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SafePet Ontario expands program to assist survivors of domestic violence in Durham Region

DURHAM REGION, Ont., Oct. 21, 2020 – SafePet Ontario has partnered with the Humane Society of Durham Region (HSDR) to help expand the SafePet program in Durham Region. HSDR will act as SafePet Ontario’s regional coordinator to provide additional support for individuals fleeing domestic violence with their pet.

As regional coordinator, HSDR will process enrolment requests, coordinate wellness checks for SafePet animals, and facilitate temporary care for pets when needed.

“We’re excited to offer support for survivors in Durham,” says Danielle Johnson, HSDR’s manager of shelter operations. “We understand the link between domestic violence and violence against pets, and unfortunately we hear about it happening in our community quite often.”

Bethesda House, Herizon House, The Denise House, YWCA Durham’s Y’s WISH Shelter, Victim Services of Durham Region and the Durham Regional Police Service have also partnered with SafePet Ontario to offer support for survivors in the region. These organizations will act as authorized referral agents to help enroll individuals and their pets in the program.

Administered by the Ontario Veterinary Medical Association, SafePet helps people and pets find safety sooner by coordinating foster care for the pets of survivors fleeing domestic or intimate partner violence.

With the COVID-19 pandemic forcing many survivors to quarantine with their abusers, SafePet Ontario has seen a surge in requests for help since restrictions were lifted.

“A lot of survivors don’t want to leave because they can’t take their pet with them,” says Johnson. “We want survivors to know that there’s a safe place for their pets to go while they focus on getting back on their feet and staying safe. We’re here for you.”

SafePet Ontario’s Durham network is encouraging individuals in the area to sign up as fosters and provide temporary care for pets in need. Foster families play a vital role by helping to ensure that no pet is left behind in an abusive environment. To learn more about fostering for SafePet Ontario in Durham Region, visit www.hsdr.org.

For more information about the SafePet Ontario program and how you can help, visit www.safepet.ca.

About SafePet Ontario

Established by the Ontario Veterinary Medical Association in 2003, SafePet Ontario coordinates foster care for pets of individuals fleeing domestic violence. The program helps survivors seek safety while ensuring their pet receives proper care until they're stabilized and safe and can reunite.

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