

# ***PRESS RELEASE***

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**CONTACT:**

***Nevada Network Against Domestic Violence, Tel. 775.828.1115***

*Sue Meuschke, Executive Director, [suem@nnadv.org](mailto:suem@nnadv.org)*

*Norma Restivo, Program Specialist, Education & Outreach, [normar@nnadv.org](mailto:normar@nnadv.org)*

## **The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) and the Nevada Network Against Domestic Violence sponsor Statewide ‘Safe Havens for Pets of Domestic Violence Victims’**

Since pets are often at risk in domestic violence situations, and Nevada domestic violence shelters aren’t always able to take threatened animals, The Humane Society of the United States developed a network of ‘Safe Havens for Pets of Domestic Violence Victims’ throughout the state.

The Nevada Network Against Domestic Violence (NNADV), has made the list of safe havens available through the Statewide Domestic Violence Hotline (1.800.500.1556), or through local domestic violence programs.

“Pets are too often caught in the crossfire of domestic violence: They are used as a way to exert power and control over victims of the abuse, and often a victim delays leaving a dangerous relationship because she does not know how to protect her beloved pets,” said Beverlee McGrath, The HSUS’ Nevada state director, who developed the network. “We found an urgent need to identify rescue groups and animal control agencies that would participate in a pet foster care program to offer support for domestic violence victims and we appreciate the Nevada Network Against Domestic Violence working with us to implement the program.”

McGrath discovered a need for animal safe havens while researching legislation related to abuse. She’s since found 13 animal control departments and 20 rescue groups and humane organizations that were willing to participate in a statewide network. The participating rescue groups and organizations will work to create safe havens so victims and their pets can leave dangerous situations.

Sue Meuschke, executive director of the Nevada Network Against Domestic Violence, said, “The poor economy makes it that much more difficult for women wanting to leave a violent situation to take that step. Concerns about pets and how to protect them from the violence too, are one

of many factors that confront women thinking about leaving. The ‘pet foster care network’ will be a wonderful addition to services available to families.”

Safe havens for pets of domestic violence victims are increasingly being created throughout the United States. Safe haven projects are sometimes operated like foster care. In other instances, pet victims are taken in (permanently/temporarily or both) by a participating animal shelter or domestic violence shelter.

Bonney Brown, executive director of the Nevada Humane Society, said, “Sadly, domestic violence impacts both people and their pets. The desire to protect pets sometimes keeps victims in an unsafe situation. In this tough economic climate, other options can be hard to find. Providing a safe haven for the pets of victims of domestic violence is a needed service and one that provides great comfort to the human victims. We appreciate that Beverlee is working to be sure this valuable service is available and are happy to do our part to help.”

At a national level, The Humane Society of the United States, along with the Animal Welfare Institute and Ahimsa House of Atlanta, Ga., is developing a directory that will list contact information and other background for every safe haven for pets program in the United States called the Safe Havens Mapping Project. The directory will be available online through multiple websites, and will offer a way to locate the nearest ‘safe haven for pets’ program by zip code.

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#### About NNADV:

The Nevada Network Against Domestic Violence was founded in 1980 to work toward the elimination of domestic and sexual violence against all persons. As Nevada’s statewide coalition, NNADV is an inclusive network which both supports our member programs, and educates the public at large.



The Humane Society of the United States is the nation’s largest animal protection organization – backed by 11 million Americans, or one of every 28. For more than a half-century, The HSUS has been fighting for the protection of all animals through advocacy, education and hands-on programs. Celebrating animals and confronting cruelty -- On the web at [humanesociety.org](http://humanesociety.org).

HSUS Nationwide Media Contact: Pepper Ballard: 240-751-0232; [pballard@humanesociety.org](mailto:pballard@humanesociety.org)