

LAS CRUCES SUN-NEWS

ON THE POSITIVE SIDE: Chaparral spay and neuter grant successfully ends

By Trish Anderson for the Sun-News

Sept. 6, 2013

When the Humane Society of Southern New Mexico and its president Frank Bryce approached us in August of 2012 to collaborate on a grant for spaying and neutering 750 dogs in our community of Chaparral, N.M., we were ecstatic about the possibility of such a huge and positive endeavor.

Knowing the number of dogs taken from Chaparral annually to the government- operated animal shelter by the county animal control department, the low-income situation of many Chaparral residents and the problems associated with the issue in Chaparral, HSSNM had been seeking such an opportunity for several years to address our community's need. HSSNM's persistence paid off.

A grant was sought and secured from the PetSmart Charities organization.

HSSNM, along with the dedicated and tireless volunteers from HSSNM and Chaparral, began laying the ground work to meet the PetSmart Charities grant requirements. Doña Ana County assisted the effort through the offices of the Doña Ana County Public Information Officer Jess Williams and the Facilities and Parks Vector Control Coordinator Misty Dawn Benavidez.

Without their help, the grant operation would have faced very difficult logistics and their assistance cannot be overstated.

Prior to the initiation of the spay and neuter official recruitment for participation, Dr. Elizabeth Carver, D.V.M., with her mobile veterinary service, allowed volunteers to register names at her vaccination clinics before event dates were set.

Once the announcement fliers hit the mail, the registration calls were overwhelming. On the first day, calls averaged one per minute beginning at 8 a.m. and lasted all day. There were more than 1,000 calls within the first few days.

As with any new program, there was a learning curve. The first event of the grant began Oct. 29 at 7 a.m. and ended 11 p.m., making for a very long day, but each event has proved more efficient. The grant was to spay and neuter 750 dogs for Chaparral residents over a two-year period. We will have reached our 750 goal next Monday — in just 11 months. Donations and outside resources helped fund the costs for spay and neuter procedures not covered fully by the grant, and also provided for a very high number of dogs to get rabies vaccinations and microchipped.

The list of donors and resources in the successful completion of the grant is too long for this article, but the residents of Chaparral and HSSNM and their volunteers are very grateful and most appreciative for their help. HSSNM does want to acknowledge those folks who were at the events, helped prepare for the events and who were instrumental in registration of participants. Chaparral residents Trish Anderson and Yvonne Dominguez, whose dedication and help at every event with their dog knowledge and bilingual skills, were absolutely indispensable. Dr. Amy Starr, D.V.M. and Danielle Segura, veterinary assistant with Paws and Hooves Mobile Veterinary Services from El Paso, provided for the surgical procedures and veterinary expertise for the entire effort. Thanks to Diana Armijo, Keith Odenheim, Emile Bourdet, Bill Smith and Win Jacobs, all with HSSNM, and Tom Townsend, co-chairman of the Coalition for Pets and People, for their efforts and assistance. A great big thanks goes to the Chaparral community for their support, participation and enthusiasm to achieve our goal in such a short period. While this grant has been completed, we have more than 250 dogs still on our waiting list for Chaparral and hope to develop additional resources to finish those animals and many more.

Trish Anderson is the president of Animal Welfare Group in Chaparral, KM. Interested guest authors can contact HSSNM at 575-523-8020.