



**PAW &  
PROTECT**

What is Paw & Protect?

- Trauma-informed initiative for survivors of domestic violence and their pets
- Provides temporary pet safe housing, survivor support, and coordinated advocacy
- Ensures survivors never have to choose between their safety and their pets

# *The power of communication.*

*Supporting Survivors of Domestic Violence and Their Pets.*







## Children, Violence, and the Comfort of Pets

When children witness domestic violence, they experience deep emotional distress and often feel fear, confusion, guilt, or helplessness. These traumatic experiences can impact their development, emotional regulation, and trust in others.

Research shows children who have close relationships with pets often display fewer symptoms of PTSD, depression, and anxiety after witnessing violence.



# The Emotional Bond

Many survivors of intimate partner violence (IPV) view their pets as family members, providing comfort and stability during traumatic times.

Research indicates that 71% of pet owners in abusive relationships would rather stay in an abusive environment than abandon their pets. This emotional attachment can lead to feelings of guilt and grief, making it difficult for victims to leave their abuser.

Abusers may threaten, harm, or kill pets to keep victims from leaving or as retaliation if they try to escape.



# Stress Relief & Comfort

Caring for a pet gives survivors a sense of purpose, routine, and responsibility, which can be grounding and empowering as they rebuild their lives.





# Story of Courage



Logic Model: A community where survivors and their pets can heal together, free from abuse, supported by a network of safe housing, veterinary care, and compassionate advocates.

| Inputs  | Activities  | Short-Term Outcomes  | Long-Term Outcomes  |
|---|---|--|---|
| Funding (grants, donations)                   | Develop foster/boarding   | Survivors enter shelter without fear of abandoning pets and placed in safe foster homes                        | Reduced trauma and increased safety for survivors and pets                  |
| Partner animal shelters, DV Shelters and vets | Provide emergency vet care, food, supplies  | Number of vet vouchers and starter kits distributed  | Survivors and pets are safely reunited and stable                           |
| Volunteers & transport resources              | Trained volunteers with secure kennels and confidentiality protocols.<br>Transport pets to safe locations, reunite pets later | Work with local law enforcement, DV Advocates and shelters<br>Safe removal of pets from danger                 | Pets and survivors recover together, preventing repeat victimization        |
| Safe Haven Networks                           | Foster homes, animal rescues, boarding facilities, and vet clinics to provide temporary care.                                 | Helps survivors reclaim their pets, offers training, therapy animal support, and pet-friendly housing support. | Covers vet care, food, grooming, supplies, microchipping, spay/neuter, etc. |
|   |   |  |   |



## National Animal Welfare Funders for DV Victims

Animal Disaster Funding

American Humane Association

VOCA Funds

Mary Kay Foundation Grants

Maddie's Fund

Petfinder Foundation

PetSmart Charities

The PEDIGREE Foundation

Petco Love

Bissell Pet Foundation

Banfield Foundation

The William and Charlotte Parks Foundation for Animal Welfare

Laura J. Niles Foundation

Red Rover

<https://humanepro.org/grant-listings>





## Recovery & Long-Term Stability

Why Programs Like Paw & Protect Matter

Allowing survivors to escape with their pets:

Removes a major barrier to safety

Breaks the cycle of abuse by protecting vulnerable animals

Provides powerful emotional support to survivors as they heal

Programs that offer pet-safe housing see more survivors seeking help earlier, which can save lives

# Final takeaways

The **bond between domestic violence survivors and their pets is profound**, and addressing the safety of pets is crucial in helping victims escape abusive situations. Resources and support systems are increasingly recognizing the importance of including pets in safety plans, which can empower victims to leave their abusers without fear for their beloved animals.

By understanding the complexities of this issue, advocates, rescues and shelters can better support survivors, their family and their pets during these challenging times. It's a WIN for everyone involved.





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