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MAY '09

## We Speak for Those Who Cannot Speak for Themselves

*"The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated."*

*- Mohandas Gandhi*

Animal General recognizes that the discussion of abuse towards any human being or animal is a topic that is gruesome, distasteful, and unsettling. Such behavior, while it represents the sick and twisted conduct of a few very disturbed individuals who walk among us, still causes immeasurable suffering to those touched by it. Because of the deep and lasting physical and psychological damage that this type of behavior can inflict upon innocent animals and humans, we are devoting this issue of the newsletter to raising the awareness of our readers. We hope that what follows will give you pertinent facts and offer practical methods for recognizing and reporting such savage behavior to the proper authorities.

## Bad Things Happen to Good Kittens

While we are happily going about our daily lives in the safe and warm cocoon of Animal General, we forget, at least momentarily, that there is evil in the world. The following is a true story that unraveled during December of 2008.

A client came to us with two kittens that he had just adopted from a local rescue group. One kitten, named Bugsy, appeared to have a broken leg. The other kitten, Rufus, was healthy. The client did not know how Bugsy had broken his leg. Bugsy's leg was placed in a splint. The kittens got their first set of vaccinations and stayed with us overnight.

Two days later, the client returned; this time Rufus was in a coma. The receptionist on duty that day remembered this client from about a month prior when he appeared one morning with a DOA kitten. He stated that it had jumped from his arms, hit its head on the floor, and died. We began to get suspicious that something willfully malicious was occurring.

Rufus's injuries were life threatening. The client lead us to believe that the kitten had gotten into some "medication" belonging to his girlfriend. His injuries, however, were consistent with severe head trauma and not toxin exposure. His story was not adding up. We decided that the client must relinquish ownership of the kittens to us immediately or face an investigation by ASPCA Humane Law Enforcement. He agreed to do this and was very concerned about the possibility of an investigation. It was at this point that we were introduced to his girlfriend, Sarah, as she was the one who brought Bugsy in for surrender.

Sarah could not believe that her boyfriend might have hurt the kittens, but as the story unfolded, it became

rather obvious. When she moved in with him, she had two cats, both over the age of twelve. Within the first month of moving in together, both of her cats died under odd, but not highly suspicious circumstances. Additionally, there was the DOA kitten that had "jumped from his arms." It took some convincing on our part, but she finally realized that the cats had died at his hands. She began to remove him from her life, sought police protection for herself, and we filed a formal complaint with the ASPCA Humane Law Department.

After spending about a month with us at the clinic, and having been visited daily by Sarah, we decided that the kittens belonged with her. She guaranteed us that her boyfriend was out of her life. This led us to believe that the kittens would be safe. Within two weeks of leaving Animal General, the boyfriend gained access to the apartment where Sarah and the kittens had safely returned. While she was at work, he made sure to finish what he had tried to do before.

There is a lot more to tell of this story, but because of the pending criminal proceedings against this individual, we have been directed to remain silent. Suffice it to say, in the end, after all of the investigations were completed, there were six dead cats and one permanently disabled kitten. Among those six were Bugsy and Rufus. All of this occurred during a four month period.

We take animal abuse very seriously. The staff and doctors of Animal General have dedicated themselves to bettering the lives of our animal companions. What happened here is the ultimate abuse, and in this and every instance, we will do all that we can to make sure that the abuser is held accountable.

Please stay tuned to Animal General's newsletter. We will keep you updated as legal proceedings continue.



**Go Orange in April to show your support for efforts to help end animal abuse.**

May 2009

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Vol. 3, Issue 3

<http://www.animalgeneral.com>

# INCREASING AWARENESS

## Animal Abuse: An Indication of Domestic Violence

### Profiling Abusers and Types of Abuse

There is a strong body of evidence available that supports the premise that children and teens who participate in the intentional abuse of animals often mature into adults who commit extreme acts of violence towards their family, intimate partners, or community members at large.

Animals have long been the silent victims of the disturbed. Cruel and abusive behavior towards animals usually emerges during adolescence, but can present at a much earlier age. It may involve beating, mutilation or poisoning, torture or suffocation, or training animals to fight each other to the death, and killing them for failing to do so.

Such behavior should never be considered a simple stage of childhood development that will pass in time. The American Psychiatric Association considers animal cruelty a dangerous precursor to a number of violent conduct disorders seen in adult humans. Its existence should always be promptly reported to authorities.

Statistics in the United States show that 85% of women and 63% of children entering shelters owned pets that were being abused. It is shocking to note that 32% of the pet-owning victims of domestic violence reported that one or more of their children had hurt or killed a pet.

Such behavior develops gradually making it difficult to recognize at first. Abusers are generally sociopaths able to present themselves as engaging, interesting, and intelligent individuals or pleasant neighbors whom no one would ever suspect of such horrific behavior. Initially, pets may turn up repeatedly injured for no good reason, or they may disappear without a trace. The individual will eventually turn his/her violent behavior towards a partner, a family member, or random people in the community. In a domestic setting, full-blown battering and domestic violence will emerge over time.

In a large metropolitan area where we often do not have the mixed blessing of knowing a person's family history, one subtle indicator to the essence of a new friend could be that person's reaction to domestic or wild animals over a period of time. It is an easy observation to make, and it could save your life or the life of a beloved pet.

Other types of animal abuse are motivated by people's ignorance of the needs of a pet, resulting in neglect. These are not willfully malicious or deliberate acts. Under these circumstances, an animal may suffer cruel treatment, but education of the owner can usually alleviate the problem. Examples of such neglect include: leaving an animal tied outside without adequate food, clean water, or appropriate shelter, especially during inclement weather; leaving pets inside a locked car anytime, but especially when temperatures are extreme; failure to supply pets with proper amounts of food and clean water, as well as failure to supply veterinary health care

This month we are hoping to bring a greater awareness and insight into how to identify animal abuse and help

and proper vaccinations. Puppy mills, the hoarding of animals, and laboratory testing on animals often results in additional forms of abuse, though no correlation exists between behavior of this type and human violence towards others.

Read on to see what can be done to stop witnessed or suspected animal abuse.



### Recommended Reading

**Cruelty to Animals and Interpersonal Violence: Reading in Research and Application.** Edited by Randall Lockwood and Frank R. Ascione. Lockwood is Vice President in charge of Research and Educational Outreach for the Humane Society of the United States. The two present carefully selected pertinent philosophical and historical attitudes that provide support for the positive correlation between cruelty to animals and its relationship to human violence. A powerful and compelling introduction and conclusion emphasize the gravity of the situation for animals and humans alike.

### Animal General Helps Break the Chain of Abuse Pets Protected from Domestic Violence Settings

In most cases, domestic violence shelters do not accommodate companion animals. This dilemma often leads victims to choose to remain in peril rather than to leave their beloved pets behind.

Animal General has the distinction of being New York City's sole veterinary hospital to actively address issues of domestic violence. The hospital provides shelter and care, free-of-charge, to pets of battered women for six months while they get situated in a safe environment. This arrangement enables victims of domestic violence to enter shelters with peace of mind regarding the care of their pets. When these individuals are able to secure a new home, their pets are waiting for them. It's a beautiful thing. Contact Animal General at (212) 501-9600.

## It's The Law!

In 1999, the New York State Legislator passed a law making deliberate or "aggravated animal cruelty" a felony. The provisions of the law state that those convicted of deliberate cruelty face a two-year prison sentence, a \$5,000.00 fine, mandatory counseling, a temporary or permanent ban on pet ownership, and the inclusion of the pet's protection orders.

Passive cruelty resulting from neglect is considered a misdemeanor. The maximum sentence is a one-year prison term and/or a \$1,000.00 fine.

For further information on the laws concerning cruelty to animals in *any* state, visit the [ASCPA website](#) for comprehensive information.

### Reporting Animal Cruelty: What to Have on Hand

- When possible, have a concise, factual statement or list stating what you observed, dates, times, and location.
- Attempt to photograph the abusive situation. Date the photos. Do not approach if you think there is any danger to you personally. Call authorities immediately!
- If there were other witnesses, attempt to procure short, factual written statements from them, and obtain contact information.
- When you call, keep a careful record of exactly whom you contact: agency, agent, date, telephone number, and content and outcome of the discussion.
- Always keep a copy of any document you use. Make clear to the agent that you are very interested in pursuing the case, and that you are willing to lend whatever assistance you can.
- Follow up with additional contact if necessary. (Information courtesy of ASPCA.)

### Reporting Animal Cruelty: How and Where

- **New York City:** Report cruelty or fighting complaints to either the New York City Police Department (311 for general calls, 911 for emergencies), or to the [ASPCA Humane Law Enforcement Department](#) at (212) 876-7700, ext. 4450. You can also e-mail [enforcement@aspc.org](mailto:enforcement@aspc.org)
- **New Jersey:** Report complaints to your local police department, the New Jersey SPCA at (800) 582-5979, or [NJSPCA's online form](#).
- **Outside New York City or New Jersey:** Report to the police department covering your area (they are required to investigate). Inform your local animal control agency. Visit the [ASPCA's searchable shelter database](#).
- **To Report Websites that Depict Animal Cruelty:** Contact the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Department of Justice. The [Pet-Abuse.com website](#) offers information for helping to determine more information about whether or not a website is actively harming animals.

**ALWAYS REMEMBER: ANIMAL CRUELTY IS A FELONY! A 911 CALL MUST BE INVESTIGATED!!**

# GETTING INVOLVED

## Children Who Abuse Animals

### What Adults Can Do About This Very Serious Matter

If you have witnessed, know of, or suspect that a child has intentionally hurt an animal, report the incident immediately to your local police department, local ASPCA, or other local animal-welfare organization.

Animal abuse in children is a serious matter. It should never be ignored and requires professional advice and further investigation. Your involvement in such a situation can help an animal in jeopardy and could potentially aid a very disturbed young person.

Do not approach the parent as you are apt to come face to face with a hostile adult-version of the child you are reporting. You can, however, and probably should report the incident to the principal, guidance counselor, school psychologist, or social worker at the child's school.

Talk to your children and advise them never to approach another child, adult, or adolescent who is abusing an animal. Instead, call a parent or guardian and police authorities immediately, and remain safely away from what could be a dangerous situation.

#### Further reading for parents

**Fostering the Bond Between Children and Animals: The Empathy Connection.** The Doris Day Foundation. Tips for building empathy between pets and children. Teaching the language of emotion, and nine specific steps to empathy, including illustrations. Useful for teachers, parents, and counselors.

**Help Stop Cruelty** A wonderful article detailing how to help children recognize cruelty to animals. As a parent or teacher, you may peruse it and decide if you would like to share it with young people. Please visit this site!

#### Websites on the Topic of Animal Abuse

- [www.pet-abuse.com](#) Action alerts, reporting, asking for help, types of abuse.
- [ASPCA's Reporting FAQ](#) Reporting, how and where, recognizing, laws about, kids and animal cruelty.
- [Humane Society's First Strike Materials](#) Information and suggestions for action, community action, neighborhood watch for animals, and Fact Sheets. Concise information for parents, teenagers, and concerned citizens.
- [Stop Puppy Mills - Inside a Puppy Mill](#)
- Humane Society's [information about dogfighting and animal hoarding](#).
- [HubPages.com](#) Information on animal testing.

We hope that you never have to make use of this information but if do you we hope that you will feel better prepared to act in a reasonable and responsible manner. Remember, the staff at Animal General stands ready to help. Please call Karen Heidgerd, Practice Administrator at 212-501-9600 should you need advice regarding such a matter. Help us safeguard those voiceless innocents who are exploited and abused daily by the few violent individuals within our society.