

Safe Haven Foster Program

What is the Safe Haven program?

Sojourner Family Peace Center and the Wisconsin Humane Society have partnered to provide the Safe Haven program, which offers up to 60 days of shelter for animals of domestic violence victims. Many victims are hesitant to leave a dangerous situation because they fear for their animal's safety. This program makes it possible for victims to leave a dangerous situation without losing their companion animal. Animals provide companionship, comfort, and unconditional love to women and children affected by domestic violence, and preserving the bond between families and their animals is vitally important.



How can I help?

Volunteer as a foster parent to help animals and families in need. Opening your home to an animal through the Safe Haven program not only provides a comfortable home environment for the animal, but also peace of mind for their family. Your generosity will help save lives – both human and animal.

This position requires a desire to nurture and train an animal. Safe Haven foster families must commit to care for their foster animal for up to 60 days and may need to bring the foster animal to the shelter for occasional check-ups during that time.

To become a Safe Haven foster parent, fill out an [application](#). The Wisconsin Humane Society will review your application and invite you to an upcoming orientation. After orientation, they will set up a time to meet in your home to discuss the program and answer questions prior to your first placement. A criminal background check will also be required.

To learn more about Wisconsin Humane Society's [general foster program](#) or check out answers to [frequently asked questions](#), please call (414) 431-6103 or email volunteer@wihumane.org.

Why is this program important?



Research finds a clear and compelling link between animal abuse and domestic violence. A study of women seeking shelter showed that 71 percent of those with animals affirmed that their partner had threatened, hurt or killed their animal (Ascione, Weber and Wood, 1997). In an abusive home, a companion animal may serve as a victim or child's lone confidante. Abusers often use animals as pawns to manipulate and control their victim, taking advantage of the victim's concern for his or her animal. Abusers may threaten, harm, or kill animals to intimidate victims, demand silence about the abuse, or prevent them from leaving.

Many victims are hesitant to leave a dangerous situation because they fear for their animal's safety. In fact, numerous surveys have reported that between 25 and 40 percent of battered women are unable to escape abusive situations out of concern for their animal's safety (McIntosh, 2002). Their fears are not unfounded. Abusers often retaliate when their victim leaves by torturing or killing their animals. Relinquishing a companion animal or leaving him or her in an unsafe situation increases stress in an already difficult situation, and lack of safe shelter for animals may even cause victims to stay in unsafe situations to protect their animal.

Safe Haven foster families make a difference in the lives of families affected by domestic violence. You can help a victim find safety while preserving the bond between a guardian and their companion animal.