

**On the Positive Side:**

**PetSmart Charities and HSSNM save lives**

**By Jean Gilbert**

**Posted: 10/16/2010 08:38:46 PM MDT**

Las Cruces is fortunate to have a PetSmart Charities Adoption Center, one of a thousand-plus centers located inside PetSmart Stores. Established in 1994 as a nonprofit foundation, PetSmart Charities has provided \$110 million in grants and programs benefiting animal welfare organizations across the country.

PetSmart Charities has facilitated adoptions for more than 4 million homeless pets nationwide, with community animal rescue organizations as authorized partners utilizing the in-store adoption centers. Here homeless pets are promoted for adoption and viewed by the many customers and visitors to the store. Local organizations that partner with PetSmart Charities include Boxer Rescue, Dachshund Rescue, Safe Haven Animal Sanctuary, and the Humane Society of Southern NM.

In early 2008, HSSNM became an "adoption partner" with PetSmart Charities and began featuring cats for adoption in the kitty condos of the adoption center. Under the direction of HSSNM's cat adoption captain/volunteer Evelyn Hancock and many dedicated volunteers, the program has been very successful, with the adoption of more than three hundred rescue animals since its start.

These beautiful cats are featured like jewels in a display case, and this presentation enhances adoptions. The adoption numbers constitute mostly cats featured at the store adoption center and include many dogs in the HSSNM foster program. Promotion events are staffed by volunteers.

A few success stories illustrate the happy endings that result from the HSSNM/PetSmart partnership:

- Bobby, a handsome gray-and-white short-haired cat, approximately 5 years old, lived at a senior care facility in El Paso where he provided companionship to residents before coming to the HSSNM adoption program. Prior to the care center, Bobby had lived with a family who relinquished him to an animal shelter. The urgent request to re-home Bobby, by the care center manager, came at a time when the facility was undergoing changes with remodeling.

Fortunately, Bobby found an approved foster placement and later entered the cat adoption program at PetSmart, where he was adopted in two weeks. Bobby lives to - and comfortable, sleeping with them at night.

- Toby Puppy came to HSSNM with his siblings as an owner relinquishment. All three looked so different, it was difficult to imagine they were from the same litter. Toby was the second of the trio to be adopted. His appearance and behavior reminded his new family of their beloved red hound who had recently died. The family's surviving dog sorely missed his companion and welcomed Toby. HSSNM volunteers were rewarded for their work in leash training Toby when they learned about the daily walks Toby now enjoys with his owner and canine pal.

- Lucy, who is mostly black with basset hound features, came to HSSNM with her brother Toby and another sibling. After Toby was adopted, volunteers worried that Lucy would feel abandoned, so they showered her with extra affection and play time. Their fretting soon ended, when Lucy was adopted by animal advocates. She now shares a home with four other canines - and among them, her best buddy is a rescued pit bull.

For information about HSSNM's adoption program or to view photos and descriptions of adoptable animals, go to [www.hssnm.org](http://www.hssnm.org)

Jean Gilbert is a board member and humane educator with the Humane Society of Southern New Mexico.