

# Safe Humane Chicago is a force for good

SAFE HUMANE CHICAGO | APRIL 6, 2012 | BY: KEITH SANDERSON

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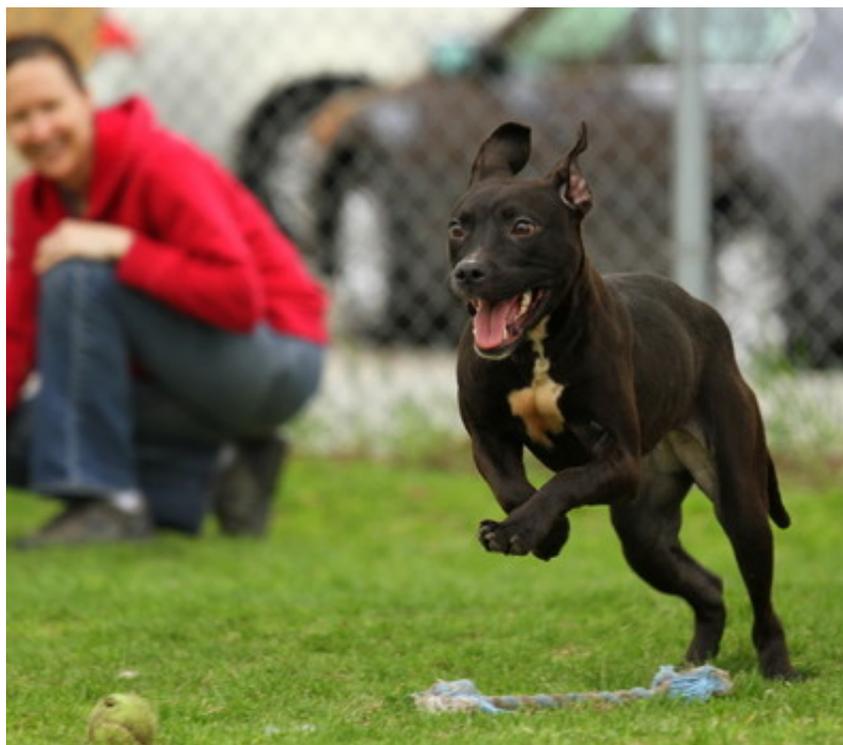


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Mahatma Gandhi said, “The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated.”

Skeptics might argue that the way animals are treated is of secondary concern to the way humans are treated. However, there is a growing body of evidence

that there is a [connection \(http://www.paws.org/human-violence-connection.html\)](http://www.paws.org/human-violence-connection.html) between animal abuse and human violence.

Despite the connection between animal abuse and human violence, there are few organizations whose mission it is to break that connection. [Safe Humane Chicago \(http://www.safehumanechicago.org/\)](http://www.safehumanechicago.org/) is an exception.

According to Cynthia Bathurst, executive director and co-founder, "Our mission is to create safe and humane communities by inspiring positive relationships between people and animals. We do this by being an alliance of non-traditional partners that recognize the connections between animal abuse and interpersonal violence and the benefits of the human-animal bond."

The alliances to which Bathurst refers include a carefully stitched quilt of various animal organizations, police and sheriff departments, attorneys, judges, courts, and schools. The end result is that [Safe Humane Chicago \(http://www.examiner.com/topic/safe-humane-chicago/articles\)](http://www.examiner.com/topic/safe-humane-chicago/articles) successfully carries out three core programs that provide the organization a means to fulfill its mission. The programs are the Youth LeaderS Program, Lifetime Bonds Program and the Collaborative Justice Program.

Briefly, Youth Leaders teaches peers and younger children in disadvantaged communities about the humane treatment of companion animals, why animal abuse is bad, and how to be safe around dogs.

The intent of the Lifetime Bonds program is for incarcerated teens to bond, socialize, and train shelter dogs so they are prepared for adoption and to develop new skills.

Another facet of the Lifetime Bonds program is to work with kids in disadvantaged communities in training their own dogs.

The third program is the Collaborative Justice program where abused animals involved in court cases are socialized and trained and placed in good homes. Meanwhile Court Advocates sit in courtrooms and advocate for humane care and for effective disposition of cases.

Another important aspect of the Collaborative Justice Program is that police, prosecutors and judges are trained about animal related laws in order to affect facilitate effective sentencing and to make sure animals trapped in the judicial system are humanely treated and don't become victims again. For example, according to Bathurst "Prior to the involvement of Safe Humane, up to 98 percent of the dogs associated with court cases were routinely euthanized when relinquished or after a guilty outcome of their owners court cases."

The irony is obvious. Dogs that were abused by owners were left by court systems in cages for long periods, then euthanized. Now the animals are evaluated, socialized and worked with on a one-by-one case.

Bathurst claims that, "As a result of the program, 50 percent of the dogs are NOW saved."

In order to provide the reader with a more comprehensive overview, there will be two additional articles which will provide more coverage of Safe Humane Chicago and specific insight into the Youth Leaders, Lifetime Bonds, and Collaborative Justice Programs.

Part Two of this series about Safe Humane Chicago will provide more information on the organization and a deeper look at the Collaborative Justice "Court Case Dogs" program.

*Make sure you don't miss the next segment about Safe Humane Chicago. Subscribe and follow Keith so you automatically receive notice when his articles are published.*

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**Keith Sanderson**, Chicago Animal Advocacy Examiner

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