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Latham Letter

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PROMOTING RESPECT FOR ALL LIFE THROUGH EDUCATION

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A Young Woman's Journey of Discovery



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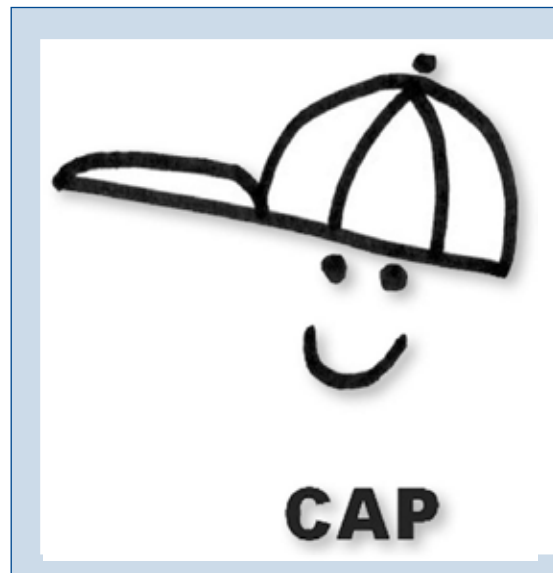


Animal Abuse

is

Everybody's Business

By Michael L. Kaibel



Part One:

KLAMATH COUNTY OREGON, home of Crater Lake National Park, is a recreational paradise with beautiful scenery, mountain meadows, and an abundance of streams and lakes. Nestled on the east side of the Cascade Mountain Range, Klamath is considered high desert and has an average of 300 days of sunshine per year. We are a family orientated rural community with traditional values.

Yet, like every community across America, there is a dark shadowy side that largely goes unspoken. Hidden within the shadows is family violence. Tease apart the fabric of family violence and you will find the tangled threads of child maltreatment, domestic violence, elder abuse, and animal abuse. Yes, animal abuse is a form of family violence. Animals are often the target of threats and acts of violence as a way to control family members and others. But the connection between animal abuse and human-on-human violence is not new. Pythagoras (570 BC – 495 BC) said, “For as long as men massacre animals, they will kill each other. Indeed, he who sows

the seed of murder and pain cannot reap joy and love.” And St. Francis of Assisi (1181-1246) declared, “If you have men who will exclude any of God’s creatures from the shelter of compassion and pity, you will have men who will deal likewise with their fellow men.”

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Indeed, he who sows the seed of murder and pain
cannot reap joy and love.**

– Pythagoras (Pre-Socratic Greek Philosopher)

Today we have the benefit of decades of scientific research connecting cruelty to animals with interpersonal violence. And so it was in April of 2009 with our “Vision of a Violence-Free Klamath County” that our community group, Klamath Child Abuse Prevention (CAP), decided to include the prevention of cruelty to animals as part of our program to end child abuse and break the cycles of family violence. Since 1997, CAP child and family advocates have been dedicated to bringing light and hope to victims, survivors, and the community at large through education and awareness campaigns. Educating our citizens about the connection (The LINK®) between animal abuse and human abuse was the next logical step in our prevention program and is now a standard part of our awareness campaign: **PROMOTE KINDNESS – Prevent Cruelty to Animals.**

Known locally as an action group, CAP members were ready and willing to take our program to the streets and make a tangible difference in the lives of children and families. Our first action item was in the area of domestic violence because it severely impacts the whole family and is one of the least reported crimes. Consider these facts: Twelve independent studies have reported that between 18% and 48% of battered women delay leaving abusive situations out

of fear for the safety of their animals (Ascione, 2007); and in a Wisconsin study, 68% of battered women reported their animals had been the target of violence. Of these incidents, 87% occurred in the presence of the women to intimidate and control them, and 75% occurred in the presence of children (Quinisk, 1999).

The decision was made to meet with the director and staff at our local women's shelter for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault, Klamath Crisis Center, and introduce them to American Humane's Pets and Women's Shelters (PAWS)[®] Program. It had been a long-time wish of the shelter's director to have an on-site kennel, and with guidance from the PAWS Program, the process is underway to make her dream come true. We expect the PAWS kennel at Klamath Crisis Center (KlamathCrisisCenter.org) to be operational by Spring 2011.

Next, CAP approached our Klamath Falls Police Department about ways to inform battered victims about the availability of the on-site kennel (our police department has an excellent working relationship with the Crisis Center and an extensive knowledge of the needs of battered victims). They said that by law they were required to give victims of domestic violence a written statement of their rights. Their suggestion was to add a statement at the bottom of that form and together we came up with: **Contact Klamath Crisis Center for safety planning, including pets**. This statement will go into effect the next time they reprint the form.

Another way to assist victims and their children from further intimidation and control by batterers is to have animals included in domestic violence protective orders. Currently, 17 states have laws providing for the inclusion of animals in protective orders, unfortunately Oregon is not one of them. However, judges in Oregon can include animals in protective orders under the "other relief" clause in the Family Abuse Prevention Act. So we contacted our county court to encourage our judges to take animal abuse seriously and to see if they were comfortable with the "other relief" clause for including animals in

protective orders. Klamath County judges responded that they were okay with the "other relief" clause as long as the case merits it and it is presented as a human safety and welfare issue.

Then CAP went to the Domestic Violence Reduction Unit (DVRU) in the District Attorney's Office to share what the judges had said, so the DA's Office would know how best to petition the court for inclusion of animals in domestic violence protection orders. DVRU's Domestic Violence Investigator acknowledged their full support and noted that they were in the process of creating a new Domestic Violence Resource List. To further help get the word out and to show a coordinated approach by agencies to help victims of domestic violence, DVRU plans to use the exact same wording the police department is using (Contact Klamath Crisis Center for safety planning, including pets) and to display it in their new resource list. With the addition of local animal-care groups providing temporary foster care for pets, we felt that we had woven a comprehensive safety net to support battered victims wanting to escape their situation without fear of what the batterer would do to their beloved pets.

CAP's second action item was to turn its attention to using The LINK[®] to reduce child abuse. Research studies show that people are more willing to report the maltreatment or neglect of an animal than of a child (Loar, 1999), and that people have a lower tolerance for cruelty and damage to animals than for cruelty and damage to children (Ascione & Arkow, 1999). In another study, a survey of pet-owning families with substantiated child abuse and neglect found that animals were abused in 88% of homes where child physical abuse was present (DeViney, Dickert, & Lockwood, 1983).



Henley Middle School student Amanda Gatz, accompanied by her parents Penny and Chris, is recognized as the first "Purple Hands Pledge Ambassador" in the Nation for her outstanding achievements with the Hands Project program and her high level of character.

KEEP IN MIND

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(Ascione, 2007)

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“Investigation of animal abuse is often the first point of social services intervention for a family...”

– Humane Society of the United States

For many children, the pain of child maltreatment is matched only by the pain of disclosing the abuse in a courtroom, a hospital or during an investigative interview. It is critical that child protection professionals do everything possible to lessen the child’s burden. To this end, the TASK™ Program is an innovative and sound intervention that assists children both short and long term.

– Director, National Child Protection Training Center

Identifying children and families at risk has been difficult in the past because of the fears and myths that keep people from reporting child abuse and neglect. But knowing that people are more likely to report animal abuse than child abuse, we decided to use that research to our advantage. One creative solution for the early identification of children and families at risk is to transform animal lovers into child welfare defenders. CAP members felt this could be accomplished simply by inspiring and motivating the estimated 40,000 animal lovers in Klamath to report animal abuse. Key to the success of this plan is that in

our community Klamath Animal Control officers are mandatory reporters for child abuse. As such, they are cross-trained to recognize and report child abuse as well as animal abuse. As noted by the Humane Society of the United States, “Investigation of animal abuse is often the first point of social services intervention for a family...” CAP plans to use our 2nd annual “Go Orange for Animals!” event as the kickoff for our awareness campaign encouraging the reporting of animal abuse as a way to reduce child abuse. See ASPCA.org for information on their “Go Orange for Animals” program.

Further assistance to promote public awareness of The LINK® and to reduce child abuse came from our Klamath County Sheriff’s Office. CAP was invited to join their Neighborhood Watch Program for county residences where we would be allowed to add information about the “family violence system” (child abuse, domestic violence, elder abuse, and animal abuse). CAP also received a similar invitation to join the city-wide Neighborhood Watch Program sponsored by the Klamath Falls Police Department whose partners include citizens, Klamath Falls City School District, and the Klamath Falls City Council. In effect, CAP will be starting a Neighborhood Watch for Pets

component under the official Klamath Neighborhood Watch Programs. This holds great promise, as Neighborhood Watch is one of the oldest and most effective crime prevention programs in the country, thanks to citizens and law enforcement working together to make communities safer.

Another promising project in Klamath revolves around America Humane's Therapy Animals Assisting Kids (TASK™) Program. The TASK™ Program was written to encourage and guide professionals within the criminal justice and child welfare systems to incorporate therapy animals into their programs and is based on research that clearly shows animals are a positive presence for children during traumatic events. The Director of the National Child Protection Training Center stated, "For many children, the pain of child maltreatment is matched only by the pain of disclosing the abuse in a courtroom, a hospital or during an investigative interview. It is critical that child protection professionals do everything possible to lessen the child's burden. To this end, the TASK™ Program is an innovative and sound intervention that assists children both short and long term."

CAP is currently in conversation with Klamath Lake Child Abuse Response & Evaluation Services (CARES) and Angels In Whiskers (local Certified Therapy Dogs) to include therapy dogs in their assessment services with children to create a more child-friendly environment. CAP also provided our DA's Office with information on the value of having dogs in courthouse settings (see CourthouseDogs.com for further information) where the dog's calming presence creates a more positive atmosphere.

Annually, CAP requests the Klamath County Board of Commissioners and the Klamath Falls City Council to proclaim April as National Child Abuse Prevention Month in Klamath. This presented us with another opportunity to promote awareness of The LINK® to both citizens and public officials.


AMENDED OFFICIAL CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION PROCLAMATION:

"WHEREAS, animal abuse is family violence and an early warning sign of a family in trouble, all citizens are encouraged to work together in reporting animal cruelty thus ending the cycle of abuse for all..."

Because CAP was blending child abuse prevention with preventing cruelty to animals, we needed a strong yet flexible program that could bridge both components and serve as the corner-stone for all of our anti-violence programs. We were already experiencing phenomenal success in our community and schools with an award winning program called **Hands & Words Are Not For Hurting Project®** (HandsProject.org).

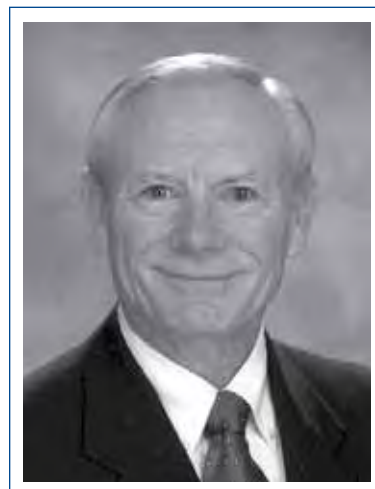
The Hands Project reduces



violence of all types and is proven to save lives. Its success is based on simplicity, repetition, and visibility. Following the wisdom that "all you need to change the world is one simple, powerful idea" makes these words the fourteen most important words you will need to remember all your life: "I Will Not Use My Hands Or My Words For Hurting Myself Or Others®." 

End of Part One

Part Two featuring the Hands Project will be continued in the Spring 2011 *Latham Letter*.



Michael L Kaibel is the Violence Prevention Coordinator for Klamath Child Abuse Prevention in Klamath County, Oregon. He is the recipient of the Klamath County Volunteer of the Year 2010 Award and the Camp Fire USA Centennial Spirit Award. Contact Michael for information on their programs to reduce all forms of family violence, including animal abuse, at michaelkaibel@centurytel.net or call 541-798-5498.

Greetings Latham,

I hope your Thanksgiving was enjoyable. One of the things I'm grateful for is the Latham Letter. In your Spring 2010 edition you featured Maine's Linkage Project and the great success they were having across their state bringing awareness about the animal cruelty/human violence connection.

The article was so inspiring that our group, Klamath Child Abuse Prevention, contacted Tonya DiMillo at the Linkage Project for information and ideas. Our conversations lead to setting up a train-the-trainer seminar with the Linkage Project. I'm happy to report that on Tuesday, 11/23/10, the Linkage Project did their first interstate training for the good citizens of Klamath Falls, Oregon. Despite a snow blizzard and hazardous road conditions we had 42 participants attend the training. It was a diverse group of community agencies that included:

- The Klamath Tribes
- Animal Control (they want to get animal abuse cases reported in the newspaper, same as drunk driver arrests) Klamath Lake Community Action Services/Sunshine Tykes Day Care
- Batterers Intervention (they are going to add animal questions to their polygraph exams)
- Department of Human Services
- Court-Appointed Special Advocates (CASA)
- Grandparents As Parents
- Child Abuse Response & Evaluation Services
- Sky Lakes Medical Center; Adult Protective Services
- Klamath Falls Police Department
- Klamath County Commission on Children & Families
- Klamath Crisis Center
- Lutheran Community Services (alcohol & drug treatment center)
- The Oregon Institute of Technology Integrated Student Health Center.

Attendee comments were: "Excellent, I learned a lot, Great, Powerful, Very moving ... and more. I can wholeheartedly recommend this training to anyone interested in learning about the violence connection between human and non-human animals."

Tonya DiMillo did an absolutely wonderful job of explaining the animal cruelty/human violence connection and answering tough questions from the audience. Also, their technical support, lead by Ben Walker, was flexible and accommodating to our unique needs.

Thanks again to the Latham Letter for being an important bridge to resources that support humane education across the nation around the globe.

Sincerely,

Michael Kaibel
Violence Prevention Coordinator
Klamath Child Abuse Prevention (CAP)
Klamath Chapter Hands & Words Are Not for Hurting Project®
KlamathCAP.com

See related article that begins on Page 16.