



A campaign to stop the violence
for our children and companion animals

Safe Humane Chicago is an unprecedented community-wide alliance to combat violence by promoting compassion and caring for people and animals. It accomplishes these goals by educating the public about responsible pet ownership and safety; promoting programs that stop the violence associated with dog fighting and animal abuse by providing positive, beneficial activities; and connecting pet owners to available resources. By taking steps to instill kindness and to reduce violence in our communities, the campaign will create safer, more humane neighborhoods across Chicago. In recognition of this powerful initiative, Best Friends Animal Society, as a national partner, will take this Chicago model to other major cities as *Project Safe Humane*.

Comprehensive programming for *Safe Humane Chicago* targets neighborhoods most affected by violence and most in need of resources using schools, churches and community groups. It has five key components:

1. **Programming for children**, “Kids, Animals and Kindness,” teaches children proper techniques for approaching and handling animals, including how to avoid a bite; humane treatment and proper care of animals; the importance of spay/neuter programs; and why dog fighting and animal abuse is bad. It provides interactive instruction with trained presenters, trained dogs and skilled dog trainers. Children are instructed to report animal abuse of any kind to a responsible adult, such as a *Safe Humane Chicago* participant. The program will be offered to participating faith-based and community organizations in targeted neighborhoods, starting with the Ministerial Alliance Against the Digital Divide, a next-generation civil rights organization with a membership of over 500 Chicago churches.
2. **Programming for teenagers**, “Youth Leaders for Safe Humane Chicago,” educates youth and certifies high school students as *Safe Humane Chicago* presenters in a Chicago Public Schools class. Teenagers mentor peers and younger children about humanely treating animals and caring for them, why dog fighting and animal abuse are bad, and how to set good examples. The program is offered through participating Chicago Public Schools.
3. **Programming for adults**, “It’s All Connected,” educates older teenagers and adults in targeted communities about why they should take dog fighting and animal abuse seriously to protect our children from violence. It emphasizes the significant connection between violence towards animals and violence towards people as well as the important bonds and care-giving skills engendered by the humane treatment of animals. Instruction includes proper animal care, how to avoid animal bites, and the importance of spay/neuter programs as well as information about available community resources. Participants are encouraged to report dog fighting and animal abuse to law enforcement. The program will be offered through participating faith-based and neighborhood organizations using trained members from the groups.
4. **Programming for at-risk youth**, “Lifetime Bonds,” engages teenagers and young adults who have been involved in or introduced to dog fighting. It will coach youth to deliver *Safe Humane Chicago* messaging to other at-risk youth. The goal is to stop the violence associated with dog fighting and animal abuse, to instill respect for both people and animals, and to provide necessary tools, encouragement and support for the safe, humane treatment of animals. Participants will be instructed on how to care for dogs, train them positively, and participate in beneficial activities with them.
5. **Support for criminal justice**: In partnership with Chicago’s community policing network and the Chicago Police Department, participants work with government agencies to provide training, logistical support and appropriate interventions for situations involving animal neglect, abuse and fighting. An already successful Court Advocacy program trains community members to follow court cases involving animal abuse of all kinds and develops educational materials and information that promote understanding and effective intervention. The existing program is a partnership of the nonprofit organization D.A.W.G. and both Chicago and Cook County agencies. It has trained more than 700 volunteers, followed hundreds of court cases, and positively impacted arrests, prosecutions, convictions and remedies.

