

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Humane Society of Berks County Introduces Pet Loss and Bereavement Program for Grieving Pet Owners

The Humane Society of Berks County, Berks County's leader in animal welfare, introduced a new program designed to help pet owners struggling to cope with the death of a companion animal. The Pet Loss and Bereavement program provides counseling and support for those who have lost an animal member of their family and are finding it hard to grapple with the loss. "No one knows better than the Humane Society just how much animals have become a part of our families," said Karel Minor, HSBC executive director. "For some people, their pet is literally the *only family they have*. We don't tell people to "just get over it" when a human family member dies, we offer support-- that's what the Humane Society of Berks County is offering pet owners."

Pet Loss and Bereavement counseling seminars are offered on a monthly basis at the HSBC's Reading shelter on the second Tuesday of each month at 6:30 PM. They are free and open to anyone who needs support and advice for managing the grief associated with the loss of an important family pet. The sessions are conducted by a variety of area counselors and psychologists who work with attendees to provide tools and techniques for handling loss. Attendees may attend as many or as few sessions as they like.

In addition to the general public, the HSBC is extending the invitation to the hundreds of pet owners utilizing the Humane Society's End of Life services each year for sick pets. Program brochures are also being distributed to area veterinarians. According to Minor, veterinarians and animal shelters are trained to handle the technical aspects of euthanizing pets and can offer support during the procedure. However, longer-term emotional support tends to fall outside the training or practical ability of animal care professionals to provide.

"We hope that this program and our partnership with counselors and psychologists will bring the needed expertise to those who need it most," said Minor. More information about the sessions, including upcoming dates, is available at www.berkshumane.org under "Services".

The Humane Society of Berks County serves all of Berks County and surrounding communities. It is a private, non-profit organization funded through donations and service fees. In addition to enforcing Pennsylvania's animal cruelty laws, the Humane Society provides adoption services, spay and neuter services, humane education, pet behavioral counseling, and helps stray, injured and mistreated animals. The Humane Society is located at 1801 N. 11th Street, Reading.

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