



Domestic Violence Association of Central Kansas

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DVACK Newsletter November 2015

"Perhaps the best Yuletide decoration is being wreathed in smiles!"

Welcome this holiday season with smiles, sights, and serenity at DVACK's annual Festival of Trees fundraiser, auctioning beautiful trees, wreaths, quilts, and more! All auction items are made or donated by community members. If you wish to contribute, bring items to the Salina office by November 16. This is our biggest fundraiser of the year, and we need your help to sponsor, purchase an advertisement in the program, or have a blast at the event—festive, fun, and unforgettable!



Sheltering To Protect

Providing Emergency Shelter for Victims' Pets

DVACK proudly announces the launch of its newest program—Sheltering To Protect. The Sheltering To Protect Program, or STOP, is a community-based partnership with Soggy Dog Salon & Suites to provide animal shelter for pet-owning victims seeking to flee their abusive relationship and enter DVACK's safe shelter. Soggy Dog will provide residency, food, love, and vaccinations for victims' dogs at its facility, which offers grooming, pet daycare, dog photography, and 24-hour boarding. STOP also seeks to form a network of volunteers who wish to foster victims' pets while they reside in DVACK's safe shelter. DVACK will collect donations for the STOP program to purchase necessary vaccinations, food, crating, leashes, collars, litter, and bowls for animals in the program. Supporters must make donations payable to DVACK and specify their contribution is for the STOP program. Diane Erickson—creator of STOP and president and C.E.O. of Soggy Dog—says, "We know the connection between animal abuse and domestic violence, and I'm excited about the opportunity to assist victims and their pets. For victims, leaving a pet behind is like having to leave your child; it shouldn't happen.

It's not just people who need shelter; it's pets too." Diane will launch the program at her **Open House at Soggy Dog Salon & Suites, located at 640 N. Santa Fe, on Saturday, November 7 from 1:00-4:00 P.M.**, where dogs can take photos with Santa and create paw-print art. All donations gathered at the event will go into the STOP fund. DVACK looks forward to this partnership and the community support it will garner.



Resort Suites at Soggy Dog. To decrease dogs' anxiety, they have full-length windows and listen to K-9 lullabies at night.

Showing Kindness, Teaching Leadership

Determined to spread a message of kindness and compassion, Solomon Junior High students in the Friends of Rachel Club posted positive messages, such as "BeYOUtiful," "You're Smart," and "You are liked," around bathroom mirrors. Students and teachers can read them and take a note to remind them they are wanted and appreciated.



The Friends of Rachel Club is facilitated by DVACK's Teen Dating Violence Coordinator, Sheila Beeson, and is newly implemented at Concordia's junior high school, in addition to DVACK's Bullying Prevention Program at Concordia's middle school. All programs are designed to teach healthy relationships, kindness, and role modeling.

Looking to make a difference in your community? Join DVACK's team with its new, fantastic positions available! Call to inquire!

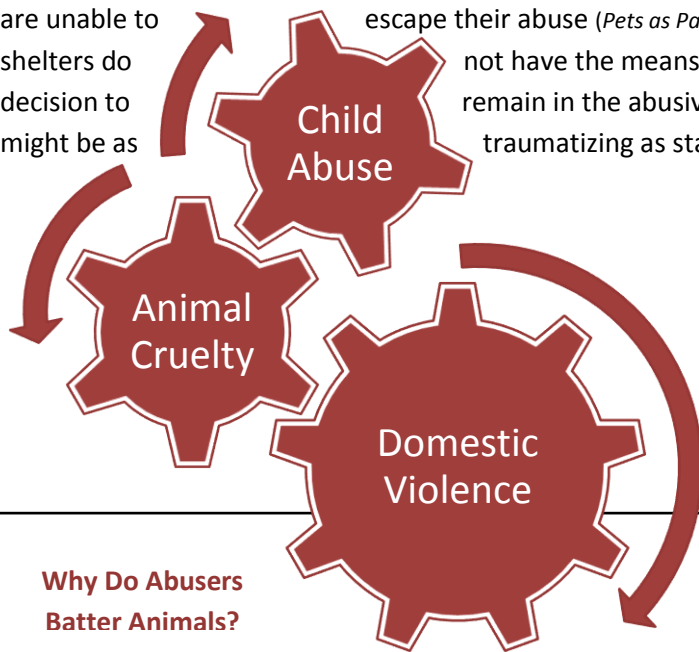
Domestic Violence & Pets

“Animal cruelty problems are people problems. When animals are abused, people are at risk.” –American Humane Association, 2013

Domestic violence and animal abuse are among a self-perpetuating cycle in which (1) an estimated **48% to 71%** of domestic violence offenders also abuse or kill pets, (2) children exposed to domestic violence are **three times** more likely to be cruel to animals, (3) pet abuse is **one of four** significant predictors for who will become a batterer, and (4) investigation of animal abuse is often the first point of social services intervention for a family experiencing domestic violence (Animal Welfare Institute, 2015; American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, 2015; American Humane Association, 2013).

Of DVACK’s clients since January 2015, **41** reported that their perpetrator abused or killed their pets. Twenty-three of these victims of domestic violence are Salina residents; thus, **in the last 10 months, at least 23 pets in Salina were tortured or killed at the hands of a perpetrator of domestic violence.** One survivor told DVACK her husband would force her and their three sons to watch as he beat and drown their dogs, threatening, **“This could be you.”** Sabotaging pets is a common tactic abusers use to instill fear and gain or maintain power and control over their victims. Among pet-owning women entering safe shelters, **71%** reported that their abuser threatened, injured, maimed, or killed family pets for revenge or to psychologically

control them (National Coalition Against Domestic Violence). This fear of a pet being hurt is why up to **65%** of domestic violence victims are unable to escape their abuse (Pets as Pawns: The Co-existence of Animal Cruelty and Family Violence, 2012). Most safe shelters do not have the means to shelter victims’ companions, leaving victims with the difficult decision to might be as not have the means to shelter victims’ companions, leaving victims with the difficult remain in the abusive environment or leave their pets behind, which, for some survivors, traumatizing as staying in the violent relationship.



Why Do Abusers Batter Animals?

- To demonstrate power and control over the family
- To isolate the victim and children
- To enforce submission
- To perpetuate an environment of fear
- To prevent the victim from leaving or coerce her to return
- To punish for leaving or showing independence

American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals

“I came in the door from grocery shopping to find our dog in the middle of the front room floor with his neck snapped. My husband was sitting there in a chair, grinning, and said, ‘That’s what you get for being late.’ I was gone maybe five minutes.

He got me the dog as a gift.”

–Survivor, Salina, Kansas

Statistics

- **68%** of battered women reported violence towards their animals. **87%** of these incidents occurred in the presence of the women, and **75%** in the presence of the children, to psychologically control and coerce them.
- Pets may suffer unexplained injuries, health problems, permanent disabilities at the hands of abusers, or disappear from home.
- Abusers kill, harm, or threaten children’s pets to coerce them into sexual abuse or to force them to remain silent about abuse. Disturbed children kill or harm animals to emulate their parents’ conduct, to prevent the abuser from killing the pet, or to take out their aggressions on another victim.
- In one study, **70%** of animal abusers also had records for other crimes. Domestic violence victims whose animals were abused saw the animal cruelty as one more violent episode in a long history of indiscriminate violence aimed at them and their vulnerability.
- Battered women have been known to live in their cars with their pets for as long as four months until an opening was available at a pet-friendly shelter.

American Humane Association

First respondents must understand this connection between animal abuse and family violence and look for signs that children and/or pets might be victimized. Children may be more willing to discuss what has happened to a pet than their own victimization. Asking, “Do you have any pets?” “Has the batterer or anyone else threatened to harm your pet?” “Will you need assistance in finding a safe place for the pet if you leave?” is imperative to better understand the scope of abuse (American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, 2015).