

On the Positive Side: We should all take the pledge for animals

By Frank Bryce / For the Sun-News

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The last "On the Positive Side" article talked about the good efforts to return animals off city and county animal control trucks and the animal control officers' opportunity to explain and promote pet owner responsibilities. Most often referred to as "Humane Education" and practiced by almost every animal welfare organizations such as the Humane Society of Southern New Mexico (HSSNM) in some form of outreach and service connected program, these efforts are sometimes so subtle, as they should be, the general audience often does not realize the efforts are taking place.

We all use flyers, brochures, bill boards, bumper stickers, slogans, mottos, personal presentations and articles like the "On the Positive Side" to reach as many pet owners and care givers as we can. These also include some formal school student programs like HSSNM's "Critter Connection" and "Diggity Dog Learning" which reach about 2,500 young students annually throughout our county. New and innovative programs are being constantly being discussed and developed.

Coalition for Pets and People (CCP) Co-Chair Billy Garrett, through open coalition discussions as to how to expand this effort, presented an idea that the CCP groups adopted and is now being implemented. Garrett, with the help of CCP members, designed a pledge card that states the signer pledges to do their part to eliminate the killing of adoptable animals in Doña Ana County by Dec. 31, 2018, if not sooner. Printed in English and Spanish, the CCP hopes the pledge card will reach everyone throughout the county and all our communities from youngsters to seniors who love their pets.

Simple, straightforward and easily distributed, the pledge card is now available from CCP supporters to all of us interested in joining the effort to create better care and awareness for our loving animal companions. The card titled "Zero in Seven — Count Me In!" says "In exchange for companionship, loyalty and love, I promise that every animal I care for will be: Spayed or Neutered (unless I am a licensed breeder), Micro-chipped, Vaccinated, and Treated Humanely (shelter, shade, food and water). I will never abandon my animals or allow them to run loose. I will accept this responsibility for the full natural life of my animals."

With this pledge, each of us that accept the pledge can begin to contribute to the growing effort to prevent the killing of about 9,000 healthy, adoptable animals annually at our local shelter. The card provides a list of issues that many of us may face with our pets and contacts for help with these issues.

Pledge cards will be available from participating CCP organizations at their fund raisers and events or you can contact TalkToUs@ZeroIn7.org for more information. For the cost of a stamp or the effort of an email, you can let the CCP organization know of your pledge and that you can be counted in to help reach the pledge goal. Please help the animal welfare organizations of your choice and get involved wherever you can.

Frank Bryce is president of the Humane Society of Southern New Mexico. Interested guest authors should contact HSSNM at 523-8020.