “Caught in the Cross Fire: When the Abuse of Animals Co-Occurs with Family Violence” at the Washington State [Children’s Justice Conference](#).

May 14 – Kitchener, Ont., Canada: Phil Arkow will present Link trainings to the Annual General Meeting of the [Kitchener-Waterloo Humane Society](#).

May 15 – Kitchener, Ont., Canada: Phil Arkow will present Link trainings to the [Human-Animal Vulnerability Coalition](#) of Waterloo Region.

May 16 – Marianna, Fla.: Maya Gupta will present a workshop on The Link in rural communities at the [Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence Training Institute](#).

May 16 – (online): [Allie Phillips](#) will present on Sheltering Animals and Families Together (SAF-T) to students at the University of Buffalo School of Law.

May 23 – (online): Rachel Touroo, DVM, director of veterinary forensics for the ASPCA, will present a free webinar on “The Role of the Forensic Veterinarian in Animal Abuse Cases,” in a [webinar series](#) presented by the National District Attorneys Association’s National Center for Prosecution of Animal Abuse, in partnership with the ASPCA and the Animal Legal Defense Fund.

June 8 – Charlottesville, Va.: The Central Virginia Link Coalition will discuss opportunities to link human and animal violence prevention agencies and individuals. For details contact [Dr. Julie Palais](#).

June – Orillia, Ont., Canada: Randall Lockwood will present on animal cruelty and interpersonal violence for the [Orillia branch of the Ontario SPCA](#).

June 20 – (online): Allie Phillips will present a free webinar on “Sheltering Animals and Families Together: A Solution for Abused Families,” in a [webinar series](#) presented by the National District Attorneys Association’s National Center for Prosecution of Animal Abuse, in partnership with the ASPCA and the Animal Legal Defense Fund.

June 21 – Kansas City, MO: Heddie Leger and [Kim Fletcher](#) will conduct a training on The Link for the Kansas City Caring for All Network (KC-CAN) Link coalition.

July 25 – Orlando, Fla.: Allie Phillips will present on “Caught in the Crossfire: The Co-Occurrence of Animal Abuse and Family Violence” and “Therapy Animals Supporting Abused Kids” at the [Florida Crimes Against Kids Conference](#).

July 26-27 – Bento Gonçalves, Brazil: Phil Arkow will train on The Link for veterinarians, and guidance to respond to suspected abuse, at the [Medvep](#) 2nd Congress of Veterinary Specialties.

July 30-31 – São Paulo, Brazil: Phil Arkow will present [eight Link workshops](#) for ABMVL (Brazilian Legal Veterinary Med. Association) and ITEC (Education, Conservation and Animal Welfare Institute).

Sept. 20 – Saskatoon, Sask., Canada: Tim Battle will present results from the “Cruelty Connection” study at the 2013 [Saskatchewan SPCA Animal Welfare Conference](#).

Nov. 2 – New York City, NY: The 3rd [Zoobiquity Conference](#) will present a species-spanning conversation among physicians and veterinarians treating similar diseases and public health issues.

Nov. 7-8 – Almoradi, Alicante, Spain: Nuria Querol i Vinas will discuss preventing future aggression by looking at the early indicators of family violence at the II [International Congress on Juvenile Violence and Juvenile Offenders](#).



ABOUT THE NATIONAL LINK COALITION



The National Link Coalition is an informal, multi-disciplinary collaborative network of individuals and organizations in human services and animal welfare who address the intersections between animal abuse, domestic violence, child maltreatment and elder abuse through research, public policy, programming and community awareness. We believe that human and animal well-being are inextricably intertwined and that the prevention of family and community violence can best be achieved through partnerships representing multi-species perspectives.

OUR VISION: The Link between violence against humans and violence against animals is widely known and understood. We believe that through the recognition and integration of this understanding into policies and practices nationwide, humans and animals will be measurably safer.

To subscribe to The Link-Letter (free!) – Just send an e-mail to Coordinator Phil Arkow (arkowpets@snip.net) and tell us what organization(s) you’re with and where you’re located.

Members of the National Link Coalition Steering Committee

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Chair, Animal Abuse & Family Violence Prevention Project,
The Latham Foundation
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Columbus City Attorney's Office/Prosecution Division
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