

Hands-on DAPA program saves lives, one pet at a time

By Lauren Henckel, DVM / For the Sun-News Las Cruces Sun-News

Posted:

lcsun-news.com

Doña Ana Pets Alive! (DAPA) was founded in April as an ACTion Programs for Animals (APA) grassroots campaign. The goal is to save animals from our shelter and to provide programs and services that will make Doña Ana the next no-kill county in America.

Thanks to a group of dedicated and hardworking volunteers, we have adopted out 25 dogs and cats since we began rescues from the Animal Service Center of the Mesilla Valley (ASCMV) just two months ago. Twenty-eight lives saved, from a 2-pound fluffy kitten to 60 pounds of hard-playing muscle. We are now holding adoption events from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. every Saturday at Tractor Supply and every Sunday at PetCo.

"We are amazed by the community support of our efforts so far," said Michel Meunier, APA's president/director. "Each week, we see new faces of those willing to help save lives added to our core group of foster homes who do the quarantine fostering right after we pull animals from the shelter.

These special foster people, such as Chris and Valina Hamilton, are the first stop for the animals pulled from the shelter. They ensure the cats and dogs are healthy and of sound temperament before moving on to other foster homes, and they also run our weekend offsite adoptions. Providing post-adoption support and assistance is also a key to our success."

No-kill communities have become a reality in a growing number of cities and counties. These are communities just like ours where 90 percent or more of the animals turned in to public shelters find homes instead of death.

Our county can be transformed into a no-kill county. To achieve this goal, Doña Ana Pets Alive! needs more supporters. If you can't provide a forever home, consider becoming a short-term foster for one of our rescued dogs or cats. Donate your time and knowledge to help us grow. We believe that our community is ready to embrace these programs that benefit both people and our animal companions.

"One of our greatest needs is for foster homes for cats and bigger, sometimes unruly dogs that need more socialization before moving onto a permanent home. We also welcome assistance from area trainers and behaviorists or other animal-welfare specialists," said Meunier. "Contact us to find a way that you can get involved with this exciting campaign. Lending your particular talents and skills can help - anything from providing services such as photography to graphic design to helping raise funds to walking dogs at offsite adoptions are ways that you can participate in our life-saving goals. It truly takes the entire community to change the outcome for our at-risk, sheltered animals."

Dr. Lauren Henckel volunteers with ACTion Programs for Animals/Doña Ana Pets Alive!