



SPRING 2020 NEWSLETTER

"Working together to improve the welfare of reservation dogs and cats"

"Diné Bikéyah bikáá'góó, ahil neilnishgo lééchqá'í dóó mósí baa' ádahwiilyáago"

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BHS Foster Coordinator Leaves The Rez But Not The Cause



I found my first Rez dog when I was 12 and it changed my life forever.



Ruby and Sarah Groenwald

I had always wanted to be a veterinarian, and my ever-supportive auntie (who volunteered for Blackhat) happened to know a good one on the Rez. So one summer in middle school, I became Dr. Ruby's assistant. I worked for "room" (luxury accommodations included a foam pad on a table in a hogan and a bivy sack on a Navajo Mountain trail ride) and "board" which ranged from Vienna sausages and crackers to uncooked stew vegetables to blue corn mush from a roadside vendor.

Something about the Navajo Nation spoke to me then... I saw so much hardship, so many animals and humans struggling. But I saw so much kindness too. I learned my first Navajo phrase,

Deesk'aaz at about 1 am as I shivered outside the vet truck with the owner of a colt who had gotten its leg caught in a fence. I was fascinated by the language and the culture and the soft red sand that made a home in every orifice, slowly making its way into my very being.

One day a small black puppy turned up with his ribs sticking out around a belly full of worms. We took him home and got him fed. I already had the classic "mom can we keep it" speech brewing in my head for when my parents picked me up. But alas, as many rez dogs do, the puppy met an untimely demise at the tires of a truck. I don't think my middle school heart ever quite recovered. Throughout the next 10 years I often thought of my experiences and vowed I would return one day to help however I could.

My chance came in 2017 when Chinle needed a science teacher. Cindy was the VP at the time and I had fostered a few dogs in my college years but was excited to do more. So naturally I found myself meeting Chris Cape in a Basha's parking lot within a week of moving to the rez. At the annual silent auction a month or two later, Cindy and Chris caught me in a good mood and asked me to be foster coordinator. I had no idea what I was getting myself into when I agreed.

In the past 2.5 years I have found myself crawling under rocks to get puppies and feeding sedative-laden gas station burritos to wiley strays. I have driven thousands of miles all over the reservation, had 50 foster dogs pass through my home, and have interacted with the most incredible group of volunteers I could possibly ask for. Yes, most of the time it's been brief dog handoffs in parking lots or texts about ticks, but I've been inspired by the dedication of this whole community that makes up Blackhat.

It seemed fitting that when I rescued a dog who had been hit by a car, she became known as Ruby in honor of the woman responsible for my first attempt at dog rescue. She is by far the best souvenir I could find: a constant reminder of the mix of devastation, strength, and hope that drive so many of us in the rescue world. I am grateful for the time I have spent, and even more grateful for those who will continue our mission. Blackhat isn't an organization; it's all of us. Though some may leave and others come in, it's a living community that I know will continue to connect people and animals for a long time to come. Keep fighting the good fight! Hágoánee'. - Sarah Groenwald

Animal Art Works 2020

A great evening of art & fellowship took place in Cortez, CO, on Feb 8 at the Animal Arts Work exhibit. This was the fourth year for the event, organized by local artist and journalist Sonja Horoshko. The Farm Bistro provided the venue for artists to display and sell their work at the animal art focused exhibit, with half of all proceeds donated to Blackhat Humane and For Pets' Sake Humane Societies. Blackhat's own president, Cindy, and her husband Eric provided the music to set the mood, members Donna and Maggie worked the door, and For Pets' Sake volunteers outdid themselves donating an array of food. The convivial atmosphere lent itself to folks lingering the entire evening and purchasing more than 75% of the art displayed. This netted Blackhat Humane over \$1,300.00! Thanks to all who came out and made this a success.



Coping With COVID: For Rescues, The Outbreak Has A Bright Side

The bad thing is, tens of thousands of people in the Four Corners are either out of work or confined to their homes in the wake of the novel coronavirus outbreak.

And all these people are finding themselves with time on their hands and not much to do, considering most towns in these parts are shuttered as though they expect Jesse James to ride through at any minute.

The good thing is, many of these people are using their confinement to adopt or foster a pet. For the first time we can remember, Blackhat has had serious inquiries on every pet on our Petfinder page, and three new foster volunteers!

We were able to follow through on five or six adoptions before first New Mexico, then the Navajo Nation, then Colorado issued stay-at-home orders. Although shelters and rescues are considered "essential businesses" and are allowed to keep operating, non-essential travel is discouraged and for the most part, we have stopped transporting. Most vets have stopped doing all "elective" surgeries

(which include spays and neuters, although any rescue would argue the contrary), which of course hampers our efforts to get pets ready for adoption.

While we certainly lament the loss of life and normalcy this epidemic has caused, what it has taught us is that, given a break in their busy routines, people do think of animals. In times of stress, we crave their company more than ever, and when we have free time, we are willing to spend it caring for the pets who have brought us so much joy.

We at Blackhat would like to take the opportunity to thank everyone who has checked in on us, who has offered to foster, or has taken advantage of this break in their hectic schedule to offer a forever home to a fur kid.

Our prayers are with those who are ill or are caring for family members who are. Please let us know if there is anything we can do to help. We will come out of these times stronger and more resilient, and continue to do what we need to do for the strays of the Navajo Nation. Hopefully we can keep up the momentum we've gathered over the last few weeks.

- Cindy Yurth, BHS President

The Numbers

Between Jan.-Mar. 2020, BHS:

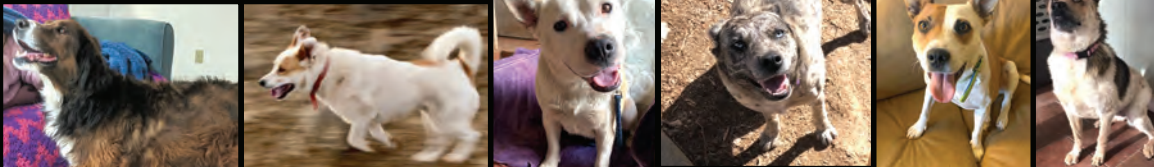
- Placed 43 animals in forever homes, and transferred 7 to partner rescues.
- Spent \$3,720.00 on foster and community support.
- Spent \$12,208.00 on vet treatment and meds.
- Spent \$1,080.00 on transportation

Ahéhee'

Thank you: Animal Haven Veterinary, Cedarwood Animal Hosp, Continental Animal Wellness, Montezuma Veterinary, Nav Nation Veterinary Services, Dr. Sand, Kaibab Vet Clinic, San Juan Veterinary, Animal Grace LLC, K. Constance, E. Caryl, McGregor, W. & C. Foote, T Hoier, J. & G. Kimbrough, L. Krundiek, R. & K Meier, J. Price, P. Rogers, RH Sherwin, K. Trottingwolf, L. K. Tsosie, V. Watson, and all who fostered, adopted, donated, prayed, transported or contributed in any way.

BHS fosters ready for their furever homes:

Oliver, Melon, Casey, Freya, Millie & Ginger



Blackhat Humane Society

Spring 2020

