

On the Positive Side: Coalition for Pets and People Invites You to Film Debut

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Are you looking for a positive way to support the tremendous animal advocacy efforts that are growing in our community and county in a relaxing and enjoyable evening or afternoon? Here's your opportunity to do just that!

The recently established "Coalition for Pets and People" is hosting its first official organizational fundraising event with the debut showing of *Darling Companion*. The film, rated PG-13, stars Kevin Kline and Diane Keaton as husband and wife in a story about relationships and a bond with a special dog. Tom Townsend, co-chair for the Coalition, stated "This is a wonderful opportunity to support the Coalition for Pets and People and the work of all the animal advocate organizations that have come together to save the lives of healthy and treatable animals."

First released in April this year, the two scheduled showings of this delightful film will benefit animals with proceeds from ticket sales aiding the work and projects of the Community Coalition for Pets & People. Showings are at the Fountain Theater in Mesilla on Friday, July 20th at 7:30 p.m. and on Sunday, July 22nd for a matinee at 2:30 p.m.

Tickets are \$10 and can be purchased at the door or in advance (to guarantee a seat) at Enchanted Gardens (270 Avenida de Mesilla, 575-524-1886), at Better Life Pet Foods (365 Avenida de Mesilla, 575-527-9265) or through Council co-chair Tom Townsend at medictom01@yahoo.com

In *Darling Companion*, Beth (Diane Keaton) saves a bedraggled lost dog from the side of the freeway on a wintry day in Denver. Struggling with her distracted, self-involved husband Joseph (Kevin Kline) and an empty nest at home, Beth forms a special bond with the rescued animal. When Joseph loses the dog after their daughter's (Elisabeth Moss) wedding at their vacation home in the Rockies, Beth, distraught and angry with Joseph, enlists the help of the few remaining guests (Dianne Wiest, Richard Jenkins, Mark Duplass) and a mysterious woman (Ayelet Zurer) in a frantic search.

Over the course of several days searching, the emotional and physical toll starts affecting everyone as their mountain adventure takes them in unexpected directions - comic, harrowing, sometimes deeply emotional and, ultimately, toward a new understanding of love.

The Coalition for Pets and People is gaining ground in its collaborative and collective work to address animal issues with support from animal organizations, dedicated private individuals, and businesses. The coalition has been endorsed by the Las Cruces City Council, the Dona Ana County Board of Commissioners and the Animal Services Center of Mesilla Valley. Both the county and city animal control departments are actively participating on the coalition teams.

Many of these supporting organizations and individuals will be available at the showings to provide information about the coalition and their own organizational efforts that you may want to support further. In any case it will be a pleasant outing on a warm summer evening or afternoon and you can be part of the solution to our animal welfare issues. Your support is needed and greatly appreciated.

Frank Bryce is President of the Humane Society of Southern New Mexico. Interested guest authors should call 523-8020.