

**On the Positive Side: Animal Planet reality stars coming to Las Cruces**

**By Michel Meunier / For the Sun-News**

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On Saturday, Oct. 6, at Pioneer Park from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., the PITS for Peace Walk will take place. The event is in honor of National Pit Bull Awareness Month, which lovers of these types celebrate every year in October. This year, ACTion Programs for Animals (APA) will be the first animal-welfare group in Las Cruces to organize such an event, which also celebrates the loving, peaceful nature of all dogs.

At the event, there will be a variety of vendor booths, groups with adoptable dogs, raffle prizes, a jumping balloon for the kids, a vaccination/microchip clinic, and doggy nail trimmings. All well-behaved, leashed dogs of all types are welcome.

It is also with great enthusiasm that APA announces that Armando and Ruby Galindo from Animal Planet's hit TV show Pit Bull and Parolees and the biggest pit bull rescue in the U.S., Villalobos Rescue Center (VRC), will be having a booth at the event. The Galindos will be selling VRC merchandise, signing autographs and conducting a dog handling class at 12:30 p.m.

The short walk itself will take place at 11:30 a.m., and participants can register starting at 10 a.m. The \$5 registration will benefit APA's Second Chance Dogs program, which rehabilitates/re-homes or finds safe rescue placement former abuse-case dogs in DAC — most of which are pit bull-type mixes. The first 100 registrants will receive an event tote bag.

The purpose of the event is to promote the positive side of dogs often misunderstood and misrepresented, especially in the press. Unfortunately, the positive pit bull-type dog stories are rarely shown. For example, one of the top search and research dogs in the U.S. is an American Pit Bull Terrier named Dakota, who has been used in 200 search missions and was specifically picked by NASA when the space shuttle Columbia exploded. She has received numerous awards and a certificate of appreciation from the FBI.

Hopefully, more TV shows, ambassador dogs, families with pit bull-type dogs, events and positive press will emerge and help change the preconceived notions that certain kinds of dogs are more dangerous than others and will show that overall, the good, loving and helpful nature of dogs in our lives is overwhelmingly positive and beneficial. The human-canine bond runs long and deep, and this event is to celebrate that wonderful history.

Michel Meunier is the founder/director of the APA. Interested guest authors can contact the Humane Society of Southern New Mexico at 523-8020.