

ON THE POSITIVE SIDE

We should all be encouraging pet adoptions

By Frank Bryce

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LAS CRUCES — The season for increased numbers of kittens and the continuing stream of puppies into every animal advocacy and support group is here! Every group needs more adopters and more fosters to help this seemingly never-ending flow of fuzzy, warm and loving little critters. While without exception the animal welfare organizations and individual rescuers who are involved are working hard to address these numbers, all of us must rely on community support to reach our goals. It is the community of adopters' and supporters' responsibility to provide as many acceptable homes as possible for the animals that have fallen into our animal welfare system. Adoption is not the only solution to pet overpopulation, but it is an important and crucial part of our efforts to continuing the reduction of euthanasia of unwanted and abandoned animals.

On a positive note through the collective and collaborative efforts of those involved, our local intake numbers seem to be possibly dropping, thereby helping reduce our euthanasia rate. The return to owner by animal control officers from city and county trucks with the use of computers and address retrieval has been an important adjunct to saving micro-chipped animals and providing more space at our government shelter. This has been enhanced recently with more animals being transferred to other cities for adoption often at considerable distance.

However, the most recent report by the director of the Animal Service Center of Mesilla Valley indicates unfortunately that these cooperating agencies are also becoming saturated and may not be able to accept more animals.

An article in the recent "Animal Sheltering" May/June 2013 magazine from the Humane Society of the United States talks candidly about the partnership between animal adopting agencies and the would-be adopters seeking a new companion animal. The article explores the adoption policies, how rescue organizations can ease the adoption procedures and yet still assist placement in safe and healthy homes. The article states the animal counselors who help adopters find the right companion animal want to understand what the adopter is seeking with as pet adoption and help the adopter understand "realistically" what the adoption entails. There are pitfalls that can be avoided with a candid discussion and full understanding by all involved.

New family additions, young children, busy schedules and limited resources can be factors that adopters and counselors are concerned with when deciding what pet might be most suitable for the family or individuals.

These issues can be addressed with open dialogue between adopters and those applying for the adoption.

It has been said before that finding a good match is not a shot in the dark.

You should seek out the animal organizations and their assistance to find the right companion for your family.

There are too many animals that have no chance of finding a loving home without your help. The Animal Service Center of Mesilla Valley has literally hundreds of cats and dogs that are waiting to meet you and the many other local animal organizations may have the perfect pet for you today. Help make this a better community with your participation as an adopter or a supporter.

Frank Bryce is president of the Humane Society of Southern New Mexico. Interested guest authors can contact HSSNM at 575-523-8020.