

Press Release



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Humane Society Silicon Valley Joins Santa Clara County District Attorney's Office and Animal Groups to Fight Animal Abuse



MILPITAS, Calif., June 1, 2010 – Humane Society Silicon Valley (HSSV), has joined forces with the Santa Clara County District Attorney's Office and several other animal welfare agencies to fight animal abuse throughout the County.

At a news conference in San Jose today, Santa Clara County District Attorney Dolores Carr said cruelty to animals is a growing problem that her office is taking seriously and is committed to prosecuting those who harm animals.

Carr said animal abuse can include afflicting physical pain and suffering on an animal, killing an animal, abandoning an animal, failing to provide basic nutrition, shelter, or veterinary care for an animal, animal fighting, and hoarding. Warning signs of animal abuse can range from an owner's lack of concern about a current pet's injuries and his refusal to treat such injuries, to severe signs of neglect such as matting, extreme weight loss, and unsanitary living conditions.

Leaving Pets in a Hot Car is a CRIME

Carr said animal cruelty is not limited to intentional physical abuse. For example, she said leaving a pet in a hot car, even for a short while, is a crime. Carr used a car parked in the parking lot nearby as an example of how hot a vehicle can get even when the weather outside is fairly mild.

"It's 69 degrees and windy outside but inside that car the temperature has hit 110 degrees in just 30 minutes," Carr remarked.

The District Attorney's Office will distribute posters throughout Santa Clara County that show a dog sitting inside an oven with the following message: A Hot car and A Hot Oven are the SAME thing! Leaving an animal in a hot car is a CRIME. To report, please call 911. The posters will be available in multiple languages.

HSSV Helps Pets Whose Owners are Victims of Domestic Violence

Beth Ward, chief operating officer for HSSV, said HSSV has been working with county-wide domestic shelters since 2001 to help victims of domestic violence through the "Ani-Safe" program.

"Pets are often threatened or injured by the violent partner as a way to intimidate or control other family members," Ward said, noting that many victims do not leave their abusive homes for the safety of shelters for fear that their pets will be harmed by their violent spouse or relative. Domestic Violence shelters often cannot accept pets because of health regulations, space limitations and potential liabilities. HSSV offers food, shelter and medical care for victim's pets for up to three weeks.

"This program gives the victim time to find alternative housing arrangements for their animal companions," Ward explained, noting that the pets are accepted confidentially. "Our goal is to reunite them with their families but when that is not possible, we work with them to re-home their animal companions."

Ward said it's important for all communities to establish a program like "Ani-Safe" that provides temporary sheltering for pets from violent homes. "These programs remove a barrier for many pet owners experiencing abusive relationships when they seek help."

The public is encouraged to report abuse of an animal 24 hours a day, and can do so anonymously. To report cases of abuse in San Jose, Milpitas, Cupertino, Los Gatos and Saratoga, call San Jose Animal Care and Services at 408.578.7297. In Campbell, Monte Sereno and Santa Clara, call Silicon Valley Animal Control Authority at 408.764.0344. In Sunnyvale, contact Sunnyvale Animal Services at 408.730.7100. For cases of animal abuse in Los Altos, Los Altos Hills, Palo Alto, and Mountain View, call Palo Alto Animal Services at 650.496.5971. For cases of animal abuse in Gilroy contact the Gilroy Police Department at 408.846.0350. For cases of animal abuse in Morgan Hill, contact the Morgan Hill Police Department at 408.779.2101.

About Humane Society Silicon Valley

Humane Society Silicon Valley (HSSV) is an independent, non-profit agency offering quality adoptions, medical care, education programs and pet care services to enhance the human-animal bond. Established in 1929, HSSV has served Silicon Valley for 80 years and found homes for more than 500,000 animals. All animals in HSSV's adoption program are sheltered until they are placed in a loving home. HSSV is an "open door" facility and accepts animals' 24-hours a day, seven days a week, regardless of any temperament or health related problems. In April 2009, HSSV opened its new Animal Community Center in Milpitas. HSSV also operates a satellite adoption center in PETCO in the El Paseo Shopping Center in San Jose. More information about HSSV can be found at www.hssv.org.

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