

**Safe for Pets too.**

*In Transition with You.*



## **First Year Report on Sheltering Animals of Women Leaving Domestic Violence in NB**

**February 2011 to January 2012**

**Safe For Pets Too** is a province wide service in New Brunswick that provides temporary emergency boarding and care for animals (small, large and exotic) belonging to individuals seeking refuge from domestic violence. Women who have concerns about the safety of their pets can contact their nearest transition house or domestic violence outreach office and make arrangements to participate in this service. After signing the appropriate documents and waivers, the animals are picked up by the New Brunswick-SPCA and transported to a participating veterinarian for free health check. The animals are then placed in foster care outside the community for a period of up to 30 days. This stay may be extended if necessary. Once the woman is ready to leave the transition house or has found someplace place to live, the animals are returned to her. Although the woman and children cannot visit their pets while they are in foster care, they can get weekly updates on how their pets are doing. Many find these updates very reassuring.

To date, we are pleased to have served 20 women fleeing abuse and sheltered nearly 30 animals. Women who participated have been extremely pleased that this service supported them in their efforts to deal with the abuse in their relationships. As one client wrote in a thank you letter to the committee:

***“It’s hard to move on from an unhealthy situation. It’s even worse when you feel like you are leaving innocent family members behind. Because that’s truly what my pets are. I could no sooner have turned my back on my animals than I could any other member of my family...I would like to thank Safe For Pets Too for being there. I could not have done it without you. You are angels.”***

The service is overseen by a volunteer, non-profit committee comprised of representatives from the NBSPCA, the New Brunswick Veterinary Medical Association, transition houses and domestic violence outreach, Police and RCMP, Public Legal Education and Information Service and the New Brunswick Association of Chiefs of Police.

<b>Report on Usage: Statistics on the usage of SFPT for the period from the launch of the program in February 2011 to January 30, 2011.</b>	
<b>Total Number of Animals Placed in Care:</b>	31 animals
<b>Number of Abused Women Helped:</b>	22 women
<b>Animals Currently in Care:</b>	1 cat and 5 dogs
<b>Number of Requests Cancelled:</b> (Note: For various reasons, callers have changed their mind about placing their pet in care. They may have made alternate arrangements, returned to their homes, etc.)	6 cancellations
<b>Types of Animals Placed:</b>	Cats = 19      Dogs = 12      Other = 0
<b>Areas Serviced:</b>	Locations in and around Fredericton, St. Stephen, Moncton, Campbellton, Woodstock and Miramichi
<b>SFPT Kilometers Clocked by NBSPCA:</b>	4,250 kilometers (Note: Travel to place animals in care amounts to about 200 kilometers per caller. Although this may seem high, this service assists rural clients and NBSPAC Animal Protection officers pick up the animals entering the service, drive them to a participating Veterinarian for a healthy animal check in another County and if necessary take the animals to their foster care situation. When the animals are ready to be returned to their owners, the officer reunites them with the woman.)
<b>Animals Surrendered:</b>	1 cat (Note: Surrendered because the elderly abused woman using the program found a placement in a senior care home which did not allow pets. The pet was later adopted.)
<b>Other Information:</b>	Many of the women ask for, and are provided with, weekly updates on the status of their pets.
<b>Client Feedback:</b>	To date, we have had extremely positive feedback. The women who have used the service are extremely grateful. Many would have stayed in a potentially dangerous situation if they had not been able to put their animals into a safe place while they sought help. There has been only one case where an animal in the program was surrendered and that was because the elderly woman who was fleeing abuse ended up entering a long-care facility that did not permit pets.
<b>Contact Us:</b>	For more information about this service, please contact us by email at: <a href="mailto:admin.nbspca@bellaliant.com">admin.nbspca@bellaliant.com</a> .