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To: Diane Balkin
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STRATEGIZING THE LINK
National Town Meeting

Plans for The Link National Town Meeting Moving Ahead!

The National Town Meeting on The Link -- a roll-up-your-shirt sleeves strategy session where researchers, community coalition leaders and advocates will meet to strategize a national effort to move The Link agenda forward -- promises to be one of the most exciting developments this year. It will be followed by an invitational Summit where national leaders will assimilate the ideas brought forth at the town meeting to craft what we hope will be a major collaborative effort.

Confirmed speakers and facilitators to date include Phil Arkow, Frank Ascione, Barbara Boat, Linda Jariz, Mark Kumpf, Randy Lockwood, Lila Miller, Gary Patronek, Allie Phillips and Ken Shapiro. There will be opportunities for poster presentations describing the public policy implications of The Link.

This all takes place June 8-10 in scenic Portland, Maine. If you're interested in The Link, you won't want to miss this. For details and to register, visit <http://www.americanhumane.org/> or <http://www.linkageproject.org/>, or contact susan@GreatGatherings.com.

Summary of Research on The Link Now Available

American Humane has compiled a concise summary of the highlights of research on The Link. This information will be of use to anyone needing a quick fact sheet to present to legislators, the media or the general public explaining how animal abuse interacts with violent crimes, child abuse, domestic violence and elder abuse. Look for the report on American Humane's website at www.americanhumane.org/link, or contact Phil Arkow, interim director for the Human-Animal Bond, at phila@americanhumane.org for a copy.

Link Brochure Now Available

American Humane has also completed work on a 16-page booklet summarizing The Link and what a variety of professionals can do. The booklet is designed for child welfare, domestic violence, law enforcement, criminal justice and veterinary professionals -- plus caring members of the public who want to get involved. To download the brochure, visit www.americanhumane.org/link or email phila@americanhumane.org to request a copy.

The Link between Rural Domestic Violence, Firearms Victimization, and Pet Abuse Explored

Despite the growing body of literature on family violence, there are few studies that deal specifically with family violence in a rural context. None have examined the implications of firearms in rural homes and the impact this may have on women dealing with abuse. New research from Deborah Doherty and Jennie Hornosty in Atlantic Canada sheds new light on how the confluence of firearms and pet abuse serves as an instrument of control, intimidation and abuse. They reported that the presence of weapons, which are often neither registered nor locked, in remote areas with a prevalent gun culture makes abused women more fearful for their safety and less likely to tell others or seek help. Similarly, consistent with other studies focusing on urban areas, they reported high percentages of threats or harm to pets, of children who were aware of these acts, and of women who were reluctant to disclose either the domestic violence or animal abuse. Sixty-four percent of women reported that firearms were used to harm the animals. An executive summary of the report is available from deborah.doherty@qnb.ca.

-- Doherty, D. & Hornosty, J. (2007). *Exploring the Links: Firearms, Family Violence and Animal Abuse in Rural Communities*. Fredericton, NB: University of New Brunswick, Family Violence on the Farm and in Rural Communities.

Ohio Legislature Introduces Pets in Protection Order Bill

Ohio has become the latest state to address the welfare of animals in domestic violence situations. On Dec. 21, Reps. Courtney Combs and Brian Williams, with 12 co-sponsors, introduced H.B. 418. The bill would require the state to include the protection of companion animals in the standardized forms used to issue temporary, domestic violence and anti-stalking protection orders. The bill would also require juvenile animal cruelty offenders to undergo psychiatric evaluation and individual or family counseling, and it would establish continuing medical education courses to train doctors to provide this counseling. Nine states have recently enacted laws that include pets in protection orders.

Link Addressed at First Veterinary Social Work Conference

The Link between human and animal violence is one of four key topics to be addressed at the first Veterinary Social Work Summit, to be held April 17-20 in Knoxville, Tenn., and co-sponsored by the Colleges of Social Work and Veterinary Medicine at the University of Tennessee. Practitioners of this new sub-specialty of social work practice will also learn about animal-assisted interventions, grief and bereavement, and compassion fatigue. Details are available at the conference website, <http://www.vet.utk.edu/socialwork/summit/>

Have some information to share with us?

Please let us know of any new research, trainings, publications, legislation, court cases or other developments about The Link and we'll pass it on to our readers. Just send an email to link@americanhumane.org.

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