

On the Positive Side: Chipping away: Enhancing the return of pets

by Frank Bryce

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The Coalition for Pets and People reported two great microchipping events during October, with 175 low-cost microchips being implanted in cats and dogs through the combined efforts of cooperating agencies and organizations. Coalition volunteers provided 39 during a three hour event at Your Pet Space on a Tuesday evening, and 136 chips were implanted during the daylong event at Young Park on a Saturday. Your Pet Space and Adams Radio Group provided the venues.

Coalition Chair Jessica Barraza, along with event coordinator Rick Hawn, were helped by Jake Sims (AWARE) for the printing; the Bulletin and Dog Cruces magazine for advertising; Jess Williams, Dona Ana County public information; Elaine Stachera, a coalition member who was first to arrive and last to leave; Laura and Romelia Moralez of ACTION Programs for Animals holding the animals and doing paper work; Cindy and Rob Taylor, APA; Christian Ortiz, coalition supporter; and Sharron Hoover of SNAP, administrative errands; Humane Society of Southern New Mexico, for initial equipment transport; and David Lieberman for final transport and storage of event supplies. Rick and Nora did the implanting of the chips. The chips were purchased from the Animal Services Center of Mesilla Valley, which included an estimated 18 hours of followup data input by shelter staff to register the chips.

This very positive set of events continues to expand microchipping throughout Doña Ana County, enhancing return of stray and otherwise errant cats and dogs directly to pet owners from Las Cruces and Doña Ana Animal Control Department trucks.

This past week, the Humane Society was contacted about a found dog with a microchip. The finder, Ty Tharp, encountered the dog, a beautiful chocolate Labrador, when he returned to his truck after checking a tree grove near Avillar and Barela streets to find her sitting in the cab of his truck. After determining this was a friendly hitchhiker, Ty took the dog home to Pam Pacheco. Pam and Ty had the dog checked for a microchip, which it had, but there was a serious hitch in returning the dog to its chip-registered owner. When the original attempts were made by the finders to track the dog with its microchip, they were told the chip company was no longer in business and the records no longer existed.

Finding themselves at an impasse, but not deterred, Pam and Ty contacted HSSNM for help. Through an investigation with a bit of polite enthusiasm leading back through Banfield Veterinary Corp. and Home Again Microchip Co. to the defunct Crystal Tag distributor, the original owner was identified.

When notified by phone of the finding of "Princess," the owner stated "Oh my God, that dog has been missing eight years."

A remarkable verification of the chip's value to return lost pets, but like the movie "Castaway," life has moved on and "Princess" needs a new home after being gone for eight years. Since we have not been able to find her mysterious owners of the intervening years, Princess is now being rehomed through the good graces of Safe Haven Animal Sanctuary.

We have every expectation "Princess" will find a new home soon and express our appreciation to Ty and Pam for their efforts to go the extra mile to rehome "Princess."

Microchips work, so please license and microchip all your pets.

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