



381 McDow Rd
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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 14, 2022

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Shelby Humane helping victims of Domestic Violence with SafePet Program

Columbiana, Ala – Did you know that Shelby Humane has a program that helps victims of domestic violence? The program is called SafePet, and its purpose is to eliminate pet ownership as a barrier for survivors escaping domestic violence.

The National Domestic Violence Hotline states that pets in abusive situations often experience violence similarly to people. Cherished pets are more likely to be used as tools of manipulation by an abuser. They may get caught in the crossfire of violence towards people, or the batterer may target the pet to gain silence and compliance from human victims. As a result, as many as 65 percent of domestic violence victims are unable to escape abusive situations because they're concerned about what will happen to their pets.

There are currently no domestic violence shelters in Alabama that provide free veterinary care, food, and boarding for victims of domestic violence. The Shelby SafePet Program addresses both human safety and pet safety and prevents victims from having to make the difficult choice of protecting themselves by entering a shelter or protecting their pets by staying to care for them in an abusive home.

Shelby SafePet will provide foster care or long-term boarding for animals until the victim is able to provide care and shelter for the pet, and themselves. The program covers costs associated with injuries and other health conditions due to abuse, including forensic veterinary examinations to document abuse. SafePet also covers all necessary preventative care, including vaccinations, deworming, heartworm tests for dogs, and Feline Leukemia testing for cats.

Shelby Humane Director of Operations, Dr. Bill Rowley says the need for this program is higher than it should be. "Up to 71 percent of victims entering domestic violence shelters report that their abusers threatened, injured, or killed the family pets."

Currently Shelby SafePet provides services to seven counties in Central Alabama: Blount, Clay, Coosa, Jefferson, Shelby, St. Clair and Walker. "We want to keep expanding our reach," said Rowley. "This program can save lives – for victims and their pets."

To be eligible for Shelby SafePet, a potential client will need to provide a letter of support or an application from a domestic violence program, law enforcement, victim servicing agency, or a copy of a



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Temporary Protection Order (TPO). They will also need to provide proof of residence in one of our current service counties.

If you or someone you know needs assistance from Shelby SafePet, visit our website at <https://www.shelbyhumane.org/safepet> or contact safepet@shelbyhumane.org for more information.