

Escaping Together: Safe Housing Networks for Pets Fleeing Domestic Violence

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I Need to Get Out: Help Save Two Lives

▶ The Violence Link

- ▶ According to research completed by Dr. Amy Fitzgerald: In Canada
 - ▶ 89% of women report that their abusers engaged in animal abuse;
 - ▶ 1 in 3 women will experience some form of partner assault in their lifetime;
 - ▶ 56% of women flee violence report delaying leaving due to concerns about the family pet; and
 - ▶ 1/3 of the women that do flee report returning to either check on the family pet or to move back in with the abuser because of the pet.

▶ How does SafePet Ottawa help?

- ▶ Families who need to flee to safety in Ottawa no longer need to worry for the safety of their pet, and they do not need to delay getting to safety because their pets can safely enter the SafePet Ottawa program.
- ▶ Our Mission: To remove one of the barriers for people fleeing domestic violence by offering a foster-based program to care for their pets for the duration of time that they are seeking permanent housing.
- ▶ Our Vision: To ensure that any person who needs to leave a situation of domestic violence will never need to decide between protecting themselves/their children and protecting their pets.

How Does It Work?

- ▶ How does it work:
 - ▶ Survivor calls the shelter to let them know they need to escape and that they have pets
 - ▶ The shelter will contact SafePet Ottawa and will receive a list of questions about the animals to ensure proper placement
 - ▶ Once the information is received, we search our database for a proper foster home
 - ▶ SafePet Ottawa will provide an appointment time with one of our veterinary partners
 - ▶ The survivor brings the animal(s) to one of our veterinary partners at the specified time
 - ▶ Our veterinary partner will examine the animal(s), bring them up to date on vaccines, deworm, and provide any additional necessary veterinary care
 - ▶ A SafePet Ottawa volunteer will pick up the animal(s) later that day and bring them into foster care
 - ▶ The animal(s) remain in foster care until the survivor either finds permanent housing, or no longer qualifies for the program
 - ▶ Once they are ready to be reunited, a volunteer will bring the animal(s) back to a veterinary partner where they will be examined again
 - ▶ The family is reunited

Confidentiality

- ▶ SafePet Ottawa does not, under any circumstances, provide the information on our foster homes, veterinary clinics, and any other partner that may wish to remain anonymous
- ▶ This does mean that survivors are unable to visit their pets while in the SafePet Ottawa program
 - ▶ But we do send photos/video & updates on a monthly basis to the survivors



Community Collaboration: Collaboration & Trust Building in the Community

- ▶ Community Collaboration is a key part in how we sustain operations
- ▶ Some of our community partners include:
 - ▶ Ottawa Spay/Neuter clinic;
 - ▶ Retailers
 - ▶ OCTEVAW
 - ▶ Ottawa Humane Society
 - ▶ Various Veterinary Hospitals
 - ▶ Various Corporate Partners

48% of Ontario women
who left their abusive partner said their decision
was delayed **out of fear for their pet's safety.**
SafePet Ottawa eliminates that fear.



Frequently Asked Questions

- ▶ Does it cost anything to place an animal with SafePet Ottawa?
 - ▶ No, there is no cost to families or individuals needing to access the SafePet Ottawa program
- ▶ Can people see their pets while they are in the program?
 - ▶ No, for the safety of our foster homes we cannot provide their information
- ▶ Is there a limit on how long animals can stay in the program?
 - ▶ SafePet Ottawa does not have a time limit that pets can remain in the program - we're here as long as we're needed for
- ▶ Is it only dogs?
 - ▶ No, SafePet Ottawa fosters all species of animals.



Thank you!

