



Sage helps save her family every day. Read how you made it possible inside.

Paws for Thought

Spring 2023



**Animal Humane
Main Campus**

615 Virginia St. SE
Albuquerque, NM 87108
505.255.5523

**Animal Humane
Westside Adoption Center**

10141 Coors Blvd. NW
Albuquerque, NM 87114
505.323.PETS (7387)

**Animal Humane
Thrift Shop**

4646 Menaul Blvd. NE
Albuquerque, NM 87110
505.938.7915

**Donor-subsidized
Veterinary Clinic**

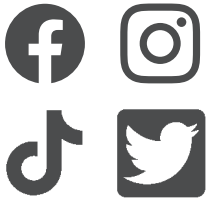
615 Virginia St. SE
Albuquerque, NM 87108
505.217.0300

**The Center
at Animal Humane**

615 Wyoming Blvd. SE
Albuquerque, NM 87123
505.255.PLAY (7529)

AnimalHumaneNM.org

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@AnimalHumaneNM

from the korner kennel

Dear supporters & pet lovers,

Seven years ago, Animal Humane was just a new job for me. But when I arrived on my first day here, I realized it wasn't just a job, but a passion-fulfilling career. That passion has allowed me to progress from Front Office Lead to Clinic Manager. In four short years, I was promoted again to Director of Veterinary Operations. In that new position I oversaw both Clinic and Shelter medicine programs, allowing me to witness firsthand the life-saving work Animal Humane New Mexico can do because of donors like you. Now, as Executive Director, I want to continue leading this organization in a way that encourages sustainable operations that save countless lives and that provides the pet in Albuquerque and beyond with the support and resources that are becoming increasingly difficult to secure across the state. I want to foster a sense of purpose & accomplishment for our team by creating goals & expectations that empower staff and volunteers to grow the organization. Being the Executive Director is a privilege and an honor, as I can represent the organization, my colleagues and be the voice for the homeless cats & dogs across New Mexico.

Every program within Animal Humane's Circle of Care is vital to improving the lives of New Mexico's cats & dogs but one that I foresee us prioritizing this year is spay/neuter services. We know that this service is vital for our community & shelter pets, and it also helps with the overall health of the pet population. This is especially important, as we continue to see pets entering our care who need medical



intervention. In 2022, 12% of cats that entered our shelter had upper respiratory infections & we can assume that this increase is due to less spay/neuter access across our state. Animal Humane will be re-opening our Donor-subsidized Veterinary Clinic this month, with the focus on providing community pets with affordable preventative care, including spay/neuter surgeries & vaccinations.

I'm excited to watch our team continue our life-saving work through their efforts, passion and perseverance. The gratitude I have for our donors fills my heart and I can't wait to see the impact you will bring to New Mexico's cats & dogs in 2023.

Val Wilson

Val Wilson, Executive Director

Joyful June Bug

On a seemingly normal day in early October, Sara James was driving down I-25 when she saw a small gray kitten darting across the freeway. Cars continued to whiz by, so Sara immediately pulled over to save the frantic kitten who had just ducked under a barbed wire fence. Using her jacket to protect them both, Sara rescued the kitten and carried her to safety.

The tiny kitten was covered in fleas and her eyes were weepy and begging for help. Considering the kitten's other injuries, Sara could only assume the kitten had been hit by a car. So, Sara brought her to Animal Humane's Donor-subsidized Clinic.

"They not only helped June Bug, but they also helped me calm down. Despite now being covered in fleas, I felt so much better leaving knowing she would get the help she needed," said Sara.

Because of your support, our Veterinary Team was able to start assessing and treating the fragile feline right away. **And June Bug desperately needed help.** The fleas covering this little kitten's body had caused anemia, diminishing her energy and her ability to heal. She was given medication to help with the fleas, and iron supplements to support her red blood cell production. Just one day after her harrowing journey to our care, June Bug was in surgery to get spayed and have the fracture in her right hind leg repaired.

A week after her surgery, June Bug's Foster Caregiver brought her to our Veterinary Clinic for a routine follow-up. Our Veterinary Team found that June Bug's fractured leg still wasn't healing properly.

The vulnerable kitten had developed edema in her hind leg. This accumulation of fluid in the tissue surrounding the injury had caused June Bug to lose feeling in her foot and reduced circulation to her toes. Our Team made the difficult decision to amputate the leg to ensure June Bug had the best quality of life moving forward before returning June Bug to the



loving arms of her Foster Caregiver to continue resting and healing.

Despite her difficult start to life, donors like you helped ensure June Bug's future was bright. Joining you in cheering her on was Sara, the hero who brought June Bug to Animal Humane that fall day.

"I called every other day to continue to check on her and see when she would be out of Foster Care. It took me no time to decide that she needed to be in my life forever." said Sara.

Finally, on October 26, just 23 days after her rescue, Sara and June Bug were reunited.

"She is the most loving, brave kitten I have ever met." Sara shares. "Some people might say her being a tripod makes her special, but after spending so much time with her, it's definitely her purr. I feel like it's her way of telling me she appreciates me, and as long as I take care of her, she will take care of me."

It takes a community to improve the lives of pets in need. **And, without daring rescuers like Sara and generous pet lovers like you, stories such as June Bug's would not be possible.** We are forever grateful for the difference you make in the lives of dogs & cats who desperately need a second chance.



Sage and Rose

A connection unlike any other

As her family packed up their belongings, Sage watched as her future with them began to fade away. Like others nationwide, Sage's family had come to the difficult decision to surrender their beloved pet, as they needed to move to smaller housing. Thankfully, they brought Sage to us. **By putting her in your care, Sage's family ensured she was set up for success in her pursuit of her new family.**

Losing her home and family in one day took a toll on Sage.

cover story

This stunning four-year-old Shepherd was full of fear, with wide whale eyes and a crouched stature as she took in her new surroundings. The slightest movement from any Team Member would cause Sage to dart away, in a desperate bid to escape. We knew that Sage's chances at a life full of love and fun hinged on her ability to move past her fears and begin to trust others

once again. Our Behavior Team stepped in, where thanks to your support she was given the extra time and compassion she needed to find a brighter future.

As our Behavior Team started working with Sage, they found most of her fear came from a hand being raised or moving near her. To help her learn that human hands were nothing to be frightened of, our Team Members took turns using hand targeting and other exposure therapies to desensitize Sage to normal movements. By using

*"We were meant to be together.
I can't tell you enough just how much
we love her!"*

— Rose

treats, which Sage was a big fan of, and pairing them with touch Sage began to progress! Soon, she was ready to graduate and begin meeting with potential adopters.

Just two weeks later, as she was scrolling through dogs who were available at various Albuquerque shelters, Rose spied Sage.

"My husband and I had been looking for about two years for a pet to add to our family," Rose said. "I instantly showed Sage's picture to my husband and said, 'This is the one! We have to go get her! **It was as if she was staring right at me saying, 'Come and get me'.**" Rose and her husband came in to meet Sage and our Team spent time counseling them on her history and fear. Rose sat on the ground in the Bonding Room, quietly talking to Sage. **Sage eventually came up to her, and their connection hasn't wavered since.** They took her home that same day!

As Sage bonded with her new family, just one week after her adoption, something incredible happened.

"One day my mom was visiting because I had just gotten out of the hospital. Suddenly, I had a very bad seizure, but my mom and husband were across the room. **Sage immediately stood up on a chair to get everyone's attention and alert them that I was having a seizure.**" said Rose. "I have to say, Sage



must be the smartest dog we have ever had. From that day on she has stayed by my side and now we take good care of each other."

As fellow pet lovers, you know firsthand the incredible, unconditional bond people can build with the pets around them. **The connection that Sage and Rose share is no different, a connection made possible by you.**

Sage has continued to alert those around her when Rose is having a medical episode, even going so far as to wake Rose's husband up when she needs help. Now starting medical treatment at the Mayo Clinic in Arizona, Rose needs Sage's support more than ever. Thank you for helping pets and the people who love them.

"We were meant to be together. I can't tell you enough just how much we love her!"

PUPdates & CATch-ups



Fig has been the perfect addition to his new family! He loves getting his daily snuggles not just from his new humans, but his four-legged brothers and sisters.



Frodo has been doing so well in his new home! He has learned the rules of the house and is getting along great with his older brother, a four-year-old fellow rescue named Pippin.

Want your adopted pet to be potentially featured in an upcoming newsletter? Scan the QR code to send us a PUPdate and CATch-up! Send any images to pupdate@animalhumanenm.org. We can't wait to hear from you!



Henry finds hope

Adoptable senior dogs sometimes get the short end of the stick – but not Henry. This seven-year-old Great Pyrenees Spaniel cross was transferred to Animal Humane from the Espanola Valley Humane Society. Just 12 days after, he found himself enjoying tummy rubs, camping, and constant companionship with his new forever family, Brian and Michele Leist.

While Henry's cuteness and loveable nature contributed to his adoptability, so did the generosity of human health care provider Optum New Mexico. **Since August, Optum NM has sponsored the adoption fees of 14 senior dogs and cats, Henry among them.**

"Our focus is preventive care with an emphasis on people 65 and older, and it has been well documented that the companionship of a pet has numerous health benefits," said Optum NM's Marketing Director, Erica Krause Muñoz. "By sponsoring senior pets, we hope to not only save an animal life but also add to the quality of life of the people who adopt them."

Studies have shown that the bond between people and their pets is linked to several health benefits, according to the Centers for Disease Control. These benefits include decreased blood pressure, cholesterol levels, triglyceride levels, feelings of loneliness, anxiety, and symptoms of PTSD; pets have also been shown to increase opportunities for exercise and outdoor activities; facilitate improved cognitive function in older adults; and encourage more opportunities to socialize.

Though Henry's new mom, Michele, recently retired, Henry isn't about to let her sit still or be alone.



Henry

"He goes wherever she goes, whether it be in the living room, the bedroom or the car," Brian said of his wife and their pup. "**Henry just wants to be with us.** He loves taking a walk every day. He loves chasing the ball in the house or in the backyard. We gave him a teddy bear, which is half his size, and the stuffing is gone from the bear's head already."

Thanks to Optum NM and donors like you, Henry is living his best life in his golden years. However, older cats and dogs often stay in shelters longer than their younger counterparts.

Animal Humane, which defines a senior pet as age 6 and older, finds that many potential adopters mistakenly believe that older pets are at a shelter because something is wrong with them. Nothing could be further from the truth. Like you, Optum and Animal Humane know that senior pets are simply waiting for their next loving home.

Most of the time, adult pets end up in a shelter due to lifestyle or financial changes in a home rather

than through any fault of their own.

One of the best aspects of adopting an older animal is that what you see is what you get. These pets come with life skills already in place. They know how to walk on a leash. They're housebroken. They may even know "sit," "stay" and other cues. While joyful surprises are a boon of pet ownership, size, personality, and weight won't be included when you adopt a senior pet.

Michele and Brian, for example, aren't going to be surprised in a few years with how big Henry is. His 90 pounds of love at the time of adoption is as big as he will get.

"We have a soft spot for senior dogs," Brian said.

With Brian and Michele's help, Henry has discovered a love for camping and he has claimed the sofa in their travel trailer as his own, eager for his next adventure.

"We are looking forward to this spring and trying out the canoe with Henry," Brian said. "Life vests for all!"



Kevin

Heavy Lifting For Shelter Pets



Akhil

We are always surprised by the creative ways people find to support pets in need! This past fall, we were delighted by an especially innovative fundraiser two men found to support homeless pets. **By combining their love of fitness and their love for pets, Kevin and Akhil were able to raise over \$1,000 during a deadlifting competition at Iron Soul Gym.**

"My wife and I adopted Jersey, a Pitbull Boxer mix from a rescue in Birmingham, Alabama. Before she got to the rescue, she had a tough life," Akhil said. "She was bred for dog fighting and suffered from heartworm and years of physical abuse. **Jersey really changed my life, so I have had strong feelings towards rescues ever since.**"

When Akhil approached his friend, Kevin, about the idea of choosing Animal Humane for their upcoming deadlifting

competition, Kevin was on board!

"My mom and I got involved with a Beagle rescue group in Maryland about 14 years ago. Those volunteering moments made me aware of the immense need for society to help adoptable animals. While I haven't had the time to volunteer like I did in high school, **I've wanted to continue supporting animal rescues because of how impactful they are to our lives and society,**" said Kevin.

Kevin and Akhil began spreading the word about their deadlifting competition and how people could support Animal Humane through them.

"People pledged a certain amount of money per pound. So as Akhil and I went up in weight that we lifted, we were able to raise more and more money,"

Both Kevin and Akhil took on the challenge to lift as much as they could! On their final attempt, Akhil lifted 375 pounds and Kevin lifted 530 pounds!

"I've found that raising money for good causes through personal challenges like marathoning or deadlifting sets everyone up for success. It motivates me to train and do better during the challenges and gives organizations like Animal Humane the support they need to keep doing their good work," Kevin adds.

Whether it is through donations, pet supply drives, or lifting hundreds of pounds, every cent goes to the pets we all love and care about. We are unbelievably thankful to Kevin, Akhil and to you who help support Animal Humane's mission and save lives!

FUR THE RECORD

Using Cryptocurrency to Save Lives!

Did you know that Animal Humane is now able to accept donations in the form of **cryptocurrency**? We can now accept over 100 cryptocurrencies via our crypto philanthropy partner The Giving Block. When you donate appreciated crypto, your gift can be up to 20% more impactful than selling and donating the cash, allowing you to save on your taxes and save more lives! Learn more at animalhumanem.org/donatecrypto.



How Naga met Ghost

In late May of 2022, a beautiful three-year-old all white Shepherd was transferred to Animal Humane from a rural shelter in Tucumcari. **Naga entered our care full of fear, but we suspected he had much love to give.** Knowing this sweet pup deserved the best chance possible, our Behavior Team immediately created a plan to help Naga become more comfortable around people. He was particularly nervous around individuals who are male presenting. So, an integral part of his training was desensitizing him to those who are male presenting through calm & controlled exposure. Naga's plan also encouraged a variety of volunteers to spend quality time with him in his kennel, so he could learn that humans could be trusted and conquer his fears!

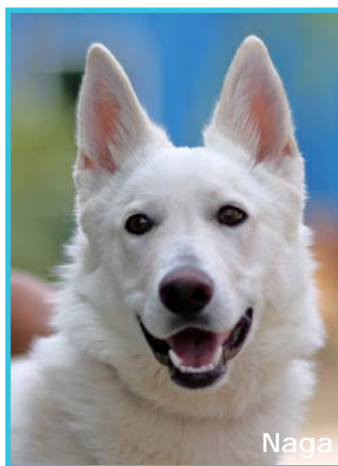
Over time, many potential adopters met with Naga, but none were the right fit. Naga needed more time, and because of donors like you, we were able to give him just that.

Months passed and Naga stayed ever patient waiting for his perfect person to come take him home.

Finally, one September morning, his dreams came true. Mariah walked into Animal Humane looking for a friend for Ghost, the Animal Humane Alum she adopted in July. She had originally noticed Naga then, as she visited our Main Campus to meet with Ghost.

Mariah put Naga on hold and, given Naga's history, she brought her two male roommates, along with Ghost, to Campus the very next day. Thanks to the behavior support you facilitated, Naga's introduction to Ghost was a resounding success.

"It couldn't have gone better," Mariah explained. "It took Naga a few minutes to get comfortable with the guys, but Ghost and Naga started playing right away." **Mariah knew Ghost had found his forever friend and she adopted Naga that same day.**



"Naga loves to play tag around the house and wrestle with Ghost. He is just a special boy and always brightens our day," she enthuses.

Just like your generosity gave Naga and Ghost the time and love they desperately deserved, your continued support will help thousands of other homeless pets like them moving forward.

Best friends like Naga and Ghost only meet because of your support! Thank you!

2023

paw-gress

438

Adoptions

88

Pets in Foster Care

29

Pets Received Behavior Support

368

Total Surgeries including Spay/Neuter

Numbers reflect 2023 statistics through February 23, 2023.