



Turmoil and Change: The Decade 2000 – Present

The decade that began in the year 2000 demonstrated Animal Humane's resilience. It has been a decade of turmoil and many changes. By way of example, the organization cycled through six Executive Directors before the end of 2006, had six different veterinarians by 2007 and survived a failed capital campaign/merger with Watermelon Mountain Ranch.

The decade began with Executive Director, Joel Warner at the helm and Dr. Bob Doak as Chief Medical Officer. In his 5th year, Warner set his sights on continuing to improve our Virginia Street facilities and adding programs to increase adoptions. Following Warner's attendance at the No More Homeless Pets Conference, he began to follow emerging trends in shelter management that promoted shifting to healing illnesses and rehabilitating pets versus using euthanasia as the only outcome for less desirable pets. Part of this new vision included the introduction of a Behavior Department and Behavior Helpline modeled after the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) and Denver Dumb Friends's League "Pets for Life" campaign. Other programs introduced in 2000 included Junior Humane and Camp-Love-a-Pet. Warner also began work on forming a federation to help set standards for animal shelters in New Mexico. The federation did not survive his departure from Animal Humane in 2001.

In January 2000, Warner managed to negotiate a very cost effective purchase of what is now our current Super Thrift Store and surrounding lot. Warner and the Board investigated the possibility of conducting a capital campaign to upgrade the current kennel processing building to include improved isolation quarters, a better cattery and upgraded intake facilities. A \$2M campaign was launched for the renovation.



Dr. Bob Doak

In April, as the result of a lawsuit filed by Marcy Britton against the City of Albuquerque's Animal Care and Control (ACC), the HSUS performed an audit of ACC's operations, focusing in part on their euthanasia practices. The audit uncovered inhumane practices and routine neglect of sheltered animals. The negative publicity impacted Animal Humane as well, since many members of the public, to this day, continue to confuse the City shelters with Animal Humane. Mr. Warner spent considerable time and effort to set the record straight that the HSUS report had nothing to do with Animal Humane or our practices.

In December 2001, after a very productive tenure as Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Doak resigned to join VCA Animal Hospitals management team. While at Animal Humane, he increased the volume of spay/neuter surgeries performed and set a new bar for clinic operations. Dr. Doak can also be credited with developing the initial vision for opening a low-cost veterinary clinic for low-income clients at Animal Humane—a vision that was realized in 2007 thanks to Board support for a complete clinic renovation made possible by a successful \$1.025M capital campaign.

The Merger Debacle

The big headline of 2000 was the start of a major initiative to open a new shelter in Placitas. The State had given land to Sandoval County to build a multi-purpose facility to house an animal shelter, 4-H and Future Farmers of America. (The State later withdrew the offer for the land as

land values rose in Rio Rancho.)

The concept was to build a hacienda-style, cage-free shelter, a petting zoo and a therapeutic riding facility to be called "Watermelon Ranch (WR) in Placitas." Animal Humane was asked to submit an RFP to Sandoval County to build and operate this facility. (It is important to note that this effort pre-dates the Watermelon Mountain Ranch organization and shelter. In 2001, it was known as "Watermelon Ranch Circle of Friends," with Sophia DiClemente serving as Board President.) Preliminary funding for the project was committed by The Range Cafe, Simon & Schuster and Sophia DiClemente. Animal Humane agreed to team with the DiClementes to undertake a joint capital campaign to build the WR facility. In November 2000, Lee DiClemente was voted onto Animal Humane's Board of Directors. Animal Humane put its own capital campaign on hold.

Moving into 2001, Notah Begay was named Honorary Chair and Sophia DiClemente named Chair of the capital campaign, with a goal of raising \$5M. Watermelon Mountain Ranch's (WMR) Board of Directors committed to raise \$1.5M to develop the project. Rick and Debbie Johnson of Rick Johnson & Co. agreed to design campaign fundraising materials pro bono. Architectural drawings were essential component of the fundraising materials and effort. Animal Humane and WR agreed to share the \$20,000 required to develop the plans, with Animal Humane advancing the entire amount. Since veterinary services and processing for adoptable animals for both locations would be performed at our Virginia Street campus, it was agreed that funds raised would be split between the new WR shelter project and Animal Humane's Clinic/Kennel processing building renovation. Phase II of the capital campaign and project would pay for a new clinic for Animal Humane and more funding for the new WR Placitas location.

By May 2001, the joint project began to unravel, with disagreements on the progress and conduct of the capital campaign at the center. In June 2001, given the discord between the two organizations, Animal Humane's Board discussed separating the WR Placitas campaign from the Virginia St. campaign and dividing the money raised to date between the two organizations. The Board approved withdrawing its RFP from Sandoval County. By August, attorneys had gotten involved in the dispute. Animal Humane representatives met with the Sandoval County attorney (David Campbell) and members of the WMR Board of Directors and their attorney discussed potential methods for eliminating Animal Humane's connection to the WR facility and campaign while preserving for WR the benefits of Animal Humane's involvement in the RFP process. The parties were unable to reach an adequate solution. Although Animal Humane and WR had parted ways during the summer of 2001, legal discussions continued for some period. Lee DiClemente resigned from Animal Humane's board in November. By July 2002, we began returning donations to donors who had restricted their gifts to the new WR facility. Relations between the two organizations remained strained for years and only began to show signs of healing in 2009.

Executive Director Succession

In November 2001, Joel Warner resigned from Animal Humane, accepting the position of Executive Director of the Spartanburg, South Carolina Humane Society. Stewart Shatz, who had been a Board member and then Assistant to Warner, became ED. Eight months later, Mr. Shatz resigned and Tracy Floor, then operations manager, became interim ED while the Board searched for a new ED. In December 2002, Judi Pierson was offered the job and she started in February 2003. During her tenure, she initiated limited admission policies, taking in only those pets considered to be adoptable and refusing intakes when the shelter is "full." As a result, intakes were down from 5,140 in 2002 to 3,706 and adoptions reach their lowest point since 1995 due to the strictness of the adopter qualification process. The Board of Directors was unhappy with the direction adoptions

were taking and Ms. Pierson left in February 2004. Nancy Wilkins, then Board President, stepped in as interim ED while a new search was carried out.

John Merritt, fresh off a major renovation of the San Diego Humane Society facility, was hired and started in June 2004. The Board charged him with increasing adoptions 25% year-over-year for the next three years. He met the goal in his first year, but with no corresponding goal set to keep euthanasia in line, the annual euthanasia rate jumped to 29% from 14% the previous year. Mr. Merritt identified the need to improve cat housing and isolation facilities and the renovation of the kennel processing building began by Britton Construction in September 2005. However, dissatisfied in general with the shelter's location and state of disrepair, he encouraged the Board to begin an \$8M capital campaign for the purposes of building a new state-of-the-art shelter in a more central, upscale part of Albuquerque. (See below, "To Move or Not to Move" for more detail.)

While Mr. Merritt was on board, adoption hours were extended, the overly strict adopter interviews were greatly softened and he encouraged greater use of Petfinder.com to increase adoptions. With intakes still low, he established a transfer program with the city shelter. Fundraising during this time was below expectations, from Doggie Dash to individual donations. Coupled with the fact that by early 2006, adoptions had dropped by 25% with a corresponding shortfall in revenue, the organization was headed for a significant deficit in 2006. Campus renovations stalled and employee turnover was high. Mr. Merritt announced his plans to retire in mid-2006. In June 2006, Peggy Weigle began the interview process with the Board. She accepted their offer and began at Animal Humane in September 2006 and remains in the role today.

2003 – 2006

In 2003, Jean Bernstein of Flying Star Cafe and Satellite Coffee made a presentation to the Board, recommending the organization upgrade its image. She invited the marketing firm she used at the time, Vaughn Weeden, to develop a new logo for the organization. Her offer included paying for the costs of converting marketing materials to incorporate the new logo and look. The Board approved the new logo. Still in use today, the logo never fails to receive positive comments from people inside and outside our field.

The Bernstein's support did not end there. In 2005, an Albuquerque tradition was launched, namely "Buy a Cookie/Save A Pet." To this day, for the entire month of April each year, Flying Star makes special batches of their delicious iced lemon sugar cookies embossed with Animal Humane's logo. Cookies are sold at all Flying Star Cafes and Satellite Coffee locations and other partner locations. For each cookie sold, \$1 is donated to Animal Humane. Our development team relishes the opportunity to deliver over 200 dozen cookies as thank you gifts for our key donors and sponsors. In year one, nearly 4,000 Animal Humane logoed cookies were sold, bringing Animal Humane \$1 per cookie. By 2008, the monthly cookie campaign became a community favorite, raising \$35,000 for the veterinary clinic's renovation.



In February 2003, a highly critical and inaccurate story appeared in Crosswinds, a now-defunct newspaper. The reporter based his entire story on accounts from former disgruntled employees who claimed that Animal Humane was euthanizing animals for profit and that the organization was euthanizing a huge number of animals each day. None of these claims were fact-checked. Letters to the editor poured into Crosswinds. This unfortunate story continued to foster negative attitudes against the organization for years afterwards.

Animal Humane entered into an exclusive agreement with VCA Animal Hospitals in 2003. The agreement provided adopters with a complementary veterinary visit within the first 14 days of adoption with up to \$500 in coverage for certain specified health conditions. VCA was provided with adopters' names in order to schedule the appointments. VCA's partnership included becoming the lead sponsor for Doggie Dash and Dawdle as well as adoption events. In 2009, the exclusive agreement ended and adopters are given a listing of all veterinarians offering the complementary visits.

2006 – Present

As Ms. Weigle assessed the organization during the first months on board, she set several priorities:

- Give the campus a much needed face lift to make it more welcoming to adopters and supporters
- Improve the daily cleanliness of the kennels, cattery and grounds
- Initiate adoption programs and services that differentiate Animal Humane from the City shelter
- Improve donor relations by thanking every donor, every time and getting to know them individually
- Improve and motivate staff to create a first rate shelter
- Improve PR and marketing efforts so Animal Humane is no longer the city's best kept secret

One of the first management decisions facing Ms. Weigle was "to move or not to move." Throughout the decade, the EDs and staff veterinarians expressed concerns over the facilities at 615 Virginia Street, whether it was the inadequacy of the pet isolation facilities, the general condition of the various buildings or the undesirability of the location. While some of the improvements to the cattery and isolation facilities were achieved in 2005, Board discussions continued regarding renovating the Clinic, which had been built in 1977. When John Merritt arrived in 2004, he believed the organization could raise \$8M dollars to buy land and build a new shelter. The Board authorized a feasibility study be done and the judgment was that the community would not support a campaign of this size.

Nevertheless, in early 2006, the organization began looking at property to purchase to build the new shelter. An offer was made and accepted on property in the Renaissance area for \$1.2M. Ms. Weigle evaluated the site shortly after joining the organization. Concerns included the arroyo nature of the site, the fact that all construction had to be carried out by union contractors and that no architectural plans had been created, so the actual estimated cost of the new facility was unknown. Weigle recommended to the Board that the offer be allowed to expire. She also recommended that rather than having a grand and expensive plan to move to a new location, the organization focus on creating smaller "wins" by renovating the clinic to realize the vision of providing quality, low-cost veterinary services for low-income pet owners within the year. This could be achieved by launching a more realistic capital campaign. She felt the organization needed to establish a track record for successfully completing a capital campaign and to show that we could deliver on expectations. It also made sense to create these services in our present location as the target client population was in our own neighborhood. The Board approved moving forward with the Clinic renovation, capital campaign and various upgrades to the buildings on campus. At the same time, Weigle recommended reaching new audiences through an improved mobile adoption program and the addition/expansion of satellite locations. By 2010, all of these initiatives were realized.

From 2006 to 2010, the Board and donors have supported many improvements to our 615 Virginia Street campus that transformed the public's experience of visiting our shelter and just as importantly, greatly improved the quality of the facilities for the pets in our care. Campus improvements included the addition of the Mary Claire Bachechi Learning Center in 2008, improvements in the kennels, a volunteer-friendly dog walking path that winds through the campus in memory of former Board member Diane Mulcahey, to upgrades in the Super Thrift Store building on Virginia Street. On deck for later this year, the parking lot will finally be repaved and power lines buried.

Other programs introduced during this period included reinstatement of the Behavior Rehabilitation, Behavior Helpline and Pet Therapy programs, creation of Train Humane™ dog training classes, and a major expansion of the volunteer and foster care programs.

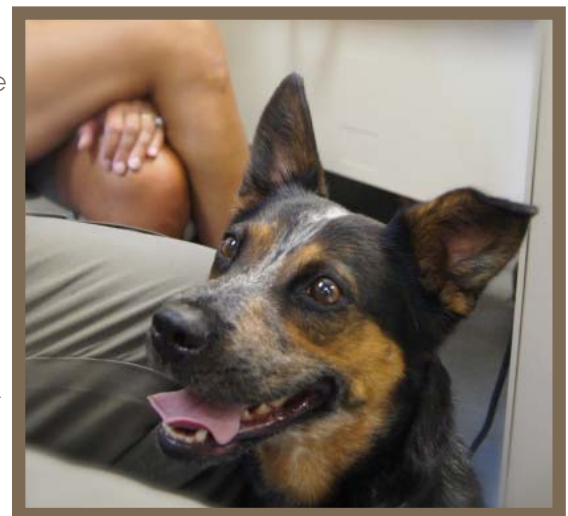
In 2008, Animal Humane undertook a branding campaign with Ripe, Inc. to help differentiate our shelter and programs from the city shelter, a problem that has persisted since our founding in 1965. Our name was shortened to "Animal Humane | New Mexico" and our branding look and feel was developed around a campus theme. All printed materials and the website now utilize the elements of this branding platform, giving the organization a consistent look for the first time.

Intakes/Adoptions/Euthanasias

From 2004–2007, Animal Humane's adoption team was driven by a simple Board directive: increase adoptions by 25% year-over-year. While this goal was met, many pets were casualties of the policy as less adoptable pets were quickly euthanized to make room for more highly adoptable transfers from other shelters. By the end of 2006, euthanasia stood at 27% of all intakes. At the beginning of 2007, Ms. Weigle gained approval for a new set of linked goals: we would strive to adopt out 85% of intakes, keeping euthanasias to a maximum of 15% of intakes. By the end of 2007, we had reduced euthanasia to 17% of intakes. By the end of 2009, not only had we achieved the maximum goal of 15%, but less than 2% of those pets euthanized were healthy pets being euthanized for "space." In 2010, a new goal was set: adopt 100% of all healthy pets.

Meeting the new goal of 100% adoptions of healthy pets meant coming up with additional adoption venues. Once again, our Board stepped up to the plate, authorizing us to open two new Adoption Centers in 2010: 9132 Montgomery Blvd. NE and 10700 Corrales Rd. NW. Together, the two locations now average 70 adoptions per month. As of November, no healthy pets have been euthanized this year.

For a brief period in 2003, intakes were by appointment only, one obvious cause of the reduced intake numbers. At this same time, no large dogs were accepted and only those pets the adoption and veterinary staff deemed as "adoptable" were accepted. All others were sent to the city shelter. Under interim ED Nancy Wilkins, the intake criteria were loosened and only aggressive animals were denied admission, a policy that continues today. During this time, the organization began asking for an intake donation to help off-set costs. By 2006, this suggested donation became a fee, though it is waived when necessary to do the right thing for the animal. As of 2010, Animal Humane takes in an average of 390 owner surrenders and strays per



Macy looks up at her new parents in 2010

month. So it's hard to imagine that for the first half of the decade, the Board had ongoing concerns about the low number of intakes.

Programs introduced since 2006 that helped achieve these higher adoption goals while keeping euthanasia low included ASPCA SAFER™ and Meet-Your-Match™, Behavior Rehabilitation and our Behavior Helpline (re-introduced after being dropped earlier in the decade), and Cats Around Town! (CATS!). CATS! is modeled after a program in Buffalo, New York, the goal being to make adoptable cats more accessible to the public. By putting cats in cat-friendly businesses all over Albuquerque, we seek placing more adult cats in homes. The program is a success! In 2009, 10% of all adult cats adopted were from CAT! partner locations.

The Clinic

In January 2007, Dr. Mike Neal and Kathy Pierce joined the team. Dr. Neal quickly improved the speed and quality of spay/neuter operations, transformed shelter health protocols, and made key recommendations to improve the animal living quarters, resulting in improved disease control. Together with Clinic Manager Kathy Pierce, they opened New Mexico's first and only low-income clinic and introduced a high-volume feral cat trap/neuter/return program. Currently, the Clinic's staff of 14 sees over 6,000 low-income clients, sterilizes over 9,500 dogs and cats (including 1,500 feral cats), performs over 1,250 emergency surgeries and does close to 8,000 shelter pet health assessments annually.

Development

For much of the decade, fundraising proved to be a major challenge. Following the failed joint capital campaign with Watermelon Ranch Circle of Friends, various fundraisers from vehicle raffles to a charity golf tournament "The Bonehead Classic" were staged to help meet budget goals. In 2001, a new fundraiser, "Muttminster," was proposed with Jim Villaneucci to be Master of Ceremonies and shelter pets shown by members of Junior Humane. Tickets for the dinner/event were set at \$150 per person. This event failed to generate enough support and never took place.

Artists for the Animals and Doggie Dash and Dawdle have grown incrementally, with the most successful events taking place in 2010. While direct mail remains a mainstay for operating funds, the transformation of the quarterly newsletter, Paws for Thought in 2009 by the development team has become an important source of support for our programs and services.

The fact that we successfully conducted three capital campaigns from 2007–2010 is noteworthy given the organization's past struggles in raising large sums of money for capital improvements. Under Donna Marie Stumpf's leadership and with the help of generous lead campaign sponsors and hundreds of donors, all three campaigns were completed on time and were more successful than anticipated. From 2007–2008, just over \$1M was raised for the clinic's renovation and transformation into a low-cost veterinary practice. In 2009, a \$100,000 campaign led to the construction of our gorgeous Robbie Jones Memorial Cat House. Most recently, \$100,000 was raised to build and outfit our state-of-the-art Agility Dog Park.

As we near the end of 2010, the Board and senior management team are engaged in long range planning to set our strategic plans for the next decade.

Milestones

2000

- Animal Humane purchased the building north of the administration building to house the growing Thrift Shop. The former Thrift Shop was renovated to accommodate administrative offices.
- The main client service building was re-arranged to include a Lost and Found Service area and conference room.
- Junior Humane Association was launched.
- Art for the Animals, held at State Fairgrounds, netted \$15,000
- Camp-Love-a-Pet was founded with Tami Harboldt as manager
- The Animal Planet sponsored Adopt-a-thon achieved 417 adoptions over the 3 day event
- In May, several staff members assisted with rescuing 800 animals during the Los Alamos Fire
- Earnings from Direct Mail (Grizzard & Co) totaled \$75,000
- Animal Humane received a \$36,000 grant from PetSmart to purchase mobile adoption trailer

2001

- Bob Wolf resigned as Board President after many productive years
- Don DeCandia was elected Board President
- Joel Warner resigned as ED in November
- The Adoption Option for Owned Pets was implemented allowing pet owners the option of reclaiming their pet if it was not adopted. (This option is no longer offered)
- Pets for Life Program was introduced offering Doggie Charm School and a Behavior Help Line.
- Board approved changing our name to Humane Society of New Mexico, but it was never adopted
- Direct mail brought in \$126,000 for the year
- Art for the Animals netted \$33,000

2003

- Animal Humane created the Foster Program for Pets of Military Personnel during the Iraqi War
- Our low income spay/neuter program began
- 1st Annual Bonehead Classic Golf Tournament was held
- Nancy Wilkins elected Board President

2004

- More than 5,000 local residents were served with outreach programs in the schools, community organizations, fairs and festivals
- More than 300 pets were fixed in our low-income Clinic, made possible by an anonymous donor
- An exclusive agreement was signed with VCA Animal Hospitals to provide post-adoption care for newly adopted pets. Agreement included \$20K to promote adoption events and Doggie Dash and Dawdle
- Art for the Animals was suspended in lieu of an on-line art auction, which proved to be unsuccessful
- Nancy Wilkins becomes interim ED, Don DeCandia resumed his role as Board President
- Board approved open admission intake policy

2005

- Animal Humane celebrated its 40th Anniversary
- The cattery was extensively remodeled to include cat-friendly condos and two socialization areas
- Camp Care was introduced
- First year of Flying Star Cafe Cookie Campaign Buy a Cookie, Save a Pet
- Direct mail contract switched from Grizzard to Alpha Dog Marketing
- Bob Doak, now on the Board, introduced idea of starting a low-cost veterinary clinic for low-income clients

2006

- Animal Humane held its annual adopt-a-thon at the shelter for the 1st time.
- Art for the Animals was revived, held at Flying Star Cafe on Silver Street
- Pet Therapy program was suspended due to Board concerns over lack of certification process for pet teams
- Buy a Cookie, Save a Pet brought in \$18,000
- Peggy Weigle joined as Executive Director in September

2007

- Wrote first Business Operating Plan
- Completed renovation of Veterinary Clinic to re-open in September as a low-cost veterinary clinic for low-income pet owners, in addition to caring for shelter residents
- Installed 25 outdoor dog runs on newly poured concrete pads and drainage system for sanitary operations
- Installed 120 new kennel partitions for stress and disease management and control
- Upgraded cat condo doors for easier viewing, stress and disease management and control
- Cosmetic upgrade of adoptions offices with striking new colors and graphics. Installed new heating and cooling units on all buildings except administration
- Installed improved lighting for safety in kennels
- Introduced ASPCA's SAFER™ and Meet-Your-Match™ programs
- Overhauled donor database and direct mail and donor recognition programs
- Outsourced payroll
- Opened second thrift store, PAWS & Shop at 7901 4th Street NW
- Marti Partridge elected Board President

2008

- Set goal to reduce euthanasia in addition to adoption goals
- Initiated feral cat Trap/Neuter/Return program
- Upgraded mobile adoptions vehicle with LaBoit unit
- Purchased and renovated used triple-wide building for Mary Clare Bachechi Learning Center
- Built storage building
- Installed new phone system
- Introduced Behavior Department with behavior rehabilitation, enrichment and Helpline activities.
- Began branding campaign work
- Began cremation of all shelter pets versus sending to landfill
- Converted clinic to Cornerstone software for patient management
- ED, Peggy Weigle appointed by Governor Richardson to Animal Sheltering Board
- Successful completion of \$1,025,000 Clinic Capital Campaign

- Adopted UC Davis Koret School capacity guidelines for shelter management to reduce disease.
- Launched new website
- Emily Esterson elected Board President

2009

- Year of the Cat
- Introduced the Cats Around Town! (CAT!) Program
- Introduced the Bernco Blitz to spay female cats
- Built and opened Robbie Jones Memorial Cat House
- Completed successful \$100,000 Cat House Capital Campaign
- Introduced Asilomar Accords
- Tail Date, a monthly social club for pet lovers, was introduced
- Converted to Shelter Buddy software from Chameleon for adoptions
- Train Humane rewards-based dog training program introduced
- Signed lease for 9132 Montgomery for new Adoptions Center to open early 2010
- Ended exclusive contract with VCA Animal Hospitals
- Established presence on Facebook and Twitter to promote adoptable pets and shelter events
- Reduced euthanasia of shelter pets to an all time low (less than 2% of healthy pets)
- Dr. Neal Awarded Red Cross Real Heroes Award for his life saving work
- Peggy Weigle named a Woman of Influence by New Mexico Business Weekly
- Peggy Weigle awarded Outstanding New Mexico Woman by Governor Richardson

2010

- Adoption and Training Center opened at 9132 Montgomery Blvd. NE in January
- Adoption and Training Center opened at 10700 Corrales Rd. NW in June
- Paws & Shop (second thrift store) closed in February because it was not profitable
- Saving Animals New Mexico became an Animal Humane program
- Animal Humane was presenting sponsor and Peggy Weigle was Chair of 5th New Mexico Humane Conference
- Animal Humane became State Coordinator for Spay New Mexico, a clearinghouse for spay/neuter programs statewide
- Changed fiscal year to July 1 from calendar fiscal year
- Completed successful \$100,000 capital campaign for new Dog Park on campus
- Artists for the Animals committee was formed and delivered most successful event ever
- Barbara Bruin, former Animal Humane Board member, became Director of City's Animal Welfare Department, ushering in an era of cooperation between the two organizations
- Marketing Director Lindsay Lancaster grew relationships with new media partners resulting in the addition of two dozen weekly, bi-monthly and monthly adoptable pet features plus a monthly column, "Paws Prints," in Local iQ
- July, adoptions achieves 545 adoptions, the highest monthly achievement in history
- Active volunteers exceed 300
- Susan Shires elected Board President