

# LAS CRUCES SUN-NEWS

## **On the positive side: Animal groups celebrate success**

**By Frank Bryce/For the Sun-News**

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Thursday night, July 30, saw the culmination of the year's hard work of members and volunteers of the *Humane Society of Southern New Mexico* with collaboration of Safe Haven Animal Sanctuary and the Spay Neuter Action Program at HSSNM's annual membership meeting.

Among the highlights of the meeting was the presentation of \$4,000 checks to SNAP Vice President Kat Lacey and SHAS President Sharon Perone as their organization's share of the recent annual "For the HeART of Animals" fundraiser. These funds will be used to support the animal shelter and adoption efforts at the SHAS sanctuary and the spay and neuter program conducted throughout the year by the SNAP organization.

Kathy Lawitz and Marcia Weist were recognized for their leadership in organizing and conducting the event, which included a fun night of art, entertainment, food and dancing to benefit all three animal welfare organizations.

HSSNM was presented a check for \$4,600 from the Free Spay and Neuter Program, which dissolved but transferred its remaining assets to HSSNM.

These funds are restricted to continuing free spay and neuter assistance throughout Doña Ana County. Both FSNP and SNAP have contributed tremendously to spaying and neutering of animals in their effort to reduce our county's pet overpopulation problem. SNAP has worked successfully with the Doña Ana County sheriff's Animal Control Department to provide high volume low-cost spay and neuter services utilizing the Animal Control's Rescue and Emergency Response mobile surgical van throughout the county.

HSSNM Humane Education Coordinator Jean Gilbert received kudos for her efforts to provide humane education programs in the local school system and the Boys and Girls Club of Las Cruces.

Jean was recognized by the Jane Goodall International Foundation's Roots and Shoots Program for her work using "The Adventures of Snooter," a spay and neuter awareness storybook written by Vanessa Bryce, former president of FSNP and current treasurer of HSSNM.

Evelyn Hancock was recognized for her dedicated efforts with her volunteers working in cooperation with the PetSmart Charities and the super support of the local PetSmart management and staff at the cat adoption facility at the PetSmart store.

In the past year, Evelyn and the great group involved have aided the adoption of more than 150 cats and dogs with their efforts. HSSNM was told the PetSmart adoption facility in Las Cruces was one of the most productive in the PetSmart Charities system.

Tom Hoeksema, Doña Ana County Animal Control reserve officer, was the guest speaker and provided a moving presentation about a developing animal control effort called ACES. Tom is the lead person for the Animal Control Environment Survey, which is a new effort to increase awareness of county animal ordinances and animal care.

The program provides information to pet owners and allows compliance within a specific time frame. Follow up visits are made to ensure the requirements are met and compliance is accomplished.

So far, the response has been very impressive and encouraging. Animal Control Director Curtis Childress has been instrumental with his support of this effort and MaryIn Zahler as founder of the volunteer reserve officers program.

The final action by the membership was the election of board of directors. These included John Jones, Jean Gilbert, Vanessa Bryce, MaryIn Zahler, Frank Bryce, Bill Hart, Diane Hammond and Win Jacobs. The board will meet in a special session to determine officers and terms of office for this group.

The new board will lay out goals and plans to make the next year a greater success and continue to be an "On the Positive Side" proponent.

Frank Bryce is a community animal advocate, a volunteer officer with the Doña Ana County Animal Control reserves program and vice president of HSSNM.