



San Diego Animal Advocates
P.O. Box 230135
Encinitas, CA 92023-0135
(760) 632-8638
www.animaladvocates.org

*San Diego Animal Advocates
is a non-profit animal rights
organization founded in
1984. We are dedicated to the
abolition of animal abuse,
neglect and exploitation
through education, direct action
and community outreach.
Please visit our website at
www.animaladvocates.org.*

Dear Friend,

Would you like to help end the cycle of abuse between people and animals? You have a unique opportunity to do so.

In recent months, heinous acts of animal cruelty have occurred throughout California.

The headlines read like scenes from a horror movie....

- *A 4 week old puppy found in a dumpster, with his ears completely cut off, mutilated by a sharp instrument...sick, terrified, and in severe pain*
- *A German shepherd dog tied to a tree and starved for weeks, his stomach and intestines filled with the dirt and rocks he was forced to eat to survive*
- *A tiny Chihuahua chained to a tree, beaten with a golf club, and burned with bleach that was thrown in her eyes*
- *A young German shepherd puppy stabbed over 50 times on a public street, where he staggered for blocks before collapsing, and dying in a pool of his own blood*
- *Three dogs in the same household brutally beaten to death, after their muzzles and limbs were bound with heavy tape*

But these are not the works of a horror film writer. They are true events, **three of which took place right here in San Diego County.** Such unspeakable acts of cruelty to animals shock and disgust us, when we see and hear the terrible stories on the news. We ask ourselves and each other, "How could anyone do these things to a helpless animal?"

In fact, it is not really a mystery. Many predisposing factors have been identified by experts in abnormal psychology and criminal behavior. Sometimes the perpetrators of these horrors have grown up in a home where they were exposed to animal abuse, or were abused themselves as children. Sometimes they are struggling with mental or emotional illness. Sometimes they are responding in frustration and rage to devastating personal circumstances. Sometimes they are just plain sadistic.

But one thing we know for certain is that people who abuse animals seldom stop there.

The FBI has long acknowledged that animal abuse is the one most reliable predictor of future violent criminal behavior. Not all animal abusers become killers, but it has been amply documented that virtually every known serial killer and sexual homicide perpetrator has a history of cruelty and violence toward animals. And children who witness animal abuse, often in a domestic violence situation, are at great risk of becoming animal abusers themselves.

So what can we do to stop this horrendous and vicious animal abuse?



We can increase the legal penalties for mistreatment of animals. Far too often the penalties are very light and animal abusers basically get away with the proverbial slap on the wrist. We must demand that judges impose the strictest possible sentences on convicted animal abusers.

We can offer larger rewards for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the perpetrators. SDAA presently is able to offer rewards of \$3000 to \$5000, thanks to the donations of our supporters. But even higher incentives may be needed to persuade those with information to come forward, to overcome the fears of “getting involved” or of possible retribution.

But more fundamentally, **we can and must educate the public about the proven link between animal abuse and other violent crime against people, especially children.** Increased public awareness and understanding about the nature of animal abuse and its inevitable progression is essential so that more people recognize the grave danger animal abusers present to society. SDAA already sponsors a credentialed speaker on the connection between animal abuse and domestic violence, but we want to do more. **We believe the time has come to form a coalition of organizations to increase public education, and to actively involve the media in promoting a dramatic, consistent, and relentless campaign against animal abuse.** Billboards, newspaper and magazine display ads, radio and television announcements will focus on the theme that animal abuse cannot and will not be tolerated by a civil society.

We are calling this campaign TEACH (Touch Every Animal with Compassionate Hands) and we are launching it immediately. Our goal is to help the community and the judicial system recognize that animal cruelty is a serious crime – a virtual time bomb that will most certainly explode into violence against people- and that abusers must be stopped early when the warning signs are detected. **With your help and support we can increase public awareness on this critical issue, and help to stop dangerous abusers before they do even more harm.** Our first step is to join forces with like-minded organizations, and we have begun work on a new web page for the program.

The second step of the new campaign is professional education. We recognize the critical importance of interrupting the cycle of violence. **SDAA has pledged to finance a training program for mental health professionals which will address this complex issue.** This training is based on a curriculum developed by AniCare, a program of the **Animals and Society Institute**, an independent education and research organization that advances the status of animals in public policy. The six hour certification provides expert instruction to a group of 25-30 counselors, therapists and social workers, equipping them with the skills and information they need to treat animal abusers, and provide an avenue for change and rehabilitation. The course has proven invaluable to professionals who work with animal abusers, teaching them also how to assist and treat the domestic victims of animal abuse in the home, such as children who witness the abuse. **Treatment of animal abusers has become an increasingly acknowledged necessity:** 27 states currently recommend or mandate judges to require counseling for anyone convicted of animal cruelty.

As it has become more difficult in today’s economic climate to obtain public or governmental grant funding, SDAA has offered to sponsor at least two group trainings, certifying approximately 50-60 mental health professionals. We are hopeful we will be able to sponsor many more as we receive additional donations and increase awareness in the community.

In order to make our new campaign successful, we need your help! Our immediate goal is to raise \$5,000 which will cover the cost of the first two training sessions.

As you know, San Diego Animal Advocates does not send out an annual appeal letter –instead, **we ask for your donations when we have a specific need.** We believe the horrific stories at the beginning of this letter demonstrate that **the need is urgent** to stop this vicious cycle of violence.

As we enter the New Year, we do so with a renewed determination to honor our organization’s creed: “Working toward a better world for animals.” And we know that a better world for them means a better world for everyone. We are counting on your generous support to make this happen! We, and the animals, thank you!

Sincerely,

Jane Cartmill, President
San Diego Animal Advocates