

LAS CRUCES SUN-NEWS

Opinion: Let's work together to build a no-kill community

By Mike Hainer For the Sun-News

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Dr. Beth Vesco-Mock, director of the Animal Services Center of the Mesilla Valley, has set our goal; a no-kill community where healthy and treatable animals leave our shelter alive. Shelter capacity has been increased by using all available space, including socializing compatible animals. Minor illnesses are being treated and the foster/adoption program is rapidly expanding. A very positive culture change is under way at our community shelter. This is a team activity. It is time for us all to roll up our sleeves again and help.

A community coalition of government officials, animal advocates and community organizations must choose to work together with mutual respect and build an animal welfare system that decreases the number of animals going into our shelter, and increases the number of live animals leaving. There are grants available for communities that are committed enough to overcome our differences and work together. Working together can really pay off for the animals and for our community.

Our challenge is to not demean the many areas where we need improvement, but to immediately start action on the many actions we can begin to move us forward, step-by-step toward a no-kill community.

The Spay Neuter Awareness Program, Free Spay Neuter Program, animal control officers for the city and the county, Safe Haven Animal Shelter, Doña Ana County Humane Society, our city councilors, our county sheriff, our county commissioners and their many dedicated staff members, our many animal advocates as well as all radio, newspaper and television media staff are invited to join a kick-off of our Community Coalition for the Animals on June 5 at 6:30 p.m. in MountainView Regional Medical Center's community education room next to the entrance lobby.

Everyone is also invited to "For the HeART of Animals" Benefit Art Auction at the Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum on June 20, from 5 to 9 p.m. Any money raised will be used to support adoptions, foster care, spay/neuter, vaccinations, community education and other lifesaving work. Collectible artwork and soft live music combine at this "must attend" event. More information is available at www.hssnm.org. Tickets are still available by calling (575) 521-3642, or at our Saturday morning Downtown Mall Farmers Market adoption events. Cats are available at the Lohman Avenue PetSmart store. Many cats and dogs are available at the Animal Service Center on Hwy 70 (3551 Bataan Memorial West). Volunteers can make a real difference with a few hours a week. Call (575) 382-0018.

Mike Hainer is president of the Humane Society of Southern New Mexico.