

On the Positive Side: Reports of progress and how you can help

By Frank Bryce / For the Sun-News

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Recent media reports that have extolled positive progress being made to address the animal welfare problems throughout our communities and the county give us reason to believe progress continues.

Being deeply involved in these issues and constantly striving to find and provide resources to address these, the Humane Society of Southern New Mexico (HSSNM) can attest to the much deeper and committed efforts of so many organizations and dedicated individuals that have achieved the progress, including ACTion Programs for Animals (APA), Animal Service Center of the Mesilla Valley (ASCMV), Animal Welfare and Responsibility Education (AWARE), Boxer Rescue, Coalition for Pets and People, City of Three Crosses Dachshund Rescue, Doña Ana County Humane Society (DACHS), Feral Cat Management Program (FCaMP), Safe Haven Animal Sanctuary, Southern New Mexico Bassett Hound/ Beagle Rescue, and Spay and Neuter Action Program (SNAP).

Having just enjoyed a holiday where we are thankful of all the good things we share and do and entering the season of good will and well being, the progress being made in the animal welfare arena is even more heartening.

An email was received a few days ago in which Nathan Winograd, No Kill Advocacy Center director, Oakland, Calif., talked of animal shelter reform. He stated, "Shelter killing is the leading cause of death for healthy dogs and cats in the United States. Today, an animal entering a shelter has only one chance in two of making it out alive, and in some places it is as low as one in 10".

Winograd's strong words about shelter reform have merit in many areas of the nation including New Mexico.

Animal Protection of New Mexico (APNM) and the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) have identified animal shelters in New Mexico in need of reform and improvement. Victoria Murphy, APNM Animal Shelter program manager, visited southern New Mexico this past month to initiate this effort. In building a collaborative and cooperative partnership, Murphy is seeking ways to assist shelter operations and provide grants to New Mexico shelters. This is another heartening sign of progress being made.

These actions are positive but they are only half of the story as reform of shelters has to be accompanied by community reform as well. Even more so. Fortunately in our area much has been accomplished in the communities and county and continues to grow in support and interest. The commitment of time and effort on the part of the city and county Animal Control departments through return of micro-chipped animals off animal control trucks has already began to pay dividends in reduced numbers of animals taken to the shelter. In just the past five weeks, almost 125 dogs and cats have been spayed and neutered through the efforts of HSSNM in Chaparral, N.M. and the Coalition for Pets and People's East Mesa area of Las Cruces and Doña Ana County in new programs added to existing efforts.

These efforts are being made by the dedicated individuals and private organizations that do not get enough credit for all their hard work. HSSNM and all these organizations want and need your help for their work but foremost they need your individual and collective efforts for the community reform that is required to provide good homes and responsible care for animals which we all must take responsibility. We have seen the tremendous potential for the needed community reform in so many projects being undertaken. As you and your family begin this holiday season take some time to address that responsibility to all pets and contribute your help to a better community of all of us.

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