

LAS CRUCES SUN-NEWS

On the Positive Side: Coalition for Pets and People recognized

By Frank Bryce

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Positive signs that the Coalition for Pets and People is accepting its role as a united advocacy for helping resolve companion-animal issues throughout the county and within our local communities continues to be demonstrated.

A recent vote by the coalition's participating animal welfare organizations supporting the establishment of an approved "Community Cat Management" program, often referred to as "Trap, Neuter, Return," is one example. The allowance of such a program similar to those in other cities, including Albuquerque and Santa Fe, will begin to better address the issues of community cats by regulating sterilization, vaccination and other concerns.

More examples are the expanding efforts for both spay and neuter services, microchipping of companion animals and the growing successes of returning microchipped animals by the city and county animal control units in lieu of taking to the animals to the local government shelter. It has been reported that for the month of October, the county animal control units alone returned slightly more than 100 animals this way. That is a conservatively estimated savings in operational costs to the city and county of more than \$22,000, not to mention the immediate safety for the animals involved, savings to the pet owners and the reduction of extreme overcrowding at the government shelter.

It was announced this past week that the Community Foundation of Southern New Mexico has presented the Coalition for Pets and People with a Special Project Award for "commitment to working to improve the quality of life for pets in our community." Its mission statement reads: "The Community Foundation of Southern New Mexico serves as a charitable resource linking donors with community needs."

It is a trusted foundation in southern New Mexico to more than 12,700 donors who want to make a difference in the lives of others through charitable giving.

It offers resources, services and community knowledge to help its donors achieve their philanthropic goals.

It serves Doña Ana, Grant, Hidalgo, Lincoln, Luna, Otero and Sierra counties in southern New Mexico.

The assistance and cooperation of the Community Foundation to the Coalition for Pets and People has been invaluable and is sincerely appreciated by all the Coalition members and supporters.

"I am extremely proud of how our participating organizations have come together to increase their efforts in those areas that they carry out every day," said Tom Townsend, Coalition for Pets and People cochairman.

In terms of spay and neuter, we are just beginning to see a minimal impact in reduction of animals from certain areas of the county.

We need a lot of resources and funding to reach our goal of "0 in 7." The "0 in 7" means zero deaths of healthy and treatable animals in seven years or less.

It is planned that each participating organization will receive a framed award certificate for display in their office. It is important to remember each of these contributing and collaborating organizations continues to execute its own mission and pursue organization goals while contributing to the goals of the coalition that are mutually beneficial and desirable.

Please continue your support to the organizations doing this important work.

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