

On the Positive Side: Response to spay/neuter events grows stronger

by Frank Bryce

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The Humane Society of Southern New Mexico was able to conduct a very successful event recently where over 100 dogs and cats from generally low and modest income family situations were spayed and neutered in two days. This included involvement by almost all of the local animal welfare organizations.

The Humane Society of Southern New Mexico fresh off a cooperative effort has been able to develop another free event scheduled for July 11-12, which is already filled to capacity. Adopting a broader approach and the initiation of social media by the cooperating organizations and supporting individuals, has led to the overwhelming response. In the past week or so, HSSNM has received over 700 calls seeking to register cats and dogs at this event. HSSNM's ability to contact callers has been difficult due to the high numbers and information being collected, but volunteers are working as fast as they can to return calls. As this outpouring of demonstrates the need for such services, HSSNM is working to secure additional events as soon as possible.

We recognize the need for greater expansion of pet spay and neuter services to reduce the high numbers of unwanted litters of cats and dogs which are ending up being killed at the Animal Service Center of Mesilla Valley. These high animal kill numbers are in spite of the shelter and the other animal welfare organizations' efforts to adopt out locally or transport adoptive dogs and cats to rescues across the country.

HSSNM and the Coalition for Pets and People have been striving to recruit spay and neuter participation not only from the general public but specifically out of the six ZIP codes in the south valley area from Mesilla and Mesilla Park to Vado. Due to the high numbers of stray animals picked up by animal control and owner surrenders, the south valley designated areas were selected for emphasis and supported by a grant from Pet-Smart Charities.

The initial recruitment from these ZIP codes was poor at best but social media developed by others recently has created the tremendous response we needed. Private veterinary mobile spay and neuter clinics and the services available at the Animal Service Center of Mesilla Valley continue to provide location convenience, cost effectiveness and multiple opportunities for participation.

The next events will have the same criteria as the earlier April event. The events are open to county residents and the incorporated areas of the county as well. Dogs and cats must be 3 months of age and in good health. There will be the opportunity for rabies vaccination and microchipping, which will be charged to the pet owner. Pre-registration is being accepted and interested participants should contact HSSNM by leaving participant address with ZIP code contact information and description of their pets at 575-523-8020.

Frank Bryce is president of HSSNM. Interested guest authors should contact HSSNM at 575-523-8020.