

On The Positive Side: Euthanasia Rates Dip At Animal Shelter

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A recent front page article in the Sun News lauds the welcome and positive dip in the number of animals being euthanized at the Animal Services Center of Mesilla Valley (ASCMV). For the Humane Society of Southern New Mexico (HSSNM) having supported the formation of the Coalition for Pets and People and pushed for dramatic improvements at the shelter, the decline in the number of animals killed is great news for all concerned.

The Humane Society of Southern New Mexico fully understands the effect of the city and county investing over a quarter million dollars in the past eighteen months through the shelter's budget to improve conditions at the shelter. Many of the physical improvements such the rodent infestation clean-up, sealing the floors and walls and particularly significant rehabilitation of the air circulation throughout the facility have undoubtedly contributed to the lowering of the number killed by improvement of the health of the animals held at the shelter. Hiring a full time licensed veterinarian was a very important step to improve outcomes and resources for the shelter and the public.

The growing cooperation and collaboration developing within the animal advocacy groups and their efforts when combined with the over arching umbrella of the Coalition for Pets and People are paramount to continuing to lower the intake of animals at the shelter. This in turn allows for better care, adoption results and improved rescue numbers for healthy animals resulting in a lower kill rate at the shelter. Kudos must be given the city and county government officials, particularly Mayor Miyagishima, for support and involvement and the city and county animal control departments which are adapting to a new paradigm for their operations.

In the vein of Paul Harvey, "the rest of the story" begins with the start of the Spay and Neuter Program and the former Free Spay and Neuter Program around a decade ago. It could be said these groups were the catalyst for reduction of intake of animals at the shelter. The Free Spay and Neuter Program estimated it would take about five years before a noticeable change was achieved and ten years to be successful under the resources available at that time. At about the same time Safe haven Animal Sanctuary, the only no-kill facility in the area, was established and has continued to furnish a home for abandoned animals and provide altered adoptable animals to the public. It appears that these may be early factors in the current dip. The Action Program for Animals, a new and vibrant group, currently contributes to this overall effort with its pet food bank and foster/adoption program.

HSSNM is proud of all the foregoing and current efforts of our animal advocacy groups. HSSNM will continue to work to achieve our goal "Bringing the Community Together for the Animals" and encourages everyone to support this effort. The work of the Coalition for Pets and People needs to accelerate and expand to take advantage of the groundwork already developed.

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