

# What's happening at Lewis County



*Changing Lives ... One family at a time*

## Leaving a Domestic Violence Situation: What About My Pet?

A victim of domestic violence can choose to seek temporary shelter when leaving an abusive environment. However, what can be done when pets are involved but they aren't allowed in the shelter? Victims may be hesitant to enter a Dwelling or Shelter if it means leaving their pets behind. There are many reasons why victims don't want to leave pets behind. The sobering fact is that 71% of pet owners entering women's shelters reported that their batterer had injured, maimed, killed or threatened family pets for revenge or to psychologically control victims (National Coalition Against Domestic Violence). Whereas a victim may want to escape an unsafe environment, pets often are looked at as part of the family and can be part of that difficult decision.

The Victim Services Department at Lewis County Opportunities has a Pet Safe program to help alleviate this concern. We partner with a national program called "Red Rover" ([www.redrover.org](http://www.redrover.org)). By obtaining a Domestic Violence Safe Escape grant through Red Rover, we can cover the cost of temporarily boarding pets and providing basic veterinary care. We contract with a local veterinarian to board and care for up to two companion animals (cats or dogs) for up to two weeks. While the victim is working toward stability, the pets are being cared for in a professional and safe environment where their food, water, and exercise needs are being met.

For more information about the Pet Safe program or other services, please call 376-8202 ext. 4.

Has Opportunities helped you? Send your story to "News" at the address below.

**Lewis County Opportunities, Inc.**  
8265 State Rte 812, Lowville NY 13367  
**(315) 376-8202**

**Monday - Friday: 8 am - 4 pm**  
[www.lewiscountyopportunities.com](http://www.lewiscountyopportunities.com)

**Opportunity Knocks Thrift Store**  
**376-2981**

**24-hour Crisis Hotline**  
**376-HELP (4357)**