

LAS CRUCES SUN-NEWS

ON THE POSITIVE SIDE

OPINION: Humane society gets help from unusual partnership

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La Paz-Graham's Funeral Home of Las Cruces is providing office space to the Humane Society of Southern New Mexico at 403 S. Melendres St. (Courtesy photo)

LAS CRUCES — An unlikely story of two families in the mortuary business and an animal advocacy organization came together when La Paz-Graham Funeral Home of Las Cruces generously provided office space to the Humane Society of Southern New Mexico.

Sal Perches acquired the mortuary from the Graham family last August. It rests on acre of old-growth pecan and cedar trees. Perches has a strong commitment to family-owned and managed business, community service and a love of companion family animals. That same heritage of family and community commitment was shared by the grown children of Harry Graham, who last year were looking for another family to take over the legacy of their father and their grandfather's community service through Graham's mortuary. The result was a boon to the people of Las Cruces.

Perches' father started in the mortuary business in Juárez in 1958. Fifty years later, Sal and his sister, Eloidia Adamson, still own and manage several funeral homes in Juárez, El Paso and now the La Paz-Graham's home in Las Cruces.

Perches inherited his father's appreciation for what sets a funeral home or cemetery apart from the rest. He saw this same commitment in the Graham family services in Las Cruces.

"The beauty of the buildings and the grounds and the peace that surrounds them all helps set Graham's apart from the rest," Perches said.

Perches' commitment to families is being extended as he begins a new service in Las Cruces in remembrance of our four-legged family members. Beloved Pets will make remembrance services available for family pets, including cremation services. This is a natural extension of services to the community for Perches and his wife, Erica. Their border collie, Kena, and red heeler, Kipi, both 11, are treasured members of the Perches family.

Erica trains for dog agility trials with Kena and both are trained therapy dogs. Perches runs often with Kena during his training regimen for his competition in triathlon events. The couple wanted to reach out and partner with an animal advocacy organization at Beloved Pets and the Humane Society of Southern New Mexico was a natural fit because of the lifesaving work of our many volunteers. The shared business location for Beloved Pets and HSSNM is one of three adobe homes at 403 S. Melendres St. on the shaded property near the southeastern corner of Amador and Melendres.

"It has a front lawn and open area that is perfect for agility or exercise events as well as off-site animal adoptions and more," Perches said.

Harry Graham built the mortuary on the old Las Cruces tract bordered by Lohman-Amador on the north, Miranda on the east and Melendres on the west. Graham served as the general contractor who built these architectural treasures in 1948.

Harry's son, Jeff Graham, said his father brought Las Cruces into the 20th century with urban renewal and a commitment to infrastructure development.

The entrepreneurial spirit of both Perches and Graham, guided by their shared commitment to family values and community service is now joined with services to our animal friends. "Beloved Pets will assist families in honoring their lifetime friends," Perches said.

"Sal has gone out of his way to assist the Humane Society of Southern New Mexico with the generous gift of office space, something we genuinely needed," said Mike Hainer, president of the board for HSSNM.

Marcia Weist serves on the board of the Humane Society of Southern New Mexico.