Animals Create a Community
Fighting the “Dark Side” of the Human-Animal Bond through Species-Spanning Services and Systems

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A long time ago in a galaxy far, far away, a pioneer of the animal care/control & human-animal bond movements tried to shift paradigms by encouraging multidisciplinary collaboration and getting government, philanthropists and the general public to treat animal issues more seriously.
Who Was That Masked Man?

And here’s what he was saying:

“Animal welfare and animal control are two sides of the same coin. Animal welfare protects animals from people, and animal control protects people from animals.”

“We don’t have animal problems: we have people problems.”
And Here’s What We’re Saying NOW:

“Animal welfare and animal control are the same coin. They each protect people by protecting their animals. They just use different business models – nonprofit and government – to get there.

“We still don’t have animal problems: we have people problems.”
The Good Side of the Human-Animal Bond: How Many of You Have Pets?

Why do so many of us share our homes with filthy, slobbering, shedding, scratching, hairball-barfing, humping, peeing and pooping butt-licking predators?
Because There’s Nothing Quite Like It in the Whole World!

A smooch from your pooch can make your whole day seem brighter!
“It’s Not that the Nursing Homes Are Going to the Dogs...”

“...The dogs are going to the nursing homes, and every indication is that the residents love it. Happiness really is a warm puppy!”
“A pet is an island of sanity in what appears to be an insane world.”
The Good News: Animals Have ALWAYS Been Part of the Community

Lascaux, France

Gobekle Tepe, Turkey
... and they still are!

You can name her whatever you like but be sure it’s something you can remember. You’ll be using it as a security question answer for the rest of your life.
The Good News: Pets Are Good for Our Physical and Mental Health

“When the dogs go walking down the hall of the hospital, it’s like that scene in The Wizard of Oz when everything changes from black and white... to color”

Judy Levicoff, Abington Memorial Hospital
The Good News: Pets Are Good for Our Physical and Mental Health

You can say any stupid thing to a dog and it will look at you as if to to say: 'My God, that's fascinating! That never would've occurred to me'
The Good News

Animals as Therapy: The Extraordinary... and the Ordinary

“We have dogs that can adapt to guiding the blind, or sense an oncoming seizure, or sniff out cancer. And we have gazillions more that do the less specialized daily work of simply keeping their humans calm and on an even keel.”

-- John Woestendiek, Columnist, “Oh My Dog”
The Good News: Pets Improve Social Capital
-- a protective factor for community health

52% of people remember the names of their neighbors’ pets more than the neighbors themselves!

Dogs can:
- Help people get to know one another
- Help build social networks of practical and emotional support
  - Fight erosion of the sense of community
  - Combat the lack of human connectedness
- Get people outdoors
Pet-Friendly Communities: Connected to Nature

- Last Child in the Woods
- The Broken Heart
- Walk a Hound, Lose a Pound
What Does the \textit{Absence} of Pets Say About a Community?
The “Dark Side” of the Human-Animal Bond

“When animals are abused, people are at risk;

When people are abused, animals are at risk.”
Connecting the Dots: The Link between Animal Abuse and Other Forms of Family Violence

- Child Maltreatment
- Animal Abuse
- Domestic Violence
- Elder Abuse
The #1 Question from Legislators, Funders, and Social Services

Why should we care about animal issues when there are so many more pressing human needs?

Because dogs and cats can’t vote!
Marginalization of Animal Issues

Areas of Public Interest

Animal Control -- % of municipal spending:

.4%

Humane Education -- % of classroom contact time:

.0004%

Where's the animal shelter?

Next to the sewer treatment plant
The Challenge for Animal Welfare
Cruelty still not taken seriously....

“Crazy Cat Lady Action Figure” (2004)

Hoarders TV Show (2009 --)

“Crazy Cat Lady” Board Game (2010)
The Challenge for Grantees

Giving to charity, in $billions, by individuals, corporations & foundations (Giving USA - 2016)

- Religion: 32%, $123
- Education: 15%, $60
- Health: 8%, $33
- Foundations: 10%, $41
- Human Svcs: 12%, $47
- Public Benefit: 8%, $30
- Arts, Culture Int'l Affairs: 5%, $18
- Animals & Env: 3%, $11

Foundations: 76,000

Foundations primarily addressing animal welfare: ~ 35

“Philanthropy”: Love of Mankind
The Solution: Change the Discussion

LEARN WHAT THE MONSTER LIKES... AND FEED IT!
The Solution: Change the Discussion

Promote *human* benefits of animal welfare as leverage to get our message across

A species-spanning approach for more effective and integrated community outreach & programming

**Health Benefits**
- AAA/T
- Mental/physical health
- Human-Animal Bond
- Neurochemistry
  - “One Health”

**Violence prevention**
- The Link

**Community well-being**
- Social capital
A Better Way: Change the Discussion

- When it comes to cruelty to animals, both law enforcement and the public rank violence against humans above animal cruelty. Animal abuse is seen as a fairly important issue, but just can’t compete.

- Research demonstrating correlations between animal abuse and human violence has an effect on how seriously law enforcement and the public take animal cruelty issues.

Southeastern Institute for Research (2010). Understanding Opinions of Animal Cruelty Among Law Enforcement and the General Public (Study commissioned by the ASPCA)
The philosophy in the animal welfare community is switching to addressing human problems that underlie crises with animals.

“Animal shelters’ service philosophy is evolving to recognize that treating symptoms of animal welfare problems, such as animal homelessness, abuse and neglect, is only a stopgap solution: to be truly effective, underlying causes such as community and family dysfunction and violence must be addressed.”

-- Ipsos-Reid, 2010
Rebrand Human-Animal Bond and Animal Care and Control as violence prevention and community service agencies that protect the health and safety of the community and all vulnerable members of the family by focusing on human-animal issues.

“The Solution: Change the Discussion

Pet Partners’ mission is to improve human health and well-being through the human-animal bond.”
The human-animal bond, The Link, One Health, and social capital are species-spanning approaches that improve the quality of life for all and help define the type of community we choose to live in.

The Solution: Change the Discussion
Promote *human* benefits of animal welfare
The Challenge:
The Rest of the World Doesn’t Know This Yet
The Solution: Change the Discussion: *Perception Becomes Reality!*

More Appropriate Family Systems Theory

Challenge resolved!
Animal Abuse: It’s the tip of the iceberg...
All in the Family and Caught in the Crossfire: Types of Links

1. Abusive partner threatens, hurts or kills to control. Woman fears leaving. Emotional extortion.
   - Intimidation
   - Revenge
   - Retaliation

2. Coercion/control in child sexual abuse.

3. Child harms or kills animal, or witnesses animal cruelty.


5. Animal fighting.
What Has this New Focus Accomplished?

COMPELLING RESEARCH

- Pet abuse is one of the **four most significant indicators** of who is at greatest risk of becoming a batterer.

- **18%-48%** of battered women delayed leaving.

- **41%** of domestic violence batterers have histories of animal abuse

- **21%** of dog bite fatalities caused by abused animals

- **31%** of teens have attended a dogfight
What Has this New Focus Accomplished?

STRONGER LEGISLATION

States with Felony Animal Cruelty Provisions

Felony animal cruelty (50 states)
“Pet Protection Orders” – 32 states + PR, DC
PAWS Act: H.R. 909/S.322
What Has this New Focus Accomplished?

**STRONGER LEGISLATION**

- **9** states: animal abuse = domestic violence
- **7** states: Animal fighting = RICO
- **42** states: Bestiality (animal sexual abuse) illegal
- **24** states: bestiality \(\rightarrow\) registered sex offender
- **26** states: DVMs, ACOs, DCF cross-report

Dogfighting and attendance now a **federal crime**
What Has this New Focus Accomplished?

STONGER LEGISLATION

- Pet Protection Orders
- Animal abuse = Domestic Violence
- Courts may determine animal custody in divorce cases in animals’ best interest
What Has this New Focus Accomplished?
GREATER INTEREST FROM LAW ENFORCEMENT

“The topic of animal cruelty may seem unimportant in the face of events like the Boston bombing, school shootings, and other recent tragedies, but we know there’s a history of animal cruelty in the backgrounds of many perpetrators of violent acts.

“Understanding this link between animal cruelty and interpersonal violence is critical to the Department.”

What Has this New Focus Accomplished?

GREATER INTEREST FROM LAW ENFORCEMENT

- Simple or gross neglect (animal hoarding)
- Physical abuse
- Organized abuse (animal fighting)
- Animal sexual abuse
What Has this New Focus Accomplished?

GREATER INTEREST FROM VETERINARY MEDICINE

Veterinary Social Work

“The human side of veterinary medicine...
The animal side of social work...”
What Has this New Focus Accomplished?

GREATER INTEREST FROM VETERINARY MEDICINE

New Zealand: a “three-dimensional profession” with a voice that transcends animal life, human life and the environment.

Scotland: £1,000,000 to train 100,000 front-line professionals to recognize & respond to domestic violence
What Has this New Focus Accomplished?

GREATER INTEREST FROM VETERINARY MEDICINE

• Connecting the dots: a 6-stage process:

  Awareness & Responsibility ➔ Peer Support ➔ Enabling Legislation ➔ Diagnostic Tools ➔ Practice Mgmt. ➔ Who Ya Gonna Call?
What Has this New Focus Accomplished?

LINKAGES WITH DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COMMUNITY

- 500+ Domestic Violence Pet Support Programs
- 100+ pet-friendly women’s shelters

“Doggie Witness Protection Programs”
The Message is Starting to Take Hold...

“Animal cruelty is more than just a legal issue. It’s a community issue. If you improve animal welfare in a community, you improve public safety for everyone.”

-- Baltimore Mayor
Stephanie Rawlings-Blake
We Still Have a Lot of Work Ahead of Us...

• If they don’t include the pets in the lives of their clients, they’re missing a piece of the puzzle – *and an opportunity to build rapport*
  • “Are there animals at home?”
  • “How are they cared for?”
  • Are you worried about their welfare?”

SOCIAL SERVICE AGENCIES NEED TO ASK THE QUESTIONS!!

• Intakes
• Referrals
• Screenings
• Assessments
1. Animal abuse must be perceived and documented as also being a *social* issue.

2. Animal abuse must be re-defined as *family* violence.

3. The network of community caregivers must be cross-trained to recognize and report *all* forms of family violence.
Some closing thoughts...

“To remain healthy, we must maintain a respectful relationship with all the elements of our environment. A strong people-animal-environment bond is crucial to a healthy community, worldwide.”

-- Leo K. Bustad (1980)
Go forth and do good deeds...

Bark less.
Wag your tail more.
Let people pet you.

Take more time to relax.
Take more time to play.
Don’t poop on other people’s lawns.