

On the Positive Side: HSSNM becomes Good360 recipient partner

By Frank Bryce / For the Sun-News

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What would anybody say to an offer of lots of exciting toys, wonderful bedding, and comforting accessories but wow! Some local pets and parents can say that now.

The Humane Society of Southern New Mexico (HSSNM) has recently been notified of our organization's nomination by our local PetSmart store management, and subsequent selection, for the Good360 Product Giving pilot program. The notification explained that PetSmart Charities and PetSmart are now in partnership with Good360, a leading charitable organization in the product giving field. This partnership allows HSSNM to work directly with our PetSmart, Inc. store to receive donations of discontinued products such as dog/cat beds, bowls, toys, collars and leads to offset the costs associated with running our programs and fulfilling our mission. Additionally, HSSNM will not only have access to the donations provided by PetSmart, Inc. but access to donations from other donors within their network. And Good360 manages all aspects of this free program.

The notification describes Good360 as a nonprofit organization that is dedicated to fulfilling the needs of nonprofits by distributing product donations around the world. The organization works with more than half of the Fortune 100 consumer, retail and technology companies to provide needed products to more than 22,000 qualified nonprofit organizations. Good360 is ranked by Forbes Magazine as one of the nation's best-managed charities in America. HSSNM is pleased and proud to become one of those recipients of the Good360 program.

The fun part of participating in the Good360 program has already begun as two small truck loads of items have been received and are being incorporated into HSSNM programs such as Humane Educator Jean Gilbert's Critter Connection, Diggity Dog Learning and her associated pet responsibility programs designed for youth in education settings. Critter Connection conducts weekly sessions held at Las Cruces Boys & Girls Club sites with Diggity Dog Learning in public/private schools. Initiated in 2008, the Critter Connection program focus is humane and environmental education with volunteers leading from TheraPaws with ambassador dogs, R.S.V.P. (Retired Seniors Volunteer Program) and other educators or special guests from the community. Diggity Dog Learning incorporates language arts, math, science and social studies in the public school settings.

Volunteers give presentations on topics related to pet care/responsibility or nature and the environment. Sessions run about 1.5 hours in duration and begin with a story or theme presentation, often with ambassador dogs or "guest" animals in attendance.

Presentations include displays, followed with arts and crafts and interactive games and extension activities. To learn more about this successful program, contact Jean Gilbert at jean@hssnm.org or call (575) 522-2529.

The donated toys and accessories will be provided to participants of Jean's youth programs to re-enforce pet owner responsibility, pet socialization and care. Other recipients include HSSNM pet foster parents for enhanced foster animal socialization and training. Strict accounting and distribution rules have to be followed but HSSNM will be utilizing these items in the most appropriate and broadest possible manner to assist everyone associated with our efforts. So if you start seeing more dogs and cats with bright new toys, shiny new collars and behaving well, do not be surprised.

Frank Bryce is president of Humane Society of Southern New Mexico. Interested guest authors should contact HSSNM at (575) 523-8020.