



# ASN<sup>TM</sup>

ANIMAL SAFETY NET



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# INTRODUCTION

***The mission of the Animal Safety Net Program (ASN)<sup>™</sup> is to intervene in the cycle of violence by providing a safe haven for pets of domestic violence survivors, thus freeing the person and family to seek the support and services they need.***

When domestic violence occurs, pets are often threatened or harmed by the violent partner. The Animal Safety Net (ASN) program assists survivors of domestic violence (DV) by providing temporary housing for their pets, by taking them out of harm's way, and allowing domestic violence survivors to relocate to shelters.

By providing shelter and care for the pet, ASN helps survivors leave abusive homes and go to DV shelters without the fear that their pet will be left behind in a potentially dangerous environment. spcaLA has prepared this manual to share our experiences with the hope that other organizations may choose to support the pets and survivors in a similar way.

## **ABOUT THIS MANUAL**

This manual is written as a guide. Each aspect may not apply to every organization or individual involved with an Animal Safety Net Program.

The manual is broken into sections to make it easy to use. spcaLA suggests becoming familiar with the entire manual and then reading the appropriate sections as needed.

Sample ASN forms are located in the appendices. Feel free to duplicate these forms; however, in accordance with standard publishing practices, the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, Los Angeles (spcaLA) requires acknowledgment, in print, of any reproduced information.

## **SAFETY**

Per the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services "Domestic violence situations can potentially result in serious harm, injury, or death for anyone involved". Therefore, precautions must be taken when providing services to families experiencing domestic violence. This includes, but is not limited to, operating with strict confidentiality, ensuring proper staff training, and/or not releasing a pet back into a home with a known abuser. Safety awareness cannot be understated when administering this program. Safety awareness is a theme you will see repeated throughout this manual.

# THE CYCLE OF VIOLENCE BETWEEN HUMANS AND PETS

Studies conducted by the FBI have shown a direct correlation between pet abuse and other forms of violence, both in the home and at school.<sup>1</sup> Much of the research advocates that, in the best interest of both the pets and the human family members, pet abuse needs to be redefined as family violence.<sup>2</sup> Studies have also shown that children who are the victims of violence at home, whether it is physical, verbal, or sexual, are more likely to abuse pets.<sup>3</sup> These children often mimic the actions that they have seen or personally experienced. Since it is not realistic that a child would lash back at an abuser, the child is more likely to lash out at a younger sibling or a pet that is unable to fight back.

The U.S. National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCADV) found that approximately 1.3 million women fall victim to domestic violence each year; 20% of these women were found to be pregnant and 87% of the battery occurred in the presence of children.<sup>4</sup> Currie (2006) found that children exposed to domestic violence were three times more likely to be violent than children in non-violent homes.



**Violence towards people or pets must first be identified before it can be stopped.**

1. Lockwood, R., & Church, A. (1996). Deadly serious: an FBI perspective on animal cruelty. *Humane Society News*, 27.

2. Ascione, F., & Arkow, P. (1999). *Child Abuse, domestic violence, and animal abuse: Linking the circles of compassion for prevention and intervention*. Indiana: Purdue Press.

3. Currie, C. (2006). Animal cruelty by children exposed to domestic violence. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 30 (4), 425.

4. <http://www.ncadv.org/>, 2008.

A Texas study found that abused women have reason to be even more fearful of an abuser who hurts the family pet. The study suggests that batterers who harmed pets were more dangerous and used more forms of violence and controlling behaviors than the batterers who did not abuse pets.<sup>5</sup>

In Ontario, Canada a survey of women in domestic violence shelters found that 44% of the women stated their partner had previously abused or killed a pet, 42% of women said their pets had been threatened, and 43% of the women stated they delayed leaving because of concern for their pet's welfare. Data currently being collected in Canada has found that almost 50% of respondents have delayed leaving abusive situations out of fear for their pets.<sup>6</sup>

A survey of women in a safe house in Utah found that 20% had delayed leaving an abusive situation out of fear that their pets would be harmed. This survey also found that children had witnessed pet abuse in more than 60% of the cases, and 32% of the women reported that one or more of their children had hurt or killed a pet.<sup>7</sup>



5. Simmons, C.A., & Lehmann, P. (2007). Exploring the link between pet abuse and controlling behaviors in violent relationships. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 22(9), 1211-1222.

6. Daniell, C. (2001) Ontario SPCA's Women's Shelter Survey Shows Staggering Results. *The Latham Letter*, Spring 2001, 16-17.

7. Ascione, F.R., Weber, C., Thompson, T.M., & Wood, D. (2007). Pet abuse experiences: women who are battered and a comparison sample of women without battering experience.

# SURVEY SAYS...



## ASN Clients Report:

"Dear spcaLA, I would like to thank you guys for all the love and care that that you gave my dog. Because of you guys he was able to be with us for Thanksgiving and will be with us for his birthday, which is Christmas Day. I cannot express the tears of joy that your company has provided for my daughter and I. I did not think it was going to be possible for us all to be together because I am a victim of domestic violence. The hardest thing is to lose someone especially your pet because they are a part of your family. Now I do not have to have that worry and I thank you so very much. May you continue to touch the hearts of many other pet parents as myself."

"Thanks for what you do for the pets of battered people. He would have starved them if I left the dogs with him. And, of course I couldn't have that happen so I never would have left."

"Thank you, thank you, thank you! I miss the girls terribly, and cannot wait to be reunited with them. In such an ugly situation, it is the silver lining. It keeps me strong!"



**64%**

of ASN clients would not have gone into a DV shelter if they had not been able to place their pet with ASN.



**92.6%**

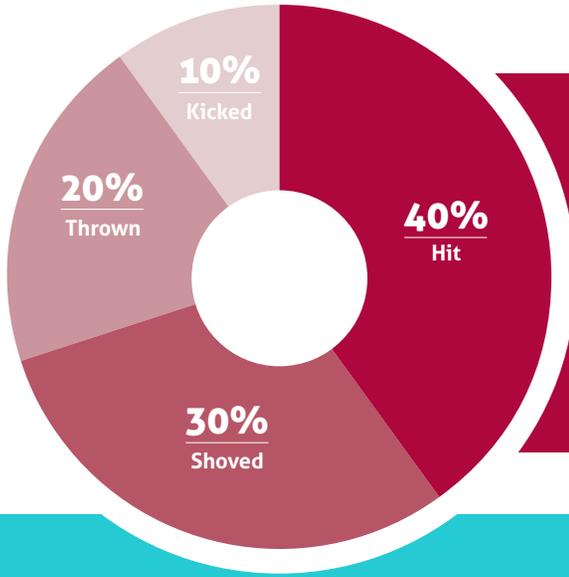
said that having a recent photograph of their pet (provided by spcaLA) helped comfort them.



**100%**

of clients said that knowing their pets were safe made it easier emotionally for them.





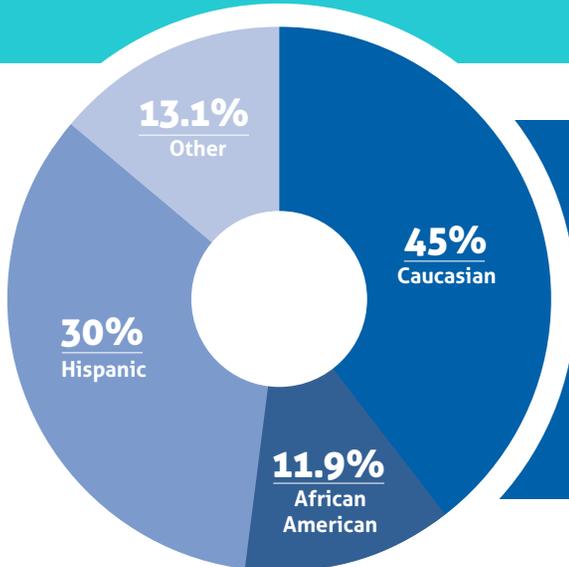
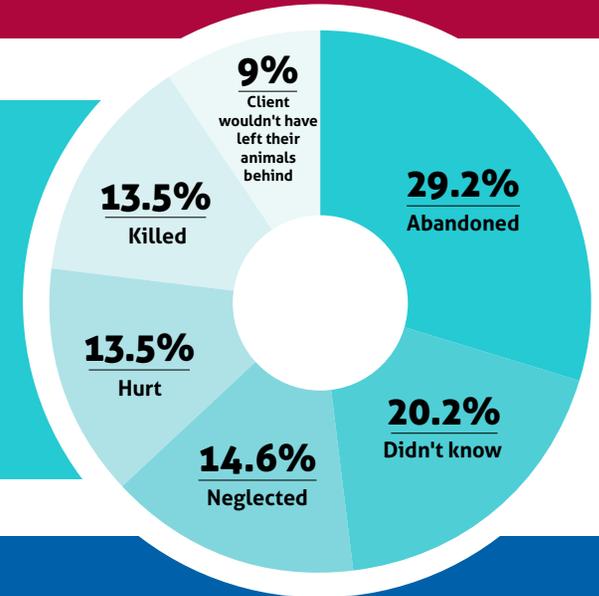
of the  
**23%**  
 of ASN pets who have already suffered abuse...

## Abuses suffered by ASN pets

Statistics gathered from the clients who reported that their pet had been previously abused.

## Possible outcomes if ASN was not an option

spcaLA asked our clients what they believe would have happened to their pets had they not entered the ASN program.



## ASN DEMOGRAPHICS

Other groups: 6% Pacific Islander; 3% Asian American; 1% Native American; 3.1% is unknown.

**40**

The average age of an ASN client

**10%**

Percentage of male ASN clients

# WORKING WITH THE COMMUNITY

Domestic violence shelters are the source of clients for the ASN program. Developing a trusting, positive relationship with community organizations is key to ASN's success. However, due to the sensitive and confidential nature of their work, gaining support from the DV shelters can be a difficult task. Contacting a few local domestic violence shelters and offering to speak with the outreach coordinator or supervisor about the ASN program is often a productive first step. An alternative suggestion is to contact local police departments and build relationships with their domestic violence representative.

Developing an informational brochure containing pertinent information about the program is a valuable tool in both starting and continuing a relationship with a DV shelter. It provides advocates working in the field with tangible material to identify the available resource. spcaLA's sample introduction letter and Animal Safety Net brochure can be found in Appendix A and B, respectively.

Creating a presentation about ASN and the cycle of violence, which includes the important topic of redefining pet abuse as family violence is effective. Many DV shelters will happily take a free guest speaker at their 40-hour trainings. Presenting at these trainings is a wonderful opportunity to reach a plethora of advocates all at one time. A copy of spcaLA's PowerPoint presentation can be found in Appendix C.

A master list of the DV shelters in your area and surrounding areas is a valuable tool. A list can be compiled by making contact with DV resources and asking them for a master list of the referral shelters they use. Different shelters have different lists, so be sure to ask a few shelters for their referral lists. Consider calling a local police department or visiting the National Domestic Violence hotline at <http://www.thehotline.org/> as first step to finding a DV resource.

A high staff turnover rate at DV shelters is not uncommon. New relationships must



constantly be established. When a key staff member leaves, the entire connection with - and concept of - ASN may go with them. Don't give up hope! Building new relationships is part of the process. Once initial contact has been made, calling DV shelters on a tri-annual basis to remind them of the ASN program and its services is helpful. Follow this routine until a working relationship is established with the shelter.

spcaLA calls all DV shelters on the master list 2-3 times a year. spcaLA uses this as an opportunity to remind shelters that ASN is an available resource in the community and to ask if a guest speaker or more brochures are needed. It takes a considerable amount of time for staff members to place these calls. In addition, brochures may have to be mailed or emailed, which also takes up time. Professional and reliable volunteers, who are familiar with the program, can be extremely helpful in this capacity.

# WORKING WITH CLIENTS

## CONFIDENTIALITY

Maintaining confidentiality is an important issue when working with domestic violence shelters and clients. Intake forms include private information that should be protected. All ASN client information should be kept in a safe location that only the ASN coordinator or ASN team members can access. Uninvolved staff should not have access to any of these documents. Personal client information should not be shared with any member of the public or with anyone who is not directly responsible for the client's or pet's well-being. At spcaLA all employees, as part of their hiring packet, sign a confidentiality agreement. An example of a Staff Confidentiality Agreement can be found in Appendix D.

## ASN HOTLINE

spcaLA recommends one phone line dedicated to ASN phone calls. It can be a standard land line, or cell phone number, that is equipped to receive messages 24/7. The line should not identify an agency and might best be an 800 number or a cell phone registered specifically to ASN. It is important that ASN pets cannot be traced back to an agency in the event that an abuser discovers the phone number.

All messages should be checked regularly and hotline calls returned promptly. spcaLA returns calls within one half-hour, Monday-Friday during business hours. Weekend calls are answered first thing Monday morning.



### **When recording the outgoing message (what the caller will hear):**

Include local and national DV hotline numbers to help the caller find a shelter;

Include the hours of your operation and how often the messages are checked;

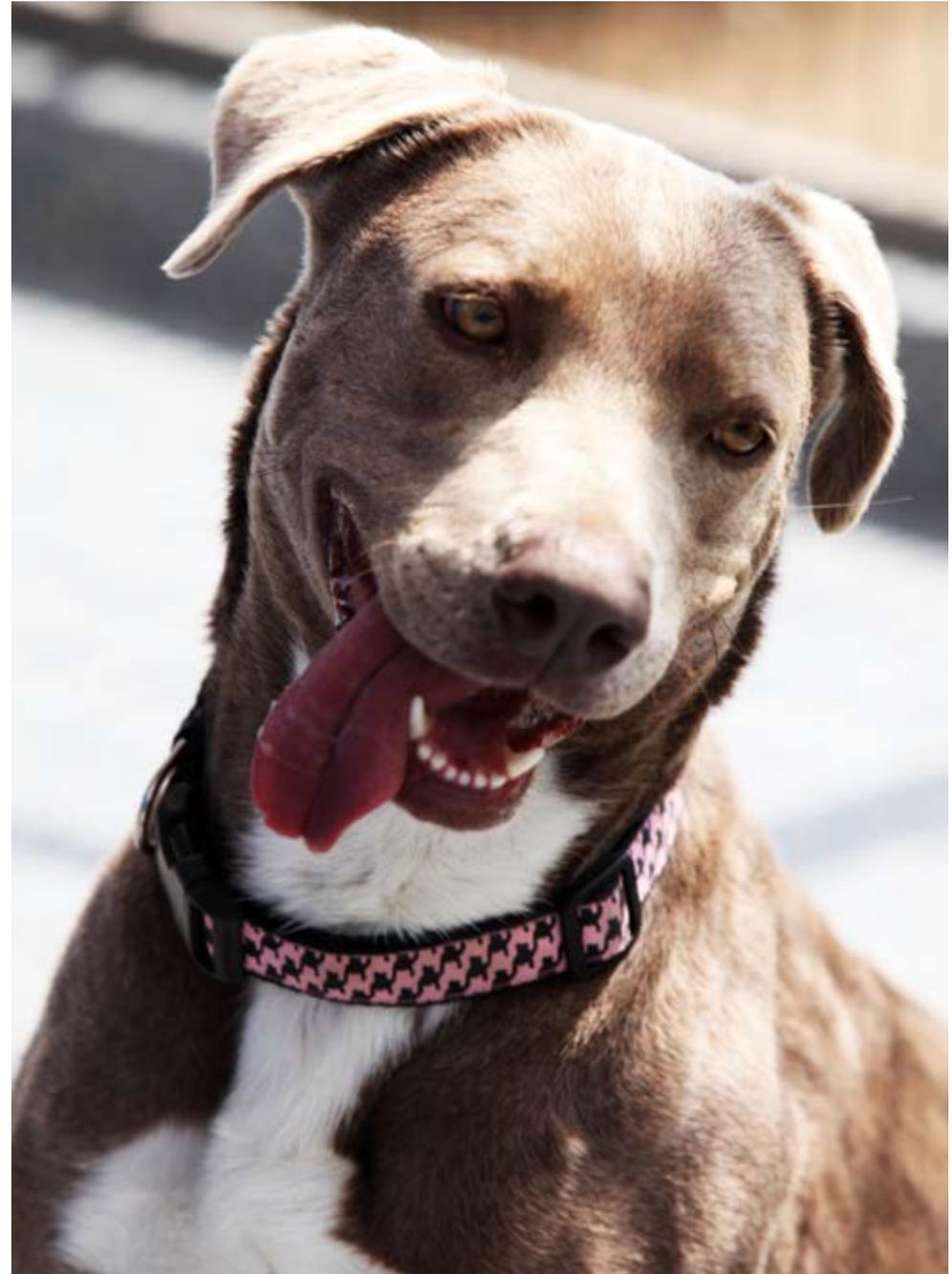
Ask the caller to speak slowly and clearly and leave only a name and number;

Ask whether or not, upon a return phone call, it is safe to leave a message;

Ask DV advocates to identify themselves as advocates from a DV shelter.

### **WHEN SPEAKING WITH CLIENTS**

When first speaking with clients, they may already be working with a DV shelter. Other times they are still looking for a DV shelter to help them and are calling on their own behalf. If a potential client is calling on his or her own behalf, he or she may only have short periods of time when it is safe to talk. When reaching the potential client, ask if it is a good time to talk or to call back later. Often, if the client isn't working with a DV shelter yet, they can be confused, fearful, disoriented, or in a rush. If the client (or the advocate) is calling from a DV shelter, they are usually collected, grounded, and have ample time to speak with an ASN representative. Either way, when speaking with the client, explain concisely and clearly the requirements of the program.



## **FLEXIBILITY**

It is in the best interest of the client, the pet, and the participating organizations to develop an individual framework around working with each new client.

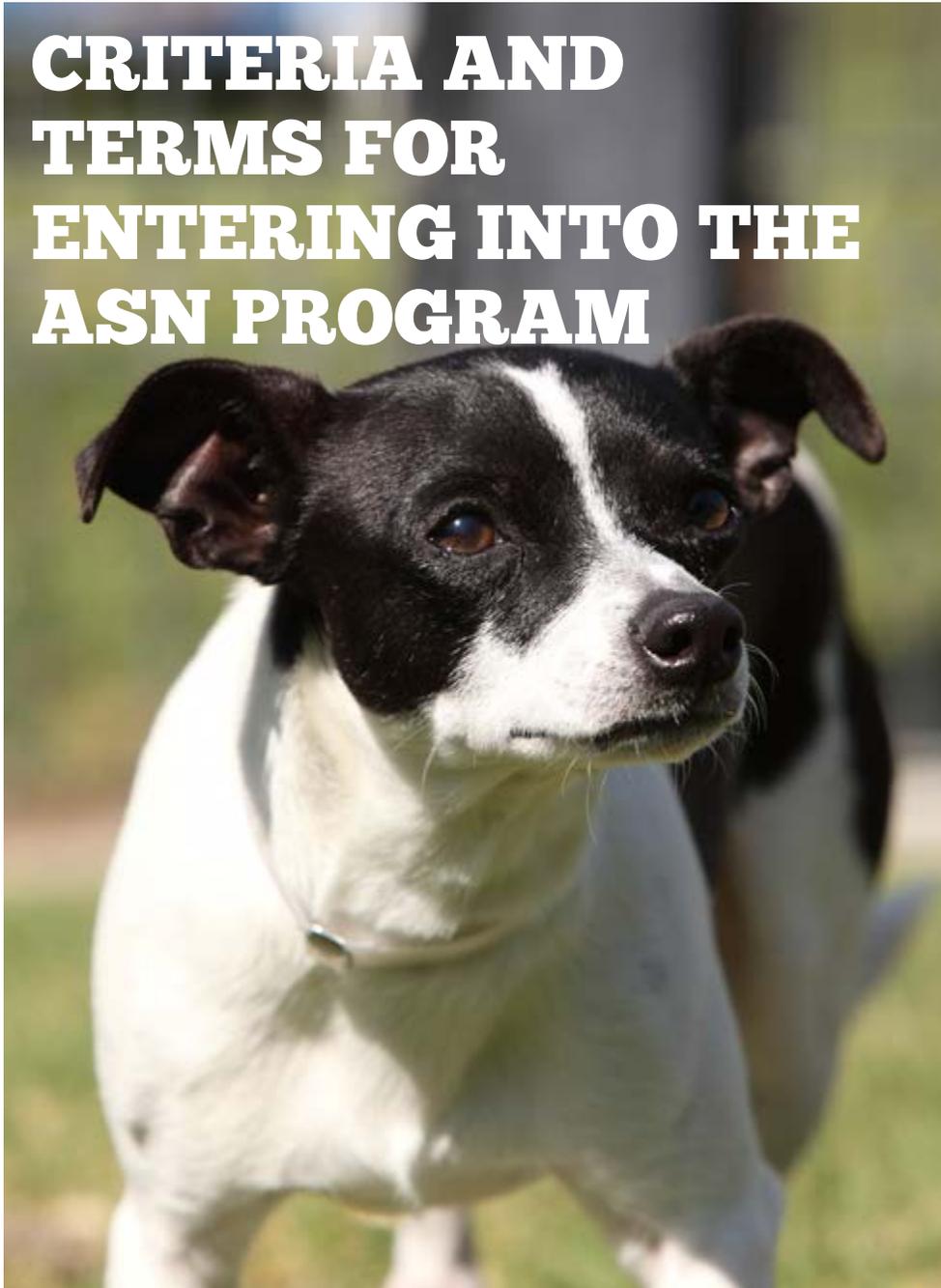
Most clients are in a complicated and difficult situation, so flexibility is a must. Clients often do not have transportation and are under time constraints. It is helpful to have many staff members trained and ready to assist when needed.

All clients who enter the ASN program are unique. Clients have varying stories, experiences, degrees of family support, and resources. It is important to remain flexible. Review each new client's needs on a case by case basis.

Some new ASN clients have issues trusting staff or the program in the beginning. Being flexible and amenable to change allows clients to feel comfortable with the programs and the organization.



# CRITERIA AND TERMS FOR ENTERING INTO THE ASN PROGRAM



## CRITERIA FOR ENTERING INTO ASN

The client must have a pet.

The client must be entering a DV shelter or advocacy program. “Staying at a friend’s house” is not an acceptable form of help seeking for entry into the ASN program.

A DV advocate must confirm that the client is going to be staying at their facility.

## TERMS THAT CLIENTS MUST AGREE TO

If they are not already, all pets will be spayed or neutered once they have entered into the ASN program. Exceptions are made when a veterinarian determines that spaying/neutering would jeopardize a pet’s health.

The client is not allowed to visit the pet until he or she is ready to pick the pet up.

Clients must sign a contract before their pet is accepted into ASN. If the client does not contact you by the contract end date, the pet is considered relinquished to the animal shelter.

# CLIENT INTAKE

- 1** | *Explain the program to the client or advocate.*
- 2** | *Fill out the Request for Service Forms (appendix E). This form collects pertinent data about the client, their pet and the DV shelter they are working with.*
- 3** | *Verify the client's entrance and potential length of stay at the shelter.*
- 4** | *Based on the information gathered in steps 1-3; determine whether:*

- a. the caller is eligible to participate in the program
- b. the pet proposed can be accepted into the ASN program.

During preparation of the intake forms issues such as complicated behavior or health matters may be identified that will exclude the pet from acceptance in the program. Representatives of the operating organization must determine what the program limitations are.

Although it is important to help DV clients, the ability to properly care for the pet is the agency's primary responsibility. \*NEVER accept a pet into the program if adequate care, proper housing, and the ability to meet medical or training needs cannot be met.

*\*Example: a horse would be too much for some shelters to accommodate, but a local stable might be willing to work with the ASN program and house the horse.*





## 5 | Complete the intake forms.

Intake forms include the client contract, which the client signs to agree to all terms of service, as well as the end date for their pet to stay in ASN. See forms 001, 002, 003-1, 003-2, and 004 in Appendix E, F, G and H.

It is extremely important that the client either claims the pet by the contract end date or contacts you with a request for an extension. If the client does not contact you or claim their pet by this date, the pet is considered relinquished to the organization. Be sure to reiterate this point several times when reviewing the contract with a potential ASN client.

This form also includes a place to describe the batterer and whether or not the client believes that he or she might look for the pet. The client must sign and initial all terms on this contract BEFORE the agency takes possession of the pets and enters it into the ASN program.

Gather as much information as possible before meeting the client. Fill out as much information as possible over the phone. Having the information in advance is important for two reasons.

- A. Preparation for the kind of pets you will be receiving can be made prior to their arrival.
- B. It is incredibly difficult for a client to focus on completing the paperwork while also saying goodbye to their pet.

Completing the majority of the forms over the phone frees up the client to quickly sign the contract and then refocus on the pet.

If the DV shelter allows for it, fax or email the paperwork to the client to be completed and returned.

Use the Receiving Checklist, form 006, to aide in the intake process. See appendix J.



## **6 | Getting the Pet from the Client**

It is best if the client can bring the pet to the ASN program office. However, many ASN clients do not have transportation. In the likely event that the client cannot transport the pet, the burden falls on the ASN staff.

Be careful! Never go into a situation where the abuser might be present. Always use good judgment and safe work practices when picking up ASN pets. Do not meet a client at his or her house, apartment, etc.

## **7 | Continuing Contact with Client**

Maintaining contact is important for the client and their family. However, the ASN provider is not responsible for contacting the client on a regular basis. The client is responsible for contacting the ASN representative to inquire about their pet. An exception is made if the pet has a change in health status and/or needs additional care (i.e.: surgery, unexpected treatments, etc.).

In addition, if pictures of the pet are received while in foster care, it is recommended that those pictures be confidentially forwarded to the client or the advocate.

The DV shelter will establish the contact protocol. Some shelters allow direct contact with the client. Others require all contacts be made through the advocate.

It is written into the client's contract that the ASN program is not responsible for finding them at the end of their contract date. As a friendly reminder, and good business practice, spcaLA recommends calling a week before the contract ends. Clients may request an extension. Extensions are granted on a case-by-case basis. Form 010 can be used in the event of an extension. See appendix H.

## 8 | **Returning the Pet**

Returning the pet to the client can be an extremely emotional and rewarding part of running the ASN program.

If the pet is in foster care, make arrangements to have the pet returned to the shelter before the client is scheduled to pick the pet up. It is recommended that this is done one day before the scheduled pick up. This will prevent any breach of confidentiality between the client and the foster. Additionally, advanced drop off will give the medical team an opportunity to perform an exit health exam.

Clients are often able to pick up their pet from the shelter. If this is not possible, make arrangements that best suit the shelter's resources. As with any off-site client interactions, use caution when planning a place to drop off the pet. As the client's contract nears the end date, the client should be in touch to either request a contract extension or arrange a day and time to pick up the pet. The pet is sent home with:

- Medical records
- Any personal items the client might have left with the pet (i.e.: blankets, toys, bowls, litter box, etc.)
- Microchip documents and tag.

Clients are also asked to fill out a brief survey. Use forms 007, 008-1, and 008-2 to assist with retuning a pet to the client. See appendix K and L.

## 9 | **Relinquishing the Pet to the Shelter**

In certain cases, the client will decide that he or she will not be able to take the pet back at the end of the contract date. The client may communicate this information, or the contract may end without any communication at all. Per the contract, if the client does not return for his or her pet, the pet is relinquished to the shelter.



Ideally, the pet can be put up for adoption and will find a new home quickly. However, some pets may have behavior or health issues that make them difficult to place or even make them unsuitable for adoption through your organization. In such situations, the ASN representative becomes the pet's advocate and must decide on the best path. Try to remember that these pets have come to the shelter through no fault of their own and may have had traumatic experiences before entering the program. Be creative thinking of ways to find positive solutions for pets who might have a harder time finding their forever homes.

## ***Some scenarios when planning how to get the ASN pet to the shelter:***

**The client needs the pet to be picked up.** If the shelter has a relationship with local law enforcement, ask them to escort you to a neutral location (parking lot, nearby restaurant, library, etc.) to meet the client and get the pet. Avoid encountering the abuser. Also, do not go alone, even to a neutral location. An abuser could be following the client. Public places shouldn't pose too much of a concern, but it is important to never be alone in any situation.

**The client is already at a DV shelter with the pet.** If the client is already at the DV shelter location and the pet is there, let the DV shelter know there is a willingness to sign a confidentiality agreement and pick the pet up from the DV location. Many DV shelters do not want any non-DV advocates to know the location of their shelters. Offering to sign a waiver not to disclose the location, they will be more apt to allow entry. (If the agency already has a positive relationship with that DV shelter, this will be a much easier process.) Also, some advocates,

if they are animal lovers, may be willing to deliver the pet.

**The client is at the DV shelter and the pet is not.** This can be tricky. The first option is to have the client get a friend or family member to pick up the pet. Then, find out if the friend or family member can bring the pet to the shelter or if it can be arranged to meet in a neutral location. Sometimes a friend or family member is willing to get the pet but only bring it home temporarily. Picking up the pet from the friend or family member's house might be the option. If a friend or family member is not available, the client will need to call the police for help. The client could attempt to get a restraining order that places the pet in protection, and the police can serve the order and pick up the pet.



# ASN FORMS EXPLAINED

## **Form 001 – Request for Service Form (Appendix E)**

Contains general information regarding the client: name, contact information, advocate's information, location and description of abuser, general pet information (how many and what kind need shelter). spcaLA suggests completing this form over the phone with the client.

## **Form 002 – Pet Information Sheet\*\* (Appendix F)**

Gathers all the information about the pet coming into the ASN program. This information is specific to each pet and is important to know for both caretaking and fostering needs. The client must sign at the bottom of this form, certifying that all information is correct.

## **Forms 003-1 and 003-2 – Temporary Placement Agreement for Owned Pet\*\* (Appendix G)**

This is the contract, which also specifies an end date for the client. Discuss the length of the client's DV shelter program with his or her advocate and base the contract end date on that program's length.

It is extremely important that the client either claims the pet by the contract end date or contacts with a request for an extension. If the client does not contact prior or claim the pet by the contract end date, the pet is considered relinquished to the organization. Be sure to reiterate this point several times when reviewing the contract with a potential ASN client.

This form also includes a place to describe the batterer and whether or not the client believes that he or she might look for the pet. The client must sign and initial all aspects of this contract BEFORE the agency takes possession of the pet and enters it into the ASN program.

## **Form 004 – Veterinary Care Authorization Form\*\* (Appendix H)**

Authorizes all necessary medical treatments. In ASN, the pet is:

- Sterilized (unless directed differently by a veterinarian);
- Updated on all vaccinations (unless the pet has current medical records);
- Given a microchip (unless the pet already has one);
- Approved for emergency surgical treatment (only when needed).

## **Form 005 – Contract Conclusion Reminder\*\* (Appendix I)**

Is sent with the client as a reminder of when to contact ASN staff or pick up the pet. This form can be re-faxed to the advocate a week before the contract date is up.

## **Form 006 – Receiving Checklist (Appendix J)**

Helps all parties involved with ASN clients easily identify what steps have been completed during the intake process.

## **Form 007 – Releasing the Pet back to the Owner (Appendix K)**

Is completed upon the pick-up of an ASN pet from the program.

## **Form 008 – Client Survey (Appendix L)**

Feedback about the ASN program is useful for the continued success of ASN and to measure client satisfaction. Authentic anecdotal accounts of the program's worth can be a valuable tool in acquiring grants or gaining clout with other organizations. In addition, the two-page survey helps identify if ASN is effectively helping clients, as well as what areas of the program may need improvement.

## **Form 009 – Corresponding Case Notes (Appendix M)**

If there is no current database available to store all ASN client information, use this form to keep track of all communications with ASN clients.

## **Form 010 – Contract Extension Agreement (Appendix N)**

In the event that an ASN client is not able to take the pet back by the contract conclusion date, they might request an extension. This decision is made on a case-by-case basis.

*\*\*Copies of forms 002, 003-1, 003-2, 004, and 005 are given to the client.*

# HELPFUL REMINDERS

*Working with DV survivors can be both rewarding and challenging. spcaLA provides some helpful reminders about working with people in crisis situations.*

## ***Be patient!***

Potential ASN clients have been through a lot and are often disoriented, potentially on drugs/alcohol, terrified, distraught or confused. Remember, at this point in their journey, many of them are seeking guidance and affirmation.

## ***Be prepared to repeat information.***

Often potential clients do not know who they are calling or what the program actually is. They may have called many places, which all do different tasks, and they can be confused. Sometimes potential clients think ASN is a shelter for people, a place for their children, an animal facility that will keep their pet forever, or a program just for dogs and not for cats, etc.

## ***Keep clients on track.***

There is a delicate balance between listening to stories that will be helpful in gaining insights into clients' situations and being a focus point for venting. Try to keep the clients on track. If they veer off onto stories and tangents that are not relevant to the ASN program, telling them something such as "I am very sorry to hear that. In order to get you and your pets safe as soon as possible, let's get through this paperwork. I have a few more questions I'd like to ask you."

## ***Remain calm.***

Many clients are panicked, scared and easily frazzled. Remaining calm and compassionate, yet direct and concise, will usually help clients to remain calm and keep their composure.



## ***Do not judge.***

New ASN clients may tell stories that, as an animal lover, can offend or upset. Remember that these people are now making good choices. Despite what may have happened to their pets in the past, it is the present that the clients are living in. As an advocate, support the clients' decisions to help themselves and their pets. Do not judge them for past choices.

## ***Provide reassurance.***

Reassurance and support, even from strangers, can play a big part in validating clients' choices and getting them to commit to change. Remind ASN clients that they are doing the right thing. Remind them that leaving their pets will give them an opportunity to get on their feet, get healthy, and, will ultimately, be better for both the pets and the client. Remind them about what a good choice they have made for themselves and their families.

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FROM ASN CLIENTS

## 1 **Q** | *May I visit my pet while it is in ASN?*

**A** | No. An ASN client may not visit their pet during the contract period. There are two reasons for this: First, the pet may get more stressed by seeing the owner without being able to go home. Secondly, in order to protect confidentiality, spcaLA does not allow foster parents and clients to meet.

## 2 **Q** | *What about my pet's medical/veterinary needs?*

**A** | All pets entering ASN are vaccinated, if no proof of vaccinations is available. All pets will be sterilized unless the vet staff deems that the surgery would negatively impact the pet's health or well-being. In the case of an emergency, the ASN client will be contacted to make a decision about the pet's needs. If the client cannot be reached or if time is of the essence in making a decision, the vet staff will make the best choice in an effort to save the pet.

## 3 **Q** | *Where will my pet stay?*

**A** | spcaLA tries to put all ASN pets in foster care. If the pet cannot be placed in foster care, the pet is kept in an undisclosed shelter location. All pet whereabouts are kept confidential for safety reasons.



**4** **Q** | *Will the foster parents want to keep my pet?*

**A** | ASN foster parents are trained and understand the sensitivity of the ASN program. Although foster parents may become attached to an ASN pet, they are well aware of their responsibility, as foster parents, to return the pet.

**5** **Q** | *What if I need more time?*

**A** | If the client needs to extend the ASN contract, he or she must contact the ASN coordinator before the contract expires. All contract extensions are considered on a case-by-case basis, depending on the needs of the pet and the client. spcaLA frequently grants one additional six-week extension, when needed.



**6** **Q** | *What if I want to pick my pet up earlier than the contract date?*

**A** | Of course this is okay! However, clients are asked to give the ASN coordinator 48-hours notice in order to get the pet back from foster care.

**7** **Q** | *What if I have a unique pet (not a dog or cat)?*

**A** | The ASN program views ALL pets as important members of the family. spcaLA does not discriminate against any kind of pet. However, ASN will only take in the kinds of pets that the shelter is able to handle appropriately. **Note:** a horse would be too much for some shelters to accommodate, but a local stable might be willing to work with an organization and house the horse. The operating organization representative must determine what those limitations will be.

**8** **Q** | *Who do I keep in contact with?*

**A** | ASN clients should maintain contact with the ASN coordinator only. Limit the amount of contact points for the clients. It is an easier transition for them to speak to the same one or two persons. **Note:** Provide a phone number and email address, and keep in mind that clients may need to contact the coordinator on the weekend or after normal business hours. spcaLA recommends having a cell phone number to give clients so that messages can be returned promptly.

# WORKING WITH ASN PETS

## NECESSITIES TO CONSIDER BEFORE ACCEPTING AN ASN PET

Prior to taking on any ASN pet, consider the following:

- 1** Who will be responsible for the **daily care-taking** of the ASN pet?
- 2** Is there **adequate room** for the pet to stay? This could mean kennel space at the shelter, appropriate foster care or a local boarding facility.
- 3** Does staff have the **appropriate training** to handle a difficult ASN pet?
- 4** How will **food** be provided? Will foster parents be responsible for purchasing food or will the shelter provide it?
- 5** Does staff have the **appropriate medical resources** to work with the ASN pet?

If unable to provide adequate care, proper housing, or to meet medical or training needs, do not accept the pet into the program. Although it is important to help DV clients, the ability to properly care for the pet is the agency's primary responsibility.



# PET INTAKE

Once all of the ASN intake forms are completed and the client has dropped off the pet, the agency is now responsible for the care and well-being of that pet until it returns to its family. Upon arriving at the facility, the pet should immediately be checked in by a veterinary staff member or veterinary office. The following is how spcaLA chooses to check in ASN pets; it is recommended to follow these guidelines and, of course, make any necessary additions that may be required.

If the veterinary staff determines, upon check-in, that possible animal cruelty or abuse has occurred, they should be required to document and report that abuse to the proper authorities.



## When pets come to ASN, they receive:

### Updated vaccinations

Review any veterinary documents the client might have brought in order to avoid unnecessary over-vaccination.

If the client has signed a medical release form for the pet's current veterinarian, contact that veterinarian for updated medical records. Give Form 004 to the veterinary staff checking the pet in.

### Comprehensive blood work

For dogs, spcaLA uses a Total Body Function (TBF) test.

For cats, spcaLA uses a CAT Scan (which includes the FELV and FIV tests).

This blood work helps to determine any underlying issues so that they may be treated immediately, if necessary. The agency's veterinarian will know the best blood work selection to utilize depending on the pet's age or current physical condition.

### A microchip

The microchip should be registered to the agency and the plastic tag attached to the pet's collar. When the client picks up the pet, provide instructions on how to change the registration information.

### ID Change

ASN pets are given a new name, collar and a generic ASN identification tag.

### Spay or neuter surgery

This is a requirement of the program. The only time it is waived is when a veterinarian determines that the pet would be at risk to undergo surgery due to health concerns.

*During check-in, your veterinary staff should also determine if the pet has special dietary needs.*

## ***Renaming and Retagging an ASN Pet***

Due to the sensitive and potentially dangerous nature of housing an ASN pet, every pet that enters the ASN program is renamed. ASN paperwork reflects the real information; however, kennel sheets or information given to foster families only shows the pet's temporary name. This prevents shelter staff or the foster family from accidentally using the pet's real name.

spcaLA also removes the pet's collar and ID tags for the duration of the pet's stay in the ASN program. The collar and ID tags are stored in the client's file and returned to the owner when the pet is reunited with the client. Tags are replaced with the pet's microchip tag and a generic ASN ID tag with the shelter manager's telephone number.

## ***Housing a Pet***

After completing the medical intake, the next step is to determine which type of housing - the shelter or foster care - is the ideal place for the pet. Often, this decision will change over time. Many pets have not slept in many days when they first come in, or are terrified, hungry, confused or aggressive. Often they just need a couple of days to sleep and acclimate.

If the choice is to house the pet at the shelter, keep it out of the adoptions area. It is best to keep the pet housed in a section of the shelter that is not accessible to the public.

If the ASN pet can be given a couple of days to settle at the shelter, it will give the pet's advocate an opportunity to get to know their true personality and aid in deciding which foster home, if any, would be the best fit. Some factors to consider for foster placement are: the pet's friendliness towards strangers and/or children, health considerations, overall behaviors, and dietary needs.



# GETTING TO KNOW THE PET



## Possible Pet Abuse

If a pet enters ASN and shows signs of abuse (or if the client admitted to witnessing animal abuse) have the veterinarian document all noted injuries. If the abuse is severe, local animal control or police department should be notified for investigation. In addition, if the client returns to the abuser the pet should not be returned to the client, as is stated in the initial contract. Pets who have experienced or witnessed abuse may show some difficulties in adjusting to the new environment.

## Common Problems Seen In ASN Pets

**General Health Problems:** Pets from violent households may have medical problems that require special attention. Often these pets have gone untreated in unhealthy situations and may have skin problems, hair loss, urine stains, severely matted fur, special dietary needs, upper respiratory problems, etc. Fosters must be made aware of any medical conditions and/or medications the pets need. Foster homes may not feel comfortable taking pets with heavy medical needs.

**Eating Disorders:** Abused pets have often lacked routine feedings and, in some cases, have been deprived of food and water for long periods of time. As a result, some pets have eating disorders such as refusing to eat in front of people or quickly gulping down food. If it is suspected that an

ASN pet has food or resource guarding issues, ask a professional trainer to develop a behavior modification plan for the pet. Be very careful in sending this kind of pet out to a foster home, and do not send it to a foster home with children.

**Behavior Problems:** Some pets may have little or no training, or they may be fearful of people. Other pets may only fear specific people (e.g., only men, only women, etc.) depending on who the abuser was. The pets may have been hurt or yelled at for the most minor offenses or for no reason at all. Foster parents need to be made aware that ASN pets may have irrational fears of unknown situations and can behave erratically, especially in the beginning, when placed into new situations.

# WORKING WITH FOSTER FAMILIES

## RECRUITING

Finding responsible and committed foster parents is an important part of the ASN program. If the agency has a foster program in place, spcaLA suggests utilizing familiar foster parents. If no foster program exists, spcaLA suggests beginning by developing criteria for accepting ASN foster parents. When accepting new fosters for ASN be sure to consider the following:

- 1** | The potential foster parent's living situation (i.e.: house, apartment, yard, etc).
- 2** | The location of the potential foster parent (*foster volunteers from different areas are needed because ASN pets are never placed in the same community as the abuser*).
- 3** | The abilities of the foster parent (*i.e.: a large dog with hip dysplasia should not go to an elderly couple that cannot lift the dog*).
- 4** | How potential foster parents feel about the program as a whole (*i.e.: avoid a foster parent that believes an ASN pet should never be returned to its owner*).

All foster parents for ASN are required to attend a long-term foster class (see Appendix P) and sign a foster care agreement, prior to fostering any ASN pet.



## CONFIDENTIALITY WAIVER

As part of ASN's strict confidentiality, foster parents are required to fill out personal information sheets and sign confidentiality waivers, found in Appendix O. This waiver holds the foster parents accountable for upholding the integrity and confidentiality of the ASN program.

## ORIENTATION

Foster parents are also required to attend an orientation class designed to discuss the care of long-term foster pets. This information can be added to an existing foster orientation or shared with volunteers who are specifically interested in long-term fostering. Orientation information, along with a sample stand-alone PowerPoint presentation for long-term fostering, can be found in Appendix P.

## MOVING FORWARD

Once foster parents have completed the paperwork and orientation, they are ready to foster! Be sure to provide them with:

- All necessary contact information.

- A 24-hour number in case of emergencies.

- Any behavior information that was provided by the client or was learned through interactions at the shelter.

## MONTHLY CHECK-INS

While the pet is in foster, be sure to continuously follow up on its well-being. Foster parents should be responsible for bringing the pet back to the shelter for a monthly health exam and weigh-in. Keeping ASN pets healthy is an important part of the program. Because foster families routinely see the pet, issues like excessive weight loss or weight gain, might be missed and could be symptomatic of underlying issues. In addition, veterinary staff can reapply flea preventative, update vaccines, or make changes to the pet's diet. Monthly check-ins can help prevent major health issues from surfacing. Monthly check-ins also help keep the foster in close contact with the shelter.



## UPDATES

Request that the foster family send email updates on the pet, including pictures if possible. Providing the client with pictures and updates on the pet's well-being can be very comforting and motivating for the client and his or her children. To maintain confidentiality, all communication about the pet should go through the ASN coordinator, and pictures or emails should not include any distinguishing features or descriptions that might disclose the pet's location.

# MATCHING ASN PETS WITH FOSTER PARENTS



Making a correct pairing of an ASN pet and foster parent is essential. Things to consider when making the foster connection:

- 1** | The **health and/or medical needs** of the pet vs. the health and ability (or experience) of the foster parent(s).
- 2** | The **behavior** of the ASN pet vs. the foster home environment. Is the pet good with kids, other dogs, or cats? Do not send the pet into a foster home that is not in synch with the pet's behavior. spcaLA suggests doing a behavioral assessment on any pet being placed in a foster home.

- 3** | How **bonded** are multiple pets? spcaLA recommends not separating any pets that are considered bonded – instead, find a foster parent who can accommodate the two (or more) pets.
- 4** | The **dietary needs** of the pet. Can the foster parent accommodate them?
- 5** | The type of **environment** the pet needs. For example, many ASN adult cats simply need a quiet place to decompress. A house full of children would not be ideal.
- 6** | The pet's size, age, or species.
- 7** | The severity of the abusive situation and the dependability/experience of the volunteer.
- 8** | The city the abuser lives in is different than where the abuse occurred.
- 9** | How high profile the ASN case is. Could an interested or new foster parent be a friend of the abuser?
- 10** | Always accommodate a foster parent who determines that they cannot, for whatever reason, continue to foster that particular pet. Space should always be made available for the pet to return if necessary.
- 11** | Can the foster parent separate the ASN pet from their pets? Cats should always be kept separated from any other pet in the foster parent's house. Dogs, which can be more difficult to keep separate, should have a dog to dog intro before going into a home with another dog.

# ASN CHALLENGES

*As with any program, ASN has myriad challenges that, with proper foresight and planning, can be overcome. Below are a few challenges that can occur when running the ASN program.*

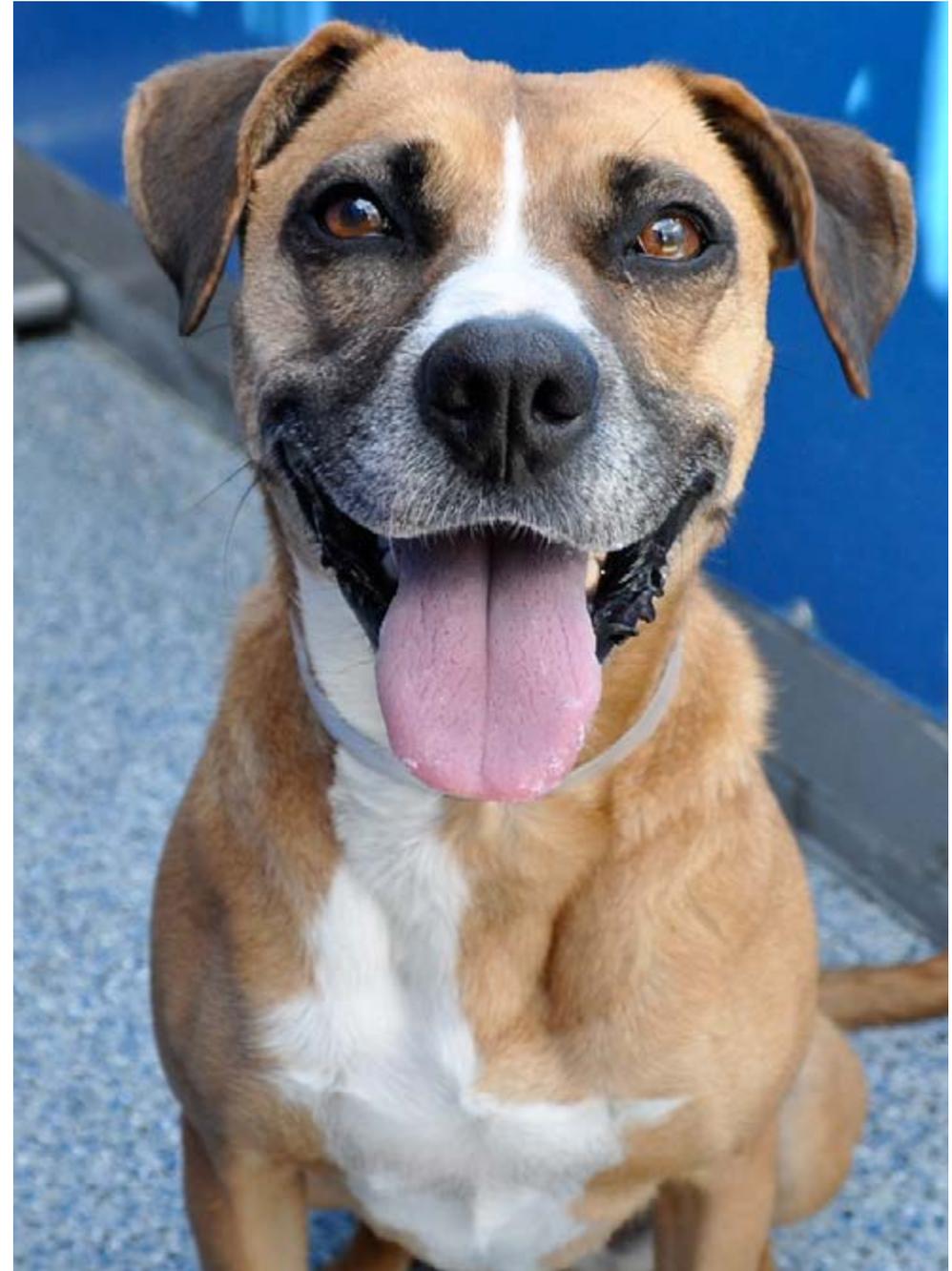
## **Safety**

Never go into any ASN situation where the abuser could be present. And, even in the “safest” of situations, it is wise for two people to perform the pickup of an ASN pet.

Although ASN clients are in need of help, it is possible that they are using drugs/ alcohol, in a state of panic, or can become easily agitated. With this program, it is always better to be safe than sorry. Create safety requirements and never allow a staff person to meet with an ASN client alone. Another suggestion is to become familiar with the local police stations. Good relationships with them should enable help from them in any potentially dangerous situation.

## **Non –Animal Advocates**

Many advocates don’t understand why pets should be considered a part of the DV process and may not initially see value in an ASN program. Don’t be discouraged by this! Take the time to discuss the research on the cycle of violence with them. In addition, remind them that as advocates, what matters most is what the clients value. Over time, those who at first didn’t support ASN become the program’s biggest advocates once they understand the importance of considering pets in DV situations.





### ***Housing (Proper Space):***

Due to the high level of pet intake and the ever-changing culture of the shelter, it is difficult to predict what the capacity for housing ASN pets will be at any given time. spcaLA does not have the luxury of having kennels assigned specifically for ASN pets. The amount of available kennel space can fluctuate and it is important to acknowledge any limitations that this might cause.

spcaLA recommends having foster families dedicated to the ASN program. Housing with foster families reduces space conflicts at the shelter and helps ensure the mental health and well-being of the ASN pet.

It is important to confirm that proper and adequate kennel space to house long-term residents is available before accepting pets into ASN.

## ***Continuing Collaborative Community Support***

Having domestic violence shelters involved is essential to the success of the program. They provide clients by promoting the program but the promotion is not so visible that it hinders the program. (Abusers should not know that the program exists.)

Often, there is a high turnover rate at DV shelters, and even though one person knew about ASN, it doesn't always mean that a few months later someone new is going to know about the program. It is worthwhile to refresh your master list annually.

It is recommended that DV shelters be contacted on a quarterly basis, reminding them of the ASN program and services. In subsequent years, calling 2-3 times a year should be sufficient. In doing this, however, please consider how much time it takes for staff members to place these calls. Along with the calls, mail or email of brochures also takes up time. Professional and reliable volunteers who are familiar with the program can be extremely helpful in this capacity.





## **Foster Challenges**

Fostering for ASN can give volunteers who don't have time for puppies or kittens the opportunity to foster (most ASN pets are adults).

Having reliable foster homes will benefit the ASN pet's transition by shortening the stay at the shelter as well as easing the pressure of having to house more pets in an already overpopulated shelter environment.

Foster parents are often very willing to assist with the ASN program. The difficulty is that many ASN pets need specific environments, which can make them difficult to place in "normal" homes. Due to the pet's previous circumstances, there can be limitations on the type of home in which an ASN pet can be placed.

For example, it may be determined that an ASN dog is best suited for a home with no children or other pets. This may be a difficult arrangement to find since many foster families have children and other pets. An older cat might need a quiet place to rest and decompress, and would do best in a home that will keep them separated from other cats in the house. Fosters in apartments with limited space may not be able to accommodate this.

The best solution is to recruit foster families with a variety of living environments. ASN clients and pets are dealt with on a case-by-case basis, and fostering is no exception. The larger and more diverse the pool of fosters, the more likely the right fit can be found.



## CONCLUSION

Creating and running an Animal Safety Net program can be a very challenging job. However, it is also extremely rewarding. Providing a safe haven for the pets of domestic violence survivors allows those survivors to begin creating better lives for themselves and their families without permanently separating the family unit.

Without this service, many people choose to stay in abusive homes so as not to leave their pets behind in a potentially dangerous situations.

If you have any questions about this manual or the Animal Safety Net program, please contact the Humane Education Department at [humaneeducation@socala.com](mailto:humaneeducation@socala.com) or (562)570-4909.



# APPENDICES

The following appendices contain information and forms that can be used to help create an Animal Safety Net program. Feel free to duplicate these forms, however, in accordance with standard publishing practices; the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Los Angeles (spcaLA) requires acknowledgment, in print, of any reproduced information.

**Appendix A:** Sample Introduction Letter

**Appendix B:** Brochure

**Appendix C:** Animal Safety Net Outreach Presentation

**Appendix D:** Staff Confidentiality Form

**Appendix E:** Request for Service Form

**Appendix F:** Pet Information Sheet

**Appendix G:** Temporary Placement Agreement

**Appendix H:** Medical Authorization

**Appendix I:** Contract Conclusion Reminder

**Appendix J:** Receiving Checklist

**Appendix K:** Releasing Pet Back to Owner

**Appendix L:** Client Survey

**Appendix M:** Correspondence and Case Notes

**Appendix N:** Contract Extension Agreement

**Appendix O:** Foster Care Agreement

**Appendix P:** Foster Orientation (sample Power Point presentation)



To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to you on behalf of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Los Angeles (spcaLA). spcaLA is a non-profit, 501(c)(3) animal welfare agency that is dedicated to the protection of animals. As you probably know, there is strong evidence that all types of violence are intertwined. Animal abuse, child abuse and domestic violence are closely linked, and this link strongly impacts our communities. spcaLA is dedicated to hosting a myriad of programs to help stop this cycle of violence.

One program offered by spcaLA is the Animal Safety Net (ASN). This program is designed to help families escape abusers by offering free, temporary, safe housing for their pets. Many domestic violence shelters do not allow pets to accompany an abused family. Many survivors of DV will choose not to leave an abuser if their pet will be left behind. Also, if an individual does decide to leave a pet behind, the abuser will often hurt that pet in an effort to maintain control over the victim. As the cycle of violence continues, the children in these situations who witness domestic violence or animal abuse, or who are being abused themselves, have a much higher risk of becoming future violent offenders.

Please, help us break this cycle! If your agency works with domestic violence cases, please inform your clients with pets of our program. The confidential phone number for potential ASN clients is (XXX) XXX-XXXX.

I would also like to extend an offer for a representative from our agency to come and speak about the most recent statistics on the cycle of violence, as well as give you more information about the ASN program. spcaLA aims to work closely with our community representatives in order to help save more lives—both human and pet.

Please contact me if you are interested in learning more about the cycle of violence and our ASN program. Also, please feel free to pass on a copy of this letter and the enclosed brochures to other local domestic violence shelters or law enforcement agencies. Thank you for your time and dedication to the community. I look forward to speaking with you.

Sincerely,

ASN Coordinator

**DOMESTIC VIOLENCE  
SURVIVORS SHOULD NOT  
HAVE TO REMAIN IN HOMES  
THAT ARE DANGEROUS FOR  
THEM OR THEIR ANIMALS.**



## PROGRAM GOALS

Animal Safety Net (ASN)<sup>™</sup> provides a safe haven for the pets of domestic violence survivors. When domestic violence occurs, pets are often threatened or harmed by the violent partner. By providing shelter and care for the pets, ASN helps survivors leave abusive homes and go to domestic violence shelters without the fear that their animals may be left behind in a dangerous environment.



*Dedicated to the prevention  
of cruelty to animals through  
**Education, Law Enforcement,  
Intervention, and Advocacy.***

5026 W JEFFERSON BLVD LOS ANGELES, CA 90016  
[www.spcaLA.com](http://www.spcaLA.com)

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**spcaLA**  
Friends for life.®

**ASN**<sup>™</sup>  
ANIMAL SAFETY NET

*A safe haven for pets and peace of  
mind for domestic violence survivors*

**(888) 527-772**

## UNDERSTANDING THE CYCLE OF VIOLENCE

**According to the US Department of Justice, there are over 3 million incidents of domestic violence each year in America.**

Many people do not realize that homes where spouses and children are neglected or abused are often shared by pets who also become victims. Abusers may neglect, threaten, torture and/or otherwise hurt these pets as a way to further harm and control their partners.

Because of the bond that often develops between owners and their animals, many survivors of domestic violence risk their lives to protect their pets by remaining in abusive relationships.



**PETS ARE NOW EXTENDED THE SAME BASIC PROTECTION AS INDIVIDUALS SUFFERING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE.**

*As of September 11, 2007, pets can be included in protective orders in the State of California.*

## HOW DOES THE PET GET TO THE SHELTER?

There are three places the pet transfer can take place:

- At the animal shelter (dropped off by the client);
- At a pre-designated, safe drop-off location;
- At the client's house, if it is safe to do so.

For more information, call (888) 527-7722.

***I never would have come out of the battering and stalking if you did not give me the only peace of mind I had. Thanks to your loving care for my cat, I had a tangible reason to fight [and] live.***

– DV survivor

## ASN PROVIDES:

- 1** | Free housing for pets while a person is in a domestic violence shelter.
- 2** | Veterinary care, vaccines, and a spay/neuter surgery for pets as needed.
- 3** | Housing for all types of pets.
- 4** | Housing for pets in safe, undisclosed locations.
- 5** | Photos of and periodic updates on the pets.

# 100%

of ASN clients said that knowing their animals were safe made it easier for them emotionally.

## CRITERIA FOR ACCEPTANCE INTO THE PROGRAM

We will do everything possible to make arrangements to temporarily house animals in need. Because we have limited resources, we are not able to accept referrals from the general public. Please do not ask the client to call us directly.

Our program accepts pets by referral from a domestic violence shelter counselor, hotline worker, police officer, social service agency, or private practice. The caseworker or client advocate must first make contact with ASN.

## HOW CAN YOU HELP?

**Become a Foster Parent.** Provide loving, safe temporary homes for ASN animals so that their owners may escape a dangerous situation without worry for their pets' safety. We provide everything you need!

**Donate.** spcaLA is an independent animal welfare organization. There is no national "SPCA" or humane society that provides support, nor do we receive government funding. Donations, from people like you, fund our humane programs. To donate, please visit [www.spcaLA.com](http://www.spcaLA.com).





# Animal Safety Net

## Pets and Family Violence



## Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, Los Angeles

- Originated in 1877 to protect horses;
- Went on to protect children;
- Relinquished the protection of children in order to focus on solely protecting pets.



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Friends for life.®

# What services does spcaLA offer?

## Sheltering

- Adoptions, Medical Care, Training

## Public Services

- Boarding and Grooming, Retail Operations; Training Classes

## Animal Protection Services

## Humane Education



# Locations

Administrative Building  
5026 W. Jefferson Blvd.  
Los Angeles, CA 90016

South Bay Shelter  
12910 Yukon Ave.  
Hawthorne, CA 90250

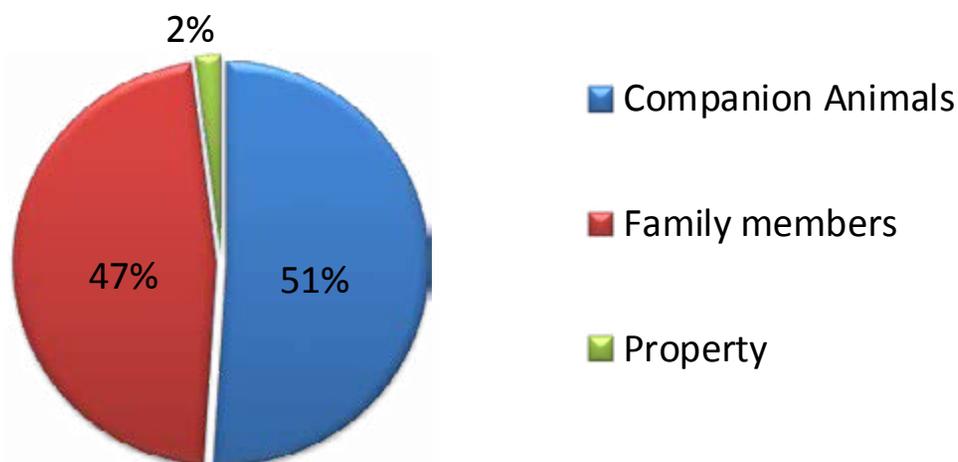
Long Beach Shelter  
7700 E. Spring St.  
Long Beach, CA 90805



# The Role of Pets in the U.S.

(AVMA, 2008)

**According to the AVMA:  
In the U.S. pets are considered...**



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# The Role of Pets in the U.S.

- \*More U.S. homes have pets than have children;
- \*Pet Industry is the 7<sup>th</sup> largest;
- \*More money is spent on pet food than baby food;
- \*Children are more likely to grow up with a pet than a father.

(\*AVMA, 2008)



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# The Role of Pets in the U.S.

\*Pets across the United States are:

- Primarily taken care of by women.
  - Studies have found that **72% of pets have primary caretakers who are women.**

\*Pets across the United States live in:

- Homes with children.
  - **64.1%** of homes with children under 6 have pets.
  - **74.8%** of homes with children over 6 have pets.

(\*AVMA, 2008)



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# Animal and Human Welfare: A Collaborative Effort



# Animal Welfare = Human Welfare

- Violence against pets has traditionally been disregarded because society values pets less than people.
- However, pets are viewed as an integral part of the family and, either directly or indirectly, are affected by domestic violence.



# Animal Welfare = Human Welfare

- Many studies have identified that the cycle of violence also includes pets.
- Phil Arkow and Frank Ascione (1999) have developed what is known as “The Link.”



# Children, Domestic Violence & Animal Abuse

\*Children exposed to domestic violence are:

- **3 times more likely** to be cruel to pets than children who have not been exposed to domestic violence.

\*Children who are cruel to pets are:

- **5 times more likely** to become violent offenders themselves and...
- **88%** of families reported for child abuse also had abused pets in the home.

(\*Ascione, 1999)



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# Animal Abuse and Interpersonal Violence



- Lee Malvo, one of two “D.C. snipers.”
- Sniper attacks went on for 3 weeks in October 2002.
- Killed 10 people and critically injured 3 in Washington, D.C. and surrounding areas.
- Enjoyed stalking stray cats and killing them with a slingshot.
- Was abused by his mother, including being beaten when his pet cat would sleep in his bed and get the sheets dirty.



# Animal Abuse and Interpersonal Violence

- Gary Ridgway, the “Green River Killer” in Seattle, WA.
- Murdered at least 49 women in the 1980s and '90s.
- Arrested in 2001.
- Growing up, witnessed violent arguments between his parents.
- Mother was very abusive.
- Enjoyed mutilating and killing small animals, including birds.
- Killed the family cat by suffocating it in a small refrigerator.
- Stabbed (but didn't kill) a 6-year-old boy when he was 16.



# Child Abuse and Animal Abuse

- David Lore, Jr. and Angela Lore
- Rockwell, North Carolina; 2011.
- Police responded to complaints of pets not being fed, dying in the house, and carcasses left on the side of the house.
- Police found four children, ages 7, 9, 14, and 16, living in filth in the home. They were never allowed to leave and had never attended school.



# Animal Welfare = Human Welfare

**\*1 million...**

animals are abused or killed in connection with domestic violence every year.

**\*74% of...**

pet-owning, female DV survivors reported that their pets had been threatened, injured or killed by the abuser.

(\*American Humane, 2001)



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# Domestic Violence and Animal Abuse

- Shawn Michael Rose II
- Clarksville, TN; October, 2011.
- 6-year history of domestic violence against girlfriend and girlfriend's mother.
- Threw girlfriend's rat terrier, Otis, into a group of trees, breaking two legs and sending him into shock.
- Broke the back of girlfriend's other dog by throwing it into the road and allowing it to be run over.
- Told girlfriend he would kill her if she left him.



# Animal Welfare = Human Welfare

- \*According to the American Humane Association, DV survivors collectively view animal abuse as “one more violent episode in a long history of indiscriminate violence aimed at them and their vulnerability.”
- \*Abusers may use a loved pet as a tool to control their partners or children.

(\*American Humane, 2001)



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## Domestic Violence and Animal Abuse: Bizzie

- California: Chelsea Higley was out with her friends one night in August 2013.
- Her boyfriend, Terrance, wanted her home and sent her 400 texts in 2.5 hours to come home.
- Terrance sent a warning text: "Watch what I do to Bizzie."
- Terrance threw Bizzie out of the 5<sup>th</sup> story window and videotaped the injury.
- Bizzie's skull was fractured and she died 12 days later.
  - Terrance was convicted and sentenced to 16 months in state prison, in addition to not being able to own an animal for 10 years.



# Animal and Human Welfare: A Collaborative Effort

- Cross reporting can become one of the most relevant forms of intervention because:
  - Animal abuse by children is one of the earliest warning signs of future violent behavior or conduct disorder.
  - Animal abuse is often the first type of abuse to be seen in a home. Discovery of that could lead to discovery of child or spousal abuse as well.



# Animal Safety Net



# What is Animal Safety Net (ASN)?

- ASN provides a temporary home for the pets of domestic violence survivors, allowing survivors and their children the opportunity to seek refuge without the fear that their pets will be injured, tortured, killed, or used as a coercive tactic to manipulate the family.



# What is Animal Safety Net (ASN)?

- Protects pets from further harm;
- Gives domestic violence survivors a better chance at successfully leaving;
- Keeps families together in times of crisis.
- If DV survivors are forced to leave their pets behind, the family unit is damaged!



# American Humane Association (2001) found...

- Women from domestic violence situations may live in their cars for up to four months instead of leaving a pet behind.
- Pets serve integral roles in the development of many children. Children often identify with the pet who is left behind!



# ASN Criteria

- Must have pet;
- Must be entering into a shelter;
- Confirmation with an advocate is mandatory.



# Contacting ASN

- Referred by an advocate to the hotline machine: (XXX) XXX-XXXX
- Answered Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.
- During business hours – usually no more than 30 minutes for a return call.



# Contracts

- Client must sign a contract.
  - pet is relinquished to spcaLA if the client defaults.
- Client must sign medical release.
  - pets are sterilized, updated on vaccines, and microchipped.



# Transportation to the Shelter

- Pets get to the shelter in a variety of ways:
  - Animal Protection Services department;
  - ASN Coordinator/Shelter Manager;
  - Client;
  - Friend/Parent of Client;
  - Police.



# One Housing Option...

- The Animal Shelter
  - Behavior and Training Department;
  - Medical Department;
  - Hundreds of volunteers;
  - Reliable staff;
  - Outdoor grassy areas;
  - Indoor/outdoor kennels.



# Another Housing Option...

- Foster Homes
  - All foster parents go through training;
  - Contact with the foster parent is regular;
  - Foster families send pictures;
  - Pets are fostered in a different city than the abuser.



# Housing for ASN pets

- We look at all the different variables:
  - Health;
  - Behavior;
  - Size;
  - Family availability;
  - Severity of the situation.



# An ASN Client May...

- Call to check in on their pet any time. (They will be given a direct contact number.)
- Receive updated emails/faxes/mailings with pictures, upon request.
- Pick up their pet earlier than the contract date, with 48 hours notice.

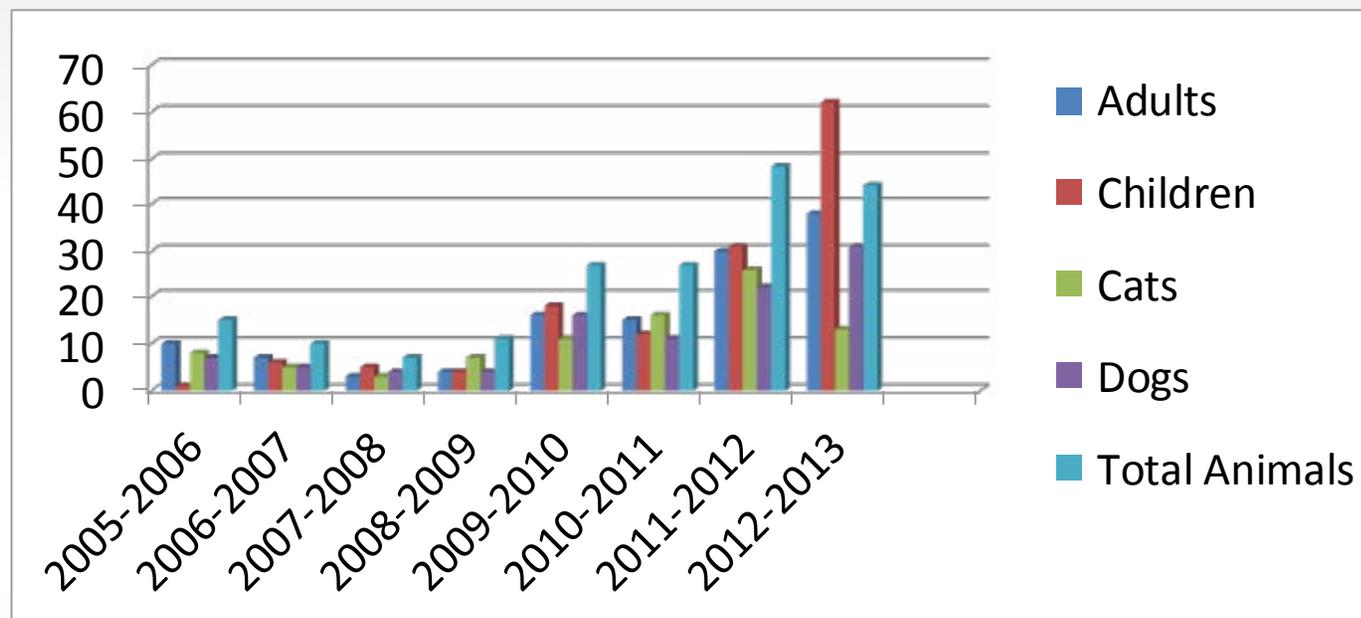


# An ASN Client May Not...

- Send someone in to pick up the pet without prior consent.
- Come and visit the pet. For two reasons:
  - Confidentiality between client and foster parent prohibits a meeting;
  - Visiting the pet in the shelter is detrimental to the pet.

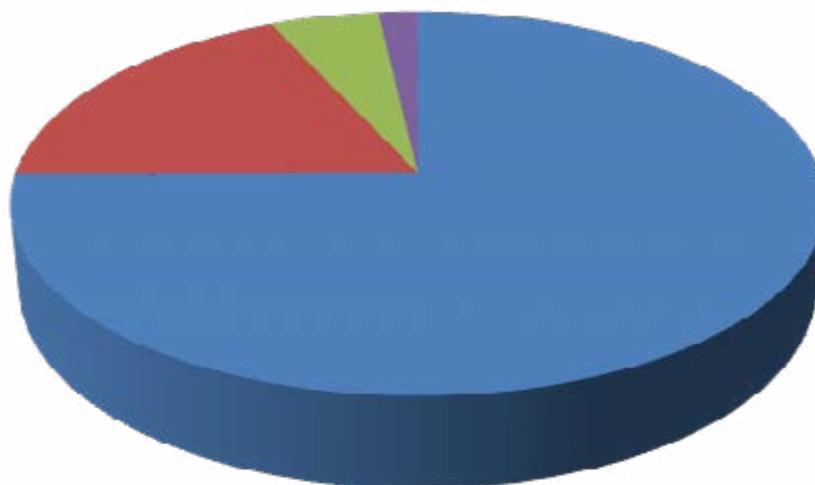


# Yearly ASN Intakes



# ASN Pet Outcomes

2004-Present



- Return to Owner (74.32%)
- Relinquished and Adopted (18%)
- Euthanized (4.9%)
- Sent to Rescue (1.8%)



# ASN Testimonials

“Thanks for what you do for the pets of battered people. He would have starved them if I left the dogs with him. And, of course I couldn't have that happen so I never would have left.”

“Thank you, thank you, thank you! I miss the girls terribly, and cannot wait to be reunited with them. In such an ugly situation, it is the silver lining. It keeps me strong!”



# ASN Testimonials

“We cannot thank you enough for such kindness and true humane gestures. I am forever thankful to your institution and the foster parents for [our dogs'] care. When we picked them up, we knew how well they had been taken care of.... Their love and the light in their eyes were as when we used to live together peacefully. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts.”



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# Need to Know ASN Information

# What can advocates do?

- Ask! (And understand, even if YOU don't care for pets.)
- Inform the client about ASN and that pets can be placed on restraining orders (since 2007).
- Change intake forms.
- Seek pet-friendly transitional housing.



# What can YOU do?

- Report animal abuse: investigation of animal abuse is often the first point of intervention.
- Become a long-term foster parent.
- Begin redefining animal abuse as family violence.
- Educate others about the cycle of violence.



# Resources

- Animal Protection Services: (XXX) XXX-XXXX
- Latham Foundation: [www.LathamFoundation.org](http://www.LathamFoundation.org)
- National Link Coalition <http://nationallinkcoalition.org>
- LAPD's Animal Cruelty Task Force: (XXX) XXX-XXXX



CONFIDENTIAL



### **Staff Confidentiality Agreement**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, understand that in the course of my employment, I may have access to and become acquainted with confidential information applicable to the Animal Safety Net program (ASN). As a member of the support staff for the program, I agree to and understand the following conditions and requirements:

- I agree not to divulge the location of the domestic violence shelter or ASN shelter or main office to unauthorized persons at any time. I will seek advice, and/or authorization from an ASN representative prior to disclosing the ASN location.
- I agree not to divulge the names or locations of any additional sheltering sites associated with Animal Safety Net.
- I agree not to divulge the names of Animal Safety Net clients, nor to disclose any information regarding those clients that may in any way identify them.
- I agree not to have personal, social or business contact with any person who has been a client of Animal Safety Net within the past year, except as providing services related to animal welfare.

I agree that I will not disclose any of the above information directly or indirectly, or use it in any way, either during the term of my employment or at any time thereafter, except when required in the course of my employment with the agency.

I understand that any violation of this confidentiality agreement incurred through my actions will result in disciplinary action and/or termination of my employment, and/or any other legal remedy available to spcaLA. I acknowledge receipt and retention of this signed agreement.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Home phone \_\_\_\_\_ Work phone \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Witness (Supervisor) \_\_\_\_\_

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ASN # \_\_\_\_\_

SS# \_\_\_\_\_

**Request for Service Form**

<b>DATE</b>	<b>TIME</b>	<b>CLIENT'S NAME</b>
<b>PHONE</b>		Is it okay to leave a message? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>EMAIL</b>		<b>ALTERNATE CONTACT</b>
<b>CONTACT #</b>		<b>RELATIONSHIP</b>

What is the primary language spoken by the client? \_\_\_\_\_

How many dependent children does client have? \_\_\_\_\_

Name of person/shelter that referred client to ASN: \_\_\_\_\_

Which DV shelter is client going to? \_\_\_\_\_

Advocate's name: \_\_\_\_\_ Advocate's phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Does client have a restraining order that includes the pet(s)?  Yes  NoMay we have a copy of it?  Yes  NoHas the abuser, or anyone in your home, ever threatened, injured, or killed any of your pets?  Yes  NoIf yes, how was your pet threatened, injured, or killed? By who (the abuser, a parent, children, etc.)?  
\_\_\_\_\_

What city does the client/abuser live in? \_\_\_\_\_

How many pets need shelter? \_\_\_\_\_ Type of pet(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Please provide physical description of pet(s) (*color, size, etc.*)  
\_\_\_\_\_**PET DROP-OFF****Who** will drop off pet(s)?**When** will the pet(s) arrive?**PET PICK-UP**

Will there be anyone with client at the time of pick-up?

 Yes  NoExact location (*be as specific as possible*)  
\_\_\_\_\_Description of client (*physical appearance, clothing*):  
\_\_\_\_\_

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### Pet Information Sheet

	PET A		PET B		PET C	
Name						
Species <i>(dog, cat, other)</i>						
Breed						
Color						
Age						
Sex	<input type="checkbox"/> Male	<input type="checkbox"/> Female	<input type="checkbox"/> Male	<input type="checkbox"/> Female	<input type="checkbox"/> Male	<input type="checkbox"/> Female
Spayed/ neutered?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Housetrained?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Microchipped?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Brand of food?						
Feeding schedule	AMOUNT	FREQUENCY	AMOUNT	FREQUENCY	AMOUNT	FREQUENCY

#### Is pet friendly towards:

Children	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Strangers	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Cats	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Dogs	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

Please explain any "No" answers:

Have the pet(s) had vaccinations?  Yes  No

VET'S NAME	PHONE	CITY

Are there any behavioral issues we should know about, e.g. separation anxiety (*such as excessive crying or destruction of property*) when left alone?

Are there any other behavioral issues or other special considerations for the above pet(s)? If yes, please describe:

Are there any special medical conditions, current medication, allergies or special dietary needs that we should be aware of for the above pet(s)? If yes, please describe:

**I certify that all information I have provided is true, complete, and correct.**

PRINT NAME	SIGNATURE	DATE

Animal Safety Net

Form 002

CONFIDENTIAL



### Temporary Placement Agreement for Owned Pets

Please read and initial each of the following:

I, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby relinquish my pet(s) to the Animal Safety Net (ASN) program for temporary placement and understand and agree to the following:

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. **The initial placement agreement is to allow 72 hours to enter into a DV shelter. I understand that if I do not find a DV shelter within this set time frame, I will need to reclaim my pet(s) by the stipulated date or my pet(s) will be considered *permanently relinquished*. The initial contract date begins on \_\_\_\_\_ and ends on \_\_\_\_\_.**
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. **Once I have found a DV shelter, I understand that my contract will begin on \_\_\_\_\_ and end on \_\_\_\_\_. Should I not reclaim my pet(s) by \_\_\_\_\_, my pet(s) will be considered *permanently relinquished to spcaLA*. I understand that I may request an extension to my contract, but *realize my request may be denied*.**
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. ASN will return my pet(s) only to myself. If I am unable to retrieve my pet(s), I will designate a person to take my place, and I must notify an ASN representative beforehand.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. I will provide the ASN representative with accurate and honest information concerning the health and temperament of my pet(s).
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. I authorize the ASN program to prescribe for, vaccinate, groom and/or provide basic preventive care for my pet(s). I understand ASN representatives will determine the acceptable level of care for my pet(s), and will perform any and all procedures it considers therapeutically and/or diagnostically necessary. In the event that my pet(s) need(s) special services, medications or life saving procedures, I understand that ASN representatives will make reasonable attempts to contact me, but may do whatever is necessary for the health and safety of my pet(s).
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Should it be discovered that my pet is severely ill or injured, I will be notified immediately. It shall be my decision alone to reclaim my pet or have him/her euthanized. I authorize the ASN program to euthanize my pet due to illness or injury if: (1) an **emergency** medical situation arises and, in the opinion of ASN, my pet is suffering, or (2) I have been contacted by an ASN representative about my pet's condition and fail to return calls or correspondence.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. I understand ASN's staff and volunteers will use all reasonable precautions against injury, escape or harm to my pet(s). I also understand that my pet(s) may be exposed to infectious disease or injury as a result of being housed near other pets.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. I understand and agree that my pet(s) may be placed at a shelter, in a boarding facility, a vet's office, or with a qualified foster volunteer. I understand that all placement information is confidential and that the name, phone number and/or address of the pet's whereabouts will not be released to me.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. I will not hold ASN, staff or volunteers liable for any illness or injury that my pet(s) might incur. Should ASN choose to kennel my pet(s), I will not hold any such shelter, kennel or vet's office or their staff liable for any illness or injury that my pet(s) might incur.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. I will keep any information concerning the location of my pet(s) and the ASN program confidential.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. In order to protect confidentiality, only myself and my case worker shall be in contact with ASN.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. ASN has the right to return my pet(s) to me at any time for any reason.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. **I will provide an ASN representative with at least 48 hours notice** if I wish to reclaim my pet(s) prior to the date established on this agreement.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. **I understand that it is my responsibility to notify ASN if I change housing. It is not the responsibility of ASN to locate me when it is time to relocate my pet(s). If I change locations and do not notify ASN or contact ASN by my contract end, I understand my pet(s) will be considered abandoned and permanently relinquished.**
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. In the event ASN determines my pet(s) has(have) been abused, by law, staff may be unable to return my pet(s) to me pending further investigation. The pet will be deemed impounded pursuant to penal code 597.1.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 16. In the event that ASN determines a pet has been injured or abused, ASN reserves the right not to release the animal to me if I decide to return to and/or live with the person who formerly injured/hurt/killed my pet(s).

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### Temporary Placement Agreement for Owned Pets

The pets entering into ASN'S temporary placement contract are as follows:

NAME OF PET	SPECIES/BREED	AGE

I certify that I have read, fully understand, and accept all terms of this agreement.

PRINT NAME	SIGNATURE	DATE

*In addition:*

Do you think the abuser will try to find the pet(s)?  Yes  No  Don't know

For security and safety reasons, please provide the name and a description of the batterer, as well as a description of any vehicle he/she may drive:

Do you have a picture of the abuser that we can keep or copy?  Yes  No

Animal Safety Net

Form 003 - 02

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**Medical Authorization**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, owner or authorized agent of the pet(s) named below:

NAME OF PET	SPECIES/BREED	AGE

I hereby authorize Animal Safety Net to administer the following treatments to my pet(s):  
(please check all that apply)

- Spay/neuter procedure as required                       Vaccinations  
 Emergency surgical treatment if needed                       Microchip  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_                       Grooming (if needed)

I also consent to the administration of necessary anesthetics for these procedures. I understand that no guarantee of successful results is made in the event Animal Safety Net treats my pet. I understand that there are risks associated with all treatments and procedures, and I will not hold Animal Safety Net, employees or caretakers liable for any complications that arise.

PRINT NAME	SIGNATURE	DATE

**VETERINARIAN RELEASE**

I give my permission to \_\_\_\_\_  
*Veterinarian/Clinic*

to release any and all medical records for my pet(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
*Pet(s) name(s)*

to Animal Safety Net.

PRINT NAME	SIGNATURE	DATE

Animal Safety Net

Form 004

**CONFIDENTIAL****Contract Conclusion Reminder**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

This is a reminder that your contract with Animal Safety Net (ASN) for your pet(s)

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is coming to an end on \_\_\_\_\_.

It is up to **you** to contact ASN at (888) 527-7722 to make arrangements to reclaim your pet(s) by this date. If we have not heard from you by 5:00 p.m. on \_\_\_\_\_, we will consider the pet(s) abandoned and permanently relinquished to ASN and will do whatever we feel is in the best interest of the pet(s).

We regret that we cannot house your pet(s) indefinitely, however, we have many others in need of our temporary services. Our primary concern is that all the pet(s) have the best quality of life possible. If we can assist you in any way with making your decision or any arrangements, please let us know.

Sincerely,

Animal Safety Net

CC: \_\_\_\_\_  
Shelter Advocate

**CONFIDENTIAL****Receiving Checklist**

<b>CLIENT</b>	<b>PHONE NUMBER</b>
<b>THIRD PARTY CONTACT</b>	<b>PHONE NUMBER</b>

**ASN STAFF MEMBER(S)**

- Explained to owner that they must reclaim pet(s) by the contract date:  Yes  No
- Pet Information (form 002) completed by owner?  Yes  No
- Agreement (form 003) signed by owner?  Yes  No
- Medical release (form 004) signed by owner?  Yes  No
- Photo ID copied and attached?  Yes  No
- Home ID tags taken off and ASN IDs attached?  Yes  No
- All items entering into ASN are labeled and stored?  Yes  No

If yes, where are they stored? \_\_\_\_\_

**GIVEN TO CLIENT:**

- Copy of Form 002 (Pet Information)  Yes  No
- Copy of Form 003 (Agreement)  Yes  No
- Copy of Form 004 (Medical release)  Yes  No
- Copy of Form 005 (Contract conclusion reminder)  Yes  No

In any of the above were answered NO, please explain here:

Please list all items that the client left for their pet(s):

Tagged with ASN # \_\_\_\_\_

Location of pets \_\_\_\_\_

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Form 006

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### Releasing Pet Back to Owner

DATE IN	DATE RELEASED
BY ASN STAFF	
OWNER NAME	
TELEPHONE NUMBER	ADDRESS
NAME(S) OF PET(S)	
TYPE(S) OF PET(S) <i>Breed and description</i>	

Photo ID checked and approved	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Written/verbal consent of owner if non-owner pick-up	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Photo ID checked and copied if non-owner pick-up	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Medical records given to owner	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

Additional treatment administered *(use back for additional information)*

**I have received my pet(s) on \_\_\_\_\_ and have read and understand the information on this form.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Owner Signature

**OR**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Authorized Non-Owner Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Driver's License #

Animal Safety Net

Form 007

**CONFIDENTIAL****Client Survey**

Dear Client,

We hope that you were satisfied with the service provided to you in caring for your pet(s). In order to ensure that we continue to offer quality services, we would appreciate it if you could take a few minutes to fill out the simple questionnaire below.

Thank you.

1. If you had not been able to place your pet(s) with Animal Safety Net, would you still have gone into the domestic violence shelter?

Yes       No

2. How many pets did you place with Animal Safety Net? \_\_\_\_\_

3. How long did your pet(s) remain in the care of Animal Safety Net? \_\_\_\_\_

4. Had anyone in your home ever hit, kicked, shoved or hurt your pet(s) in any way?

Yes       No

If you answered yes, who hurt the pet(s), and what did they do?

5. If you had left your pet(s) in the home, what do you think would have happened to them?

6. If you have children, do you think that being reunited with their pet(s) will help them emotionally?

Yes       No

7. Did it make it easier for you emotionally to know that your pet(s) were in a safe place while you were in the shelter?

Yes       No

8. Did having a photograph of your pet(s) comfort you while you were in the shelter?

Yes       No





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### Contract Extension Agreement

I, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby request Animal Safety Net to extend my temporary placement agreement for my pet(s).

The initial contract period: \_\_\_\_\_  
*Initial beginning and ending dates*

This contract has been extended until \_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*

**My pet(s) will be considered permanently relinquished to spcaLA if I do not reclaim them by this date. I understand that spcaLA does not guarantee future placement of relinquished pets.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Initial*

I understand that all terms and agreements of the original temporary placement agreement continue during the extension period.

I certify that I have read, fully understand and accept all terms of this agreement.

OWNER SIGNATURE	DATE
AUTHORIZING ASN STAFF MEMBER (INITIALS)	DATE

Please list pets below:

NAME OF PET	SPECIES/BREED	AGE

# CONFIDENTIAL



## ***Information for Foster Care Parents***

Animal Safety Net (ASN) provides a safe haven for the pets of domestic violence survivors. When domestic violence occurs, pets are often threatened or harmed by the violent partner. By providing care for the pets, ASN helps survivors leave an abusive home and go to a domestic violence shelter without the fear that their pets are left behind in a potentially dangerous environment.

Role as an ASN Foster Parent:

### **CARE**

Volunteers are responsible for their foster's day to day care. Should you believe that your foster pet(s) need(s) medical attention, please contact the emergency medical coordinator at (XXX) XXX-XXXX.

### **PICTURES**

Pictures let the client know that their pet(s) is (are) doing well. Just a few words about how the foster pet is doing or a snapshot can mean a great deal to a person who has gone through the trauma of domestic violence. You may bring or e-mail a picture to the Director of Humane Education so it can be forwarded to the client. Please do not include any information about the pet's whereabouts or identifying landmarks in pet photos.

### **RETURN OF THE PET**

Foster volunteers must return their foster pet to ASN on the agreed upon date. If there are any changes to the return date, we will try to give you at least 48 hours notice.

### **RELINQUISHMENT**

There may be some cases in which the client will decide, for personal reasons, that it is best to place the pet for adoption. In such cases, foster volunteers will be asked to return the pet to the shelter.

Thank you for being a part of this important process. You are helping us to provide a valuable service within the community. We could not begin to imagine ASN surviving without your critical participation. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call.

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### ***Special Considerations for Pets Coming from Violent Homes***

A pet coming from a violent home has often also suffered as a survivor of abuse. Although we don't often see pets with severe problems, it is important to recognize it can occur. We always inform foster parents of the information we have received from the client regarding the pet's behavior. Also, if there is any concern about the pet, we have a trainer test the pet's temperament before recommending for placement in a foster home.

Some of the problems associated with abuse:

#### **GENERAL HEALTH PROBLEMS**

Pets from violent households may have medical problems that require special attention. You may have to learn how to carefully examine the pet that you are fostering and administer daily medications as directed by the ASN veterinary staff.

#### **EATING DISORDERS**

Abused pets have often lacked routine feedings and in some cases have been deprived of food and water for long periods of time. As a result, some pets have eating disorders where the pet will refuse to eat in front of you or will quickly gulp down food.

#### **BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS**

Some pets may have little or no training, or may be fearful of people. Other pets may only fear specific people (i.e., only men, only women, etc.) depending on who the abuser was. The pet may have been hurt or yelled at for the most minor offense or no reason at all. Working with a pet who has been in an abusive situation requires a large amount of time. However, your efforts to establish a good rapport with the pet will tremendously benefit not only the pet but the pet's owner as well.

Specific questions pertaining to training and behavior can be referred to ASN staff. We will do whatever we can to support you in your relationship with your foster pet.

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### Animal Safety Net Foster Care Agreement

---

 NAME
 

---



---

 ADDRESS
 

---



---

 DAYTIME PHONE

---

 EVENING PHONE
 

---



---

 EMAIL
 

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This agreement is made between Animal Safety Net (ASN), a program of Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Los Angeles, a California Corporation, and \_\_\_\_\_  
 (hereinafter) known as "the Foster Parent" for the Animal Safety Net program).

#### The parties agree that:

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. The Foster Parent shall provide the foster pet(s) with good care, clean and secure shelter and access to food and water. Foster pet(s) should be kept apart from the Foster Parent's pet. The Foster Parent will also administer medication when recommended by the spcaLA staff veterinarian.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. The pet(s) shall remain sole property of spcaLA.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. The pet(s) shall be returned to ASN at any time upon ASN request. ASN has the right to terminate foster care without notice and may provide transportation for the return of the pet(s).
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. The ASN Foster Parent understands and acknowledges that s/he does not have any right or authority to keep the foster pet.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Agents of the ASN and spcaLA will be allowed to conduct reasonable and unannounced inspections of the premises in which the pet(s) are being housed to determine the suitability of those premises for the care and maintenance of the pet(s), prior to and during the duration of the agreement.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. The Foster Parent understands and acknowledges that s/he does not have any right or authority to place foster pet(s) in other homes or places with other individuals. The Foster Parent shall return all foster care pet(s) to ASN for housing when going on vacation, out of town or for any other reason that would render the Foster Parent to be unable to care for the pet(s). The Foster Parent shall provide ASN with 48 hours notice.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. The Foster Parent has the right to terminate the foster care for any reason with 48 hours notice to the correct staff.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Animal Safety Net program will provide the Foster Parent with food and supplies.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Routine veterinary care such as vaccination and check ups will be provided by spcaLA Veterinary staff. Foster pets are **never** to be treated by the Foster Parent's own veterinarian. Any pet requiring veterinary care should be returned to the shelter **immediately**. Expenses resulting in unauthorized emergency care of the foster pet(s) will be the responsibility of the Foster Parent. ASN or foster care veterinary staff should be contacted immediately if the pet requires medical attention. The contact numbers are as follows:

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 Animal Safety Net

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### **Animal Safety Net Foster Care Agreement**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. The Foster Parent, his/her agents, heirs, assign and associates agree to defend, indemnify and hold spcaLA and its employees free from any direct or indirect and consequential damages arising from the foster care arrangement.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. All foster placements are subject to approval and are at the sole discretion of the ASN personnel.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. The Foster Parent will notify ASN in the event that any changes occur in his/her listed address or telephone number.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. The Foster Parent shall not attempt to contact the owner of the pet(s) at any point during or after fostering. The Foster Parent is encouraged to take photographs of the ASN pet(s) so that they can be forwarded to the ASN staff and then to the true owner. Photographs should not be taken at locations that could identify the area where the pet(s) are being kept. ASN will not reimburse the Foster Parent for photographic equipment, film, or developing.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. The Foster Parent will use discretion while fostering the pet(s) and shall not call the pet(s) by its/their given name(s) when outside the Foster Parent's home. Dogs shall not be allowed off leash, and cats should be kept indoors.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. In the event that any ASN pet(s) escape or become lost, the Foster Parent will notify the ASN staff immediately.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 16. The Foster Parent understands that ASN is a **confidential program**. Foster Parents will not disclose information about the program or the pet(s) to the public. Pet(s) should be described as "just visiting" to anyone.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 17. The Foster Parent will receive physical description of the abuser. In the unlikely event that s/he arrives at the Foster Parent's house, call the police immediately, then call (XXX) XXX-XXXX.

***I certify that I have read, fully understand and accept all the terms and conditions of this agreement.***

OWNER SIGNATURE	DATE
ASN STAFF MEMBER	DATE

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 Animal Safety Net



# Long-Term Fostering for Animal Safety Net



# In this class you will learn:

- What long-term fostering is;
- The details of fostering Animal Safety Net pets;
- Proper behavior and socialization training;
- Medical conditions to watch out for;
- Contact information in case of emergencies.



# What is long-term fostering?

- It is temporarily providing a loving environment for a shelter pet that, due to certain circumstances, cannot be placed into adoptions.



- Long-term foster pets may be with the shelter for an undetermined amount of time. “Temporarily” can mean a duration of one month to a year or even longer.
- Up to a year?? Yes. However, many of our long-term placements are older pets that can be left alone during the day and may not require the same amount of work as a puppy or kitten.



**spcaLA**  
Friends for life.®

# Why do pets have to stay in the shelter for so long?

- Animal Safety Net (ASN): This program temporarily houses pets who are survivors of Domestic Violence (DV).
- ASN pets come from a home or a “home-like” situation. Coming to the shelter can be a difficult transition.



# Why is long-term fostering so important?

- The longer a dog spends in a kennel, the less likely it is to stay behaviorally sound.
- The longer a cat spends in a cage, the more likely it is to develop stress-related illnesses or behavioral problems.
- Think about it! Housing a pet for as long as a year, to ultimately have to euthanize it (for health or behavior reasons that could have possibly been avoided) is very difficult and unfair for all parties involved.



# What is ASN?

- ASN is designed to help people who are survivors of domestic violence (DV).
- We house a DV survivor's pet for as long as is needed, for free.
- The survivor **MUST** be in a DV shelter to be part of the program.
- There is no time limit on how long an ASN pet stays with us.
- The goal is to return the pet to its owner.



We're an animal shelter, right?  
So, why is ASN so important?  
Because of the "Link."



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# Things to think about...

- Children think of themselves on par with the family pet. Pets play an integral role in the development of children.
- Animal abuse by children is one of the earliest warning signs of future violent behavior.
- Child and spousal abuse are commonly found in homes with animal abuse, and reporting animal abuse may lead to discovery of human abuse.



# Things to think about...

- 88% of families reported for child abuse had an animal abuser in the home.
- 74% of pet-owning women reported that a pet had been threatened, injured or killed by their abuser.
- 32% of women entering shelters said that one or more of their children had hurt or killed a pet.



# What is the shelter's role?

- Women and their children are less likely to leave a bad situation if there is no safe place for their pet.
- If a pet IS left behind, there is strong likelihood that it will be used as a manipulation tool, and it may be injured or killed.



Animal Welfare and Human Welfare are intricately connected, and animal shelters have the same responsibility as domestic violence shelters or Child and Family Services: to help those in need who cannot help themselves.



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# What pets come in to ASN?

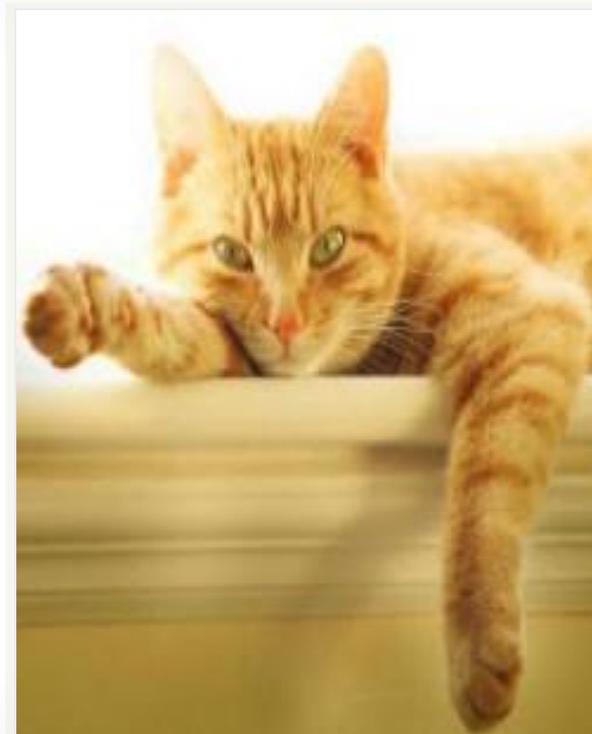


All kinds!



# What is your role as an ASN foster parent?

- Provide a loving, temporary home for the pet;
- Adhere to any dietary or medical restrictions;
- Keep the pet safe and out of the public eye;
- Help socialize and/or help the pet regain trust.

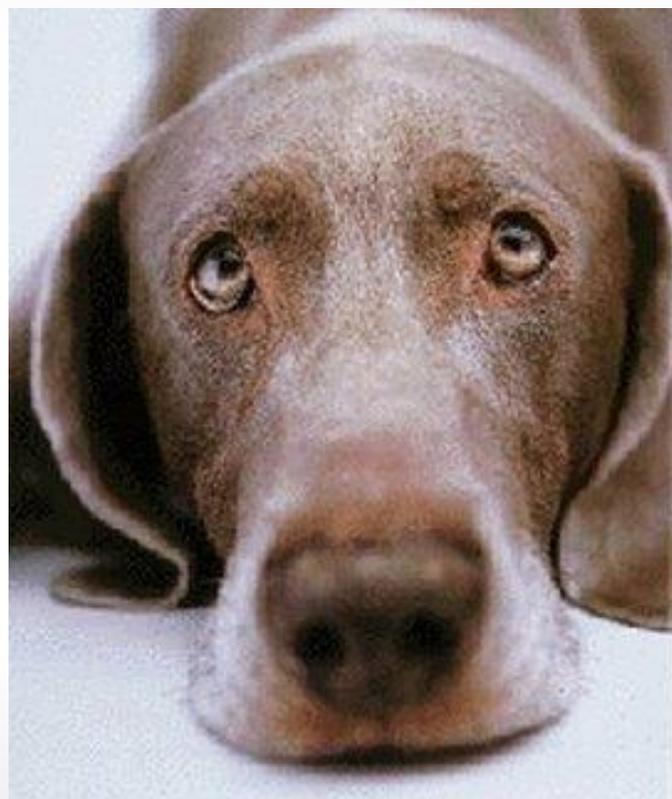


# How are supplies paid for if I am a long-term foster parent?

- The foster program supplies the basic needs for your foster pet:
  - Food;
  - Litter;
  - Flea treatments;
  - Any medical treatments needed;
  - Spay/Neuter surgery.
- It is your responsibility to let us know if you are running low on anything.



# Some common issues for ASN pets...



# Refusing to eat!

- Many dogs that come from scary or violent homes will have issues with food. They have often been punished around or with food.
- Don't be surprised if your dog doesn't eat at all for the first couple of days (due to stress) or avoids eating when you are around.
- Cats may also not eat due to the stress of a new environment.
- Give all ASN pets a quiet and secluded place to eat until you really understand them.



# Using the bathroom

- Some ASN pets may have unique bathroom habits.
- Some may have been punished while using the bathroom and will be fearful of going in front of you.
- Some may need house training.
- Cats may purposely miss the litter box when they are under stress.



# Extreme exhaustion

- Many of these pets have come from a place that is unpredictable and often terrifying.
- It is possible that they haven't slept well for days, weeks, or even months.
- Once they are in a secure, quiet, and safe place, they may sleep for days out of relief.



# Unknown triggers

- Because we don't know the full history of these pets, we don't know what they consider to be scary.



# Unknown triggers

- Some pets may fear men, hats, loud noises, yelling, pushing, leashes, food, toys, strangers, other pets, etc.
- Some pets may even show aggression (out of fear). Always be cognizant that these pets have been through a lot.
- If this happens, do not punish the pet! Use words of encouragement, and alter the environment that is frightening.



# Change in behavior



- After your pet gets comfortable, you may see a change in its behavior.
- This can be change for the better, or for the worse.
- Some pets may open up and become more playful– they may have never had the chance to play before.
- Others may get protective of the new family or jealous of another household pet.



# What are the requirements to become an ASN fosterer?

- You must be willing to sign confidentiality waivers that you will not discuss ASN details with anyone.
- You need to be flexible with the end dates; the contract dates often change.
- Dogs must meet other household dogs prior to fostering, and cats are never allowed outside.



# Cats are never allowed outside!

- Remember, these are not our cats– they belong to another person!
- It is unsafe and irresponsible to allow these cats outside.



# Dogs are never to be in highly public areas or off-leash!



- ASN pets often leave their situations against the will of an abuser.
- The abuser may look for these pets and may scope out local parks.
- We do take precautions to avoid this: pets are not fostered in the cities close to the area where the pet was previously living.
- Keeping dogs on-leash also helps to avoid any injuries.



# Isolate your ASN pet.

(This is so hard, we know!)

- This is especially crucial in the beginning because of the issues previously discussed (food, sleep, bathroom, etc.).
- This is also important in case there are unknown medical issues or pet aggression.



We understand that keeping a long-term foster pet means that the pet will be a part of the family and will not always be isolated. Please discuss this with the ASN coordinator so that we can be sure all parties are safe when your foster comes out of isolation.



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# What end date?

- ASN pets are given a contract end date, but it will often be extended.



# ASN pets are not always the cutest!



- This may seem silly, but it is important to remember because...
- Often these pets have had poor diets and a lack of veterinary visits, which may have caused skin issues, sores, bad joints, disfigurement or bad scarring.



# What about medical ailments?

- Some pets may come in with fleas, ticks, ear mites, bad hips, eating disorders, mange, etc. You would be notified of any ailments they might have.



- All ASN pets are given a full medical exam. This includes vaccinations, blood work-up, fecal exam and spay/neuter surgery.



# What do I do if a medical issue arises?

- If you notice anything unusual about your foster, you must let us know immediately!



- Look for:
  - Lethargy;
  - Change in diet;
  - Change in bathroom habits/stool;
  - Change in skin/fur;
  - Major change in behavior.



# What constitutes an emergency?

- Abnormal/difficulty breathing;
- Difficulty walking;
- Bleeding;
- Sudden loss of appetite;
- Sudden onset of decreased activity;
- Severe vomiting/diarrhea.

**The emergency contact person must authorize any emergency services.**

**If you go to your own vet, you will be responsible for any charges.**



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# Who do I contact if I am fostering ASN pets?

- Any ASN fostering issue must be communicated to the ASN coordinator (at any time of day).
  - Email; Cell: XXX-XXX-XXXX
- For medical issues during business hours:
  - Vet Technician: XXX-XXX-XXXX
- For medical emergencies after hours:
  - Emergency contact: XXX-XXX-XXXX



# Any questions?



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