

On the Positive Side: Momentum builds for spay-neuter efforts

by Frank Bryce

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You won't believe the wonderful accomplishments of the most recent events conducted by the Humane Society of Southern New Mexico with the cooperation of other animal advocacy groups. To reach the goal of "Zero in Seven" of no more euthanasia of healthy and treatable animals set by the Coalition for Pets and People, the number of spay and neuter surgeries has to be ramped up considerably. In late April, Humane Society of Southern New Mexico conducted its first event designed to provide greater numbers of free spay and neuter surgeries to reduce the number of cats and dogs being killed at the Animal Service Center of Mesilla Valley, our government animal shelter.

It has been a struggle for many years despite efforts of dedicated animal welfare groups and their tireless volunteers, and some cobbling together of funds from the county government, animal advocacy grants and private donations.

The problem has not been only the huge numbers of cats and dogs being taken to the shelter with no place to go or few at best, but the scarcity of available veterinary services, places to conduct events with large numbers of animals and how to reach the targeted audience. Those issues seem to be changing.

The first event Humane Society of Southern New Mexico did 106 cats and dogs in two days when the average is usually 25 or fewer per day. The most recent event did 183 surgeries in two days and the next scheduled event this coming Monday is accommodating 200 surgeries.

These surgeries will have all been free to assist low income participants but open to all county and city residents. This team has accomplished what our typical schedule would have taken almost two years to accomplish at a tremendous reduction in cost.

This has been possible with the veterinary assistance of the Asavet Charities and Santa Cruz Veterinary Clinic along with their trained and dedicated veterinary surgical team out of Tucson, Arizona.

There is not enough space in this article to express our gratitude for the help provided by PetSmart store staff, Safe Haven Animal Sanctuary and the many volunteers associated with Humane Society of Southern New Mexico and other animal welfare organizations. It is not an easy job to enter information, process all the cats and dogs through the daylong events, provide the care and attention required for recovering pets and ensure pet parents have proper instruction for after-surgery care at home. Special thanks goes to Animal Hospital of Las Cruces for accepting the after-surgery care in case of emergency and any needed follow up care for the pets.

The next event is already filled to excess and more need to be scheduled. We need your help to fund a number of these cost-effective events and is asking for your donations. Donations for spay and neuter support can be made to the Humane Society of Southern New Mexico, P.O. Box 13826, Las Cruces, NM 88013 or HSSNM at Pay Pal.

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