

On the Positive Side: How Java made it home and why updating microchips is key

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On Aug. 1, I found a German shepherd sitting in the road during a morning rain shower. I grabbed a leash from the car and walked to her. She walked right over to me before I got halfway to her. We jumped into my car and off we went to the nearest vet to see if she had a microchip, since she did not have a collar with a tag.

I was in luck as she did have a microchip.

I went to my work at Mesilla Valley Pet Resort (I can always bring pets I find to get baths, food and a couch to sleep on while I work) to call the Home Again microchip company. I was informed that the shepherd's name was Java, but all four contact numbers on the account were no longer working or just kept ringing. I was advised to take her to the Animal Service Center of Mesilla Valley.

I knew how busy the ASCMV is and I have a few tricks up my sleeve to getting pets home through the Mesilla Valley Pet Resort. My plan was to use Facebook, an email network that goes through Action Program for Animals, and file a found dog report with the ASCMV. I took her picture and sent out the word that I had found Java. Thankfully, I found her owners that same day through those resources. As soon as she heard her owner's voice over the phone, she really got excited and I knew how much she missed them. She had seemed sad the whole time with me unless I was giving her a belly rub.

Many times my rescue of lost pets does not turn out this way. I have to rehome a pet that has stayed with me for more three months because the microchip is not properly registered or the collar tags are missing or no longer have the right information. It is bittersweet, because the dog is going to have a great new home, but out there her previous owner, who cared enough to make the tags and get the pet microchipped, forgot to update the information and may very well never see their best friend again.

It has happened to me and I know better. My beagle mix Leroy got out and never returned, because I had not updated his microchip information. I never got him back and its been a year and a half.

When the Humane Society of Southern New Mexico heard about my return of Java to her owner, they asked me to write column about it to demonstrate the importance of getting your pet microchipped and tagged, as well as keeping that information current.

I cannot stress the importance enough. Even with a collar, tag and microchip, old information is always a big obstacle.

Thankfully in the case of Java, it worked out for the best with the help of the animal rescue community.

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