

LAS CRUCES SUN-NEWS

Commentary: Be a foster parent for an animal

By Mike Hainer For the Sun-News

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LifeSaving of animals from the Animal Services Care Center of the Mesilla Valley, our community animal shelter, is on the rise. Animal advocates and concerned citizens alike are participating in the Humane Society of Southern New Mexico's dog adoption event at the north end of the Farmers and Crafts Market every Saturday from 8:30 a.m. until 12:30 p.m.

LifeSaving events are fun and bring smiles to the faces of those involved. The adopters head home with a treasured four-legged family member to make a better life. Cats are now available for adoption seven days a week at the PetSmart store on Lohman. Calico kittens and other fluffy feline friends are going home with a new owners each day from the cat adoption center at PetSmart. The volunteers providing daily care for the cats really make a big difference.

Millions, yes, millions of dogs and cats are killed every year in shelters across America just because of pet overpopulation. However, there is good news. A myriad of animals are available from rescue groups, foster homes and adoption centers.

Our community animal shelters must become a safe, affordable and positive way to find our companion animals. You can get in on the LifeSaving and sign up to foster an animal from our local center. Foster homes are needed to provide a pet with the opportunity to recover from being in the shelter and regain their health and stability prior to adoption. Minor illness can be easily treated in a foster setting and the adjustment

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to a normal life can occur. Some foster homes provide the training a knowledgeable person can give to an animal before the adoption. Opening your home to a foster animal from our shelter can really enrich your life. Foster care is a great plan for people who are not ready for a long-term commitment and want a companion in their life.

The Humane Society of Southern New Mexico supports foster homes with training and assistance so you are not going it alone. Our adoption events usually place animals with a good permanent home soon after the animal is ready for adoption. Foster homes are a key element in changing our community from one that consistently destroys companion animals to one that consistently saves lives.

We are currently seeking volunteers to expand our LifeSaving work. Contact us at (575) 521-3642 or www.hssnm.org. The people and pets of Doña Ana County are joining with communities all over the country in implementing a "no-kill" system for healthy and treatable companion animals. The tide is turning and your help is needed now.

Mike Hainer is president of the Humane Society of Southern New Mexico.