

# **Belleville Area Humane Society Creates SafePets Program For Domestic Violence Survivors**

by Tara L. Cale  
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**BELLEVILLE** - I often hear stories from people about how their pet was the only one there for them during difficult times - maybe the only thing that got them through their trials and tribulations. But no matter how good the intentions, sometimes life brings challenges that make caring for pets difficult or impossible. So I was so thrilled to hear

about the first animal assistance program in Southern Illinois that provides temporary care for pets of those experiencing domestic violence.

The Belleville Area Humane Society (BAHS) has created an alternative to surrendering a beloved pet during such a time, and the RedRover organization has awarded grant funding to support the first animal assistance program in Southern Illinois providing temporary care for the pets of those experiencing domestic violence, so that every family member can find safety.

One in three women experience domestic abuse within their lifetime, but very few domestic violence shelters allow pets (only 10% nationally). Because of this, 48% of survivors delay leaving an abusive relationship because they don't want to leave a pet behind. While the survivor's owned pet is with BAHS, the SafePets program provides appropriate care for the pet(s), such as vaccinations, spay/neuter, preventative, and even heartworm treatment.

Jorden Sherman, BAHS Community Outreach Manager, and program founder noted, "We are so grateful for RedRover's support. This funding empowers our shelter to build safe housing for pets of survivors. This generous grant from RedRover also allows us to make necessary safety improvements so that our facility and staff stay safe as well. We are very excited for the future of this program and the immensely positive impact it will have on the lives of survivors and their furry family members."

BAHS believes every aspect of their multifaceted outreach program must support those most vulnerable in the community. Every single time a client, and especially a survivor, is able to keep the family pets, instead of surrendering them into the animal welfare system, creates a very special moment that showcases Belleville Area Humane Society's mission at its best.

The Belleville Area Humane Society is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and has been serving St. Clair County, Illinois area for over 63 years. Homeless animals in the community are valued, cared for, and treated with compassion. Funded 100% through donor support, BAHS strives to improve the lives of homeless animals in our community through foster, adoption, humane education, and community outreach. Services provided include: affordable spay/neuter options, low cost vaccine and microchip clinics, emergency veterinary assistance, and a monthly pet food pantry. To donate, volunteer, and learn more [visit www.bahspets.org](http://www.bahspets.org).

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