

LAS CRUCES SUN-NEWS

ON THE POSITIVE SIDE

Humane Society celebrates a successful year

By Frank Bryce

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It's jingle bell time, a bright time for bringing holiday wishes!

With the help of members and friends, along with community folks like this column's readers, the Humane Society of Southern New Mexico, or HSSNM, celebrates and continues to play an important role in advocacy, assistance and adoptions for animals in need.

Together we offer solutions to companion animal owners' problems and address changes in programs and laws to improve animal welfare. There are individual heart-warming and heart-breaking stories abound, but together we are all making a real difference.

The narrative of this year's efforts tells of the holiday spirit that survives throughout the year and beyond, with your support. It's been a great year with increased adoptions, made possible with dedicated foster-care providers, hard-working HSSNM volunteers and more partnerships with rescue organizations. There was an increase of 45 adoptions over last year, with a total of more than 180 adoptions.

Our pet help line remains a primary service with about 100 calls received each month. The service provides help finding resources for homeless, injured or sick, and lost/found animals with urgent needs. A cat named Cupcake is an example of a feline spared an uncertain fate with her rescuers calling the help line for assistance with veterinarian costs to treat the cat's severe tail injury.

HSSNM's Cans 4 Critters fund helped approximately 20 animals, like Cupcake, this year with proceeds from the recycled cans going toward medical expenses. The project has raised over \$3,000 since it was first established.

Humane education also expanded this year with more classrooms and adults in outreach programs. Another form of outreach, On the Positive Side news column, covers a range of positive animal- welfare topics with contributing articles by HSSNM president and community members published twice-monthly in the Las Cruces Sun-News.

HSSNM works with the Coalition for Pets and People to decrease the pet euthanasia rate with low-cost spay and neuter and micro-chip clinics and adoption promotion events.

Other successful collaborative work with the Coalition includes efforts to revise animal ordinances and meetings with government officials to improve conditions for animals, including trap-neuter-return management of feral cat colonies in the area. Both the city and county have adopted versions of the TNR program, which allows for these feral cats to be spayed or neutered, received a rabies vaccination, microchip and ear tipping for humane care and treatment of the cat colonies. The micro-chipping of animals, now mandatory in the county and city, is strongly supported by HSSNM with microchips for pets available for \$6.35. An HSSNM event last Saturday saw 83 pets be microchipped. For more information on microchipping events and community cat colony management registration, contact HSSNM at 575-523-8020.

Also this year, the HSSNM increased activities promoting animal welfare at people and pet socials, pet photo opportunities, low-cost clinics, education presentations to community groups, tabling and outreach work.

A \$5 pet photo with Santa Claus will be held this Saturday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Horse N Hound feed N Supply, 991 West Amador. The event is in conjunction with a blood drive and blood donors will receive a free Santa pet photo.

With the holiday season in full swing, please consider a contribution to HSSNM. Your support will help sustain important HSSNM's programs and grow services for animals who depend on all of us as their advocates.

Happy Holidays and best wishes from the Humane Society of Southern New Mexico.

Frank Bryce is president of HSSNM. Interested guest authors can call HSSNM at 575-523-8020.