

Doña Ana Pets Alive! works overtime

Campaign aims to save as many pets as possible

By **Michel Meunier** APA's President/Founder For the Las Cruces Bulletin

At ACTion Programs for Animals (APA), we started our no-kill programming efforts in May.

Called the Doña Ana Pets Alive! (DAPA!) Campaign, it is similar to other efforts across the nation. DAPA! pulls at-risk dogs and cats from the municipal shelter, puts them into foster homes and finds them new homes via weekend adoption events, online promotion, etc.

The overall goal is to grow the program quickly to include more of the programs and services of the "no-kill equation," which is the only national model that has helped more than 50 communities across the U.S. reach a point of saving more than 90 percent of their shelter animals' lives.

Since May, DAPA! has saved more than 100 cats and dogs from the municipal shelter. The program and campaign rely heavily on foster homes at this time, but we hope to grow into obtaining and running a facility or multiple facilities by next year.

We won't lie; saving lives is hard work, and DAPA! often overtaxes our dedicated board, volunteers, foster families and ourselves because we usually don't rest between pulling the animals out. The campaign is truly committed to reducing our community's kill rate as quickly as possible.

As DAPA! gains more support and momentum community-wide, the program and campaign will be able to save many more lives. As it is, the campaign! is only scratching the surface at this time because 8,000 animals are still put to death each year in the community.

The good news is that American Veterinary Medical Association demographic data shows that in Doña Ana County, an average of 13,000 homes take in new animals each year in our area (animals 1 year old or less). What DAPA! recognizes is a market share problem. We want to do a better job of competing for these homes.

Despite our push to save lives, the campaign doesn't compromise on support and customer service to those who adopt animals from us. Though the program and campaign often adopt out an average of five animals per weekend, our return rate is relatively low – about 5 percent.

The greatest need at the moment is for more foster homes for cats and dogs. The average stay in a temporary home for animals DAPA! pull from the shelter is a few weeks. You can foster for as long as you like, and it is an ideal way for those who can't make lifetime commitments to animals at this time to still enjoy their companionship. If you have room in your home and heart to help us save more lives, contact us at 575-644-0505 or actionprogramsforanimals@yahoo.com.

For more information about the DAPA! Campaign, visit www.actionprogramsforanimals.org, or find us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/APALasCruces or [DoñaAnaPetsAlive](http://www.facebook.com/DoñaAnaPetsAlive).

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Angie is a blue-nosed AMSTAF mix still looking for a home; here, she is with Bronwyn Olsen, one of APA's dedicated foster moms and offsite volunteers.

ACTion Programs for Animals photo

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