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## **Nonprofit Hush Puppy Haven Celebrates Six Years Helping Domestic Violence Survivors – And Their Pets**

More than 70 dogs, cats and even one lucky rabbit were able to find safety from a domestic abuse situation in the past six years thanks to Hush Puppy Haven.

As April 15 marks a calendar milestone for the nonprofit, Hush Puppy Haven continues to provide temporary foster care for the pets of domestic violence survivors while ramping up efforts to increase awareness of the program and find families willing to be fosters.

“Six years ago we were able to form this relationship with the Domestic Abuse Council (DAC) to provide a much-needed service for them as they were seeing women and men come there needing help, but not able to stay because the facility simply can’t accept pets. There was a need and we wanted to help,” said Hush Puppy Haven Founder Jen Adams. “When people hear ‘domestic abuse’ or ‘domestic violence’ they associate it with people, but pets live there, too. We get to help humans by easing the stress of worrying about their pet while they find that stability and safety they need. And we get to help the pets – any kind of pets – medically, mentally and physically by fostering them in safe, healthy and happy fosters.”

Hush Puppy Haven is not a rescue or adoption organization, but a network of foster families throughout Volusia and Flagler county that temporarily care for the pets of the domestic violence survivors during their stay at the DAC – which can be between one and six weeks. The identities of the survivor and fosters are kept confidential, even from each other for the safety of the survivor, foster and pet. Hush Puppy Haven primary expenses are veterinary care for the pets and covering all expenses for the foster families.

According to National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, in the United States an average of 20 people are physically abused by intimate partners every minute. Studies also show that one-third of domestic violence survivors say they delayed or did not seek shelter out of concern for their pet’s safety.

The pets of domestic violence survivors and the impact they have on whether or not someone will leave an abusive situation has recently reached federal level with the reintroduction of the Pet and Women Safety (PAWS) Act earlier this year to Congress. Sponsoring PAWS (H.R. 909) is Massachusetts Congresswoman Katherine Clark (D),

along with almost 180 representatives across the aisle. The act, which as of March was referred to the House subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, Homeland Security and Investigations, states its goal is “to protect victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, and dating violence from emotional and psychological trauma caused by acts of violence or threats of violence against their pets.”

“When women entering shelters report that their abusers threatened, harmed or killed their pet, you have to listen. You have to do something,” said Adams. “So few shelters have the funding or even facility to accept pets, we are the only option. And we need people to know that it is an option. They don’t have to stay in a violent situation. We can help.”

Hush Puppy Haven has recently increased outreach and awareness efforts with booths and presence at Volusia County community events such as the recent Sophie’s Circle Dog Rescue Third Annual Rainbow Bridge Walk and Volusia-Flagler Child Abuse Prevention Block Party in Holly Hill.

Next on the calendar for Bark In The Park on April 23, as Hush Puppy Haven was selected as the nonprofit spotlight for the Daytona Tortugas Community Spotlight program. A portion of all ticket sales will be donated directly to Hush Puppy Haven as the Tortugas take on the St. Lucie Mets at Jackie Robinson Ballpark, 105 E. Orange Ave, Daytona Beach, Fla., Special tickets for the event are \$8 for adults; \$6 for senior, military and children and can be purchased by emailing [hushpuppyhaven@gmail.com](mailto:hushpuppyhaven@gmail.com).

Later this year in partnership with the Ormond Beach Police Department, Hush Puppy Haven will be host a self-defense training event, Guard Up, on Wednesday, June 14 at the Nova Community Center, 440 N. Nova Road, Ormond Beach, Fla. Pre-registration is required for the course and attendees must be 12 years or older (12 to 17 must be accompanied by a parent or guardian). Tickets: \$10 (available April 24 on Eventbrite.com). For information, email [hushpuppyhaven@gmail.com](mailto:hushpuppyhaven@gmail.com)

To apply to be a temporary foster or volunteer at an upcoming event, go to [hushpuppyhaven.org](http://hushpuppyhaven.org). If you are a victim of domestic violence in Volusia County and are in need of assistance, please call the Domestic Abuse Council Hotline 24/7 at (800) 500-1119.

### **About Hush Puppy Haven**

Hush Puppy Haven is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization incorporated on April 15, 2011, serving Volusia County, Fla. Hush Puppy Haven provides temporary foster care for the pets of domestic violence survivors while they seek shelter from their abusive situation. While not a shelter or rescue organization, Hush Puppy Haven is a much needed service for the victim and their beloved pets so they may take the time and space needed to get their lives to a better, safer place. There is no paid staff, and all donations go directly to caring for these pets and related program expenses. Services offered include temporary foster care, pet transportation to and from safe location and to/from veterinary visits when necessary while in care, assistance with vaccines, spay/neuter, if needed, and food and supplies such as leashes, beds, collars and toys. There is an application process for the domestic violence survivor, an application and home visit process for prospective foster families and cooperation of local animal hospitals, victim advocates, law enforcement, crisis centers, local veterinarians, churches and family physicians to let those in need know the program is available. Hush Puppy Haven currently only receives pets through the Domestic Abuse Council of Volusia County. If you are in need of shelter and need a safe home for your pet, please contact the Domestic Abuse Council Hotline 24/7 at (800) 500-1119 and they will contact Hush Puppy directly. Learn more at [hushpuppyhaven.org](http://hushpuppyhaven.org) , and follow Hush Puppy Haven on Facebook at [facebook.com/HushPuppyHaven](https://facebook.com/HushPuppyHaven) and on Twitter at [@HushPuppyHaven](https://twitter.com/HushPuppyHaven).