



SUMMER 2020 NEWSLETTER

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

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

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Hike Turns into Rescue for Rez Family

The day started innocently enough. Blackhat board member Maureen Bohler had gathered her cousins for a hike near her home in Toadlena, N.M.

They hadn't gone very far Maureen got a call from her mother telling her she had intercepted some rustlers trying to drive the family's cows toward the highway (yep, cattle rustling is still a thing out here).

Maureen and her cousins hurried back to the road and were able to call the cows back and continue their hike, in spite of the fact that it was raining. But as it turned out, their heroic day was just getting started.

Hearing puppies crying, they followed the sound and found three youngsters. "Then a while later we found the mama and the rest in the bushes down the way," recalled Maureen. They gathered all the pups and left them under a sagebrush with their mother after giving her a sandwich they had packed for the hike.

"We continued on our hike only to



Lucy and her Toadlena 9

then hear a kitty crying," recalled Maureen. "We looked in the weeds and found a kitten with one bad eye and the other too far gone to save."

The family marked its location and continued with the hike.

When they returned for the kitten, "we saw the mama dog on the road," Maureen recalled. "I went to where I last saw them and since it stopped raining thousands of ants were out. The pups were covered with ants, crying, getting bitten and ants crawling in their mouths."

Needless to say, everybody went home with Maureen. She later found out the mother dog belonged to a neighbor of hers, who will get her back after she raises the pups and is spayed. The pups will be vetted and put up for adoption through Blackhat. Maureen's cousins decided to keep the blind kitten.

We've said it before and we'll say it again. Blackhat has THE best volunteers!

The "PDB" Lives On!

Jamie and I moved to Bayfield from California in 2014, using our white Highlander (known to us as the PDB, or Pillsbury Dough Boy) to help bring our dogs and cats to their new place. We had worked in animal welfare for years, and the car had always been handy returning wandering ranch dogs to their homes, taking 20 feral cats in for low cost spay/neuter and so on.

When we arrived in Colorado I looked at whether we might volunteer with Blackhat Humane, knowing that many rez animals need help. But the rescuing and transporting that needed doing regularly seemed a bit far from our new home, and I didn't



The maiden voyage: PBR transporting the Toadlena 9 and mom Lucy (riding shotgun) to their Colorado foster home.

know enough about the day-to-day goings on to help with work that's up my alley (like marketing). So, we decided to donate regularly instead.

Now that we're moving again we don't have a need for the PDB. It's hard to think of letting it go! We've had it for nearly 20 years and almost 200,000 miles--it has been a great car. Our mechanic says that with care it has years more to give. Jamie had the idea to donate to Blackhat, and knowing the PDB has a chance to keep going as a "dogmobile" makes us very happy. The car's interior shows it has been well used by dozens of dogs, hundreds of cats, a guinea pig and a few mice, and several humans, but the PDB has a strong heart.

Long live the PDB! May it help save more lives!
- Jamie and Cathy Enns



The official transfer: Jamie Enns with Maggie Gruschow, BHS Secretary/Treasurer

FOOD DONATIONS DURING COVID19

As the pandemic swept the Navajo Nation, Blackhat looked around for ways to help. While many groups were delivering food to homebound elders, not many had thought to include pet food. Almost all Navajo elders have a few herd dogs and a posse of cats on mouse patrol. We received some donations of pet food, and bought more, with our reserves and monetary donations that started to come in specifically for food. We've taken loads to

communities where we have volunteers who were able to identify the folks most in need and distribute it, or connect with other programs that were doing distributions. To date, we have served Chinle, Piñon, Toadlena, Newcomb, Ramah, Many Farms, Pinehill, Rock Point, Navajo Mountain, Chilchinbito, and Rock Point. We want to extend a big Ahéhee' (Thank You) to everyone who has contributed to this effort.



The Numbers

April 2020 – Aug 2020
\$15,590.00 spent on veterinary services and medications;
\$6,230.00 spent on foster support; **\$2,670.00** purchased dog food for the Navajo Nation donations;
89 dogs adopted into forever homes

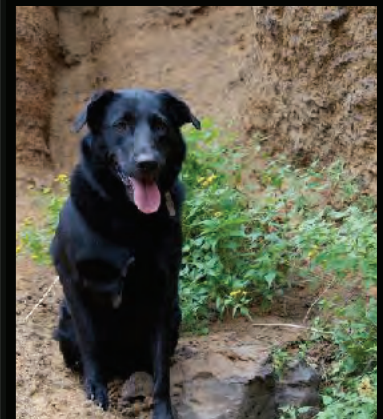
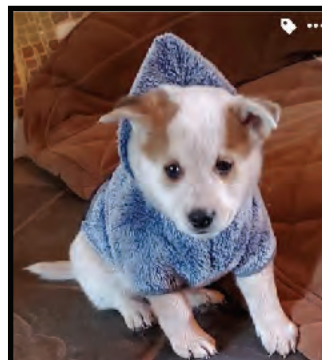
Ahéhee'

4 Corners MASH, Cedarwood Animal Hosp, Continental Animal Wellness, Montezuma Veterinary, Nav Nation Veterinary Services, Dr. Sand, San Juan Veterinary, K Arrington, C&B Brady, S. Buckingham, J. Enns, M. Ford, L. Gilbert, L&G Graham, E. Harrington, J. Jim, J. Justad, P. Massey, R&KMeier, C. Morrissey, P. Packer, J. Price, T. Prothero, L. Reed, R. Sherwin, N. Shinn, T Sharp, and all who fostered, donated, prayed, transported or contributed in any way.

Memoriums

Bottle Babies (story on next page)

Comet, Bastile and Shilah - 3 of 5 surviving bottle babies from a mama dog in BHS foster care.



Chris & Betsy Brady in memory of beloved companion Annie

Bottle Babies

Rescue is not always nice and pretty. Blackhat had a drama filled night in Flagstaff, AZ, in July.

A foster mama dog started giving birth in the afternoon, then killed one of the pups after several were born dead after a long labor. The mama dog would only let the surviving pups nurse if the foster provider, K. Oliver, held her collar so she wouldn't injure the pups.

By now it's nighttime, and the K Oliver is by herself and at wit's end. A call (well, email and Facebook) went out for help and BH volunteer T. Ames drove up from Sedona and spent the night in the barn with the pups. Two other BH fosters, D Riches &

M. Hendrie, stepped up to foster four of the bottle babies, and two were taken by former BH volunteer T Schumann who now runs N AZ Animal Search & rescue who picked up the last two at 2:00 AM!

Pups this young need a massive amount of care – and bottle feedings every two hours. Five of these pups are now thriving and will be looking for permanent homes soon. One did not make it (the vet surmised it could have been a congenital defect) which might explain why the mama dog was refusing to nurse the pups. Mama dog got checked out with the vet and is now doing fine, though no more pups in her future!



Now doing well, Comet, Bastile and the rest of the litter had a hard start



Yes, Heartworm Exists on the Rez...

Imagine a tiny parasite that burrows into your bloodstream and grows into a two-foot-long worm that lives in your arteries, grows into your heart and feeds on your blood.

It sounds like the stuff of science fiction, but for dogs and cats, heartworm is far too real.

It's not something we tend to worry about in the parched deserts of the Navajo Nation, because it's spread by mosquitos. But a Blackhat foster got a rude awakening last December when her foster dog, Melon, tested positive for the microfilarium.

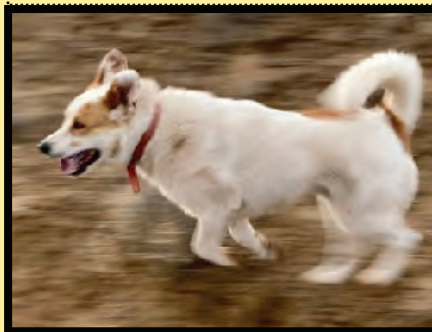
"I had never really worried about heartworm," confessed Maureen Bohler of Toadlena, Mew Mexico. "I'd seen the Heartgard (prophylaxis) at the vet and just figured if a dog gets it, you give him this little pill and he'll be fine."

As Maureen discovered, that's not how it works. Heartgard and other prescription medications are excellent preventatives, but once a dog actually has the worms in his system, getting him clear takes months and hundreds of dollars (Melon being a Blackhat foster, Blackhat paid all vet bills). Melon is now heartworm free and living happily in his forever-home.

"The problem is, you can't kill the worms all at once," explained Carmelita "Carm" Bitsoi, a senior Extension agent assigned to the Navajo Nation's Shiprock Veterinary Clinic.

Heartworm Symptoms:

- *Cough
- *Lethargy
- *Shortness of Breath



BHS alumni Melone survived an early heart worm infection and treatment .

"The dead worms floating around in the arteries can clog them and kill the dog."

Instead, the dog (or cat — it's rare in felines but it can happen) gets a mild dose of the medicine at his first visit, then another dose in a month, and then another one a few days or weeks after that.

During this time, the dog isn't supposed to run or jump. "We recommend you keep them in a kennel with just enough room for them to use the restroom," said Carm.

That wasn't easy for the large, rambunctious and social Melon.

"It was really hard on him, me and Millie (her other foster)," said Maureen.

Fortunately, San Juan Veterinary Hospital caught Melon's condition early, and he has made a full recovery, but that's not always the case.

"There are four basic stages of the worm's life," noted Carm. "Once they get to Stage Four, it's usually fatal."

Carm said the Shiprock clinic usually sees heartworm in dogs that grew up near the San Juan River or another large body of water, but that's not always the case.

"We've had cases from Lukachukai, Rough Rock and Chinle," she noted. "It's really a good idea to have every dog tested when it reaches a year old, and if it doesn't have the microfilariae in its blood, start them on the monthly preventative."

"I'm telling all my friends to do it," said Maureen. "It's such a horrible disease, and so easily prevented."

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B L A C K H A T H U M A N E S O C I E T Y

ALL IN THE FAMILY



Michaela and Rosie; Ethan with Rosie and Sage; David, Jami Lyn and grandson Brady with Rosie and Sage

Like many people who come to the Navajo Nation to teach, Michaela Brady was immediately struck by the number of homeless animals. "In Pennsylvania (where Michaela's from), the laws are very strict," she said. "You don't see that there. It's really hard to even find a puppy to adopt."

She had been in Many Farms, Arizona, less than a month when she rescued a dog she called Mesa, whom she gave to a friend back home. Jan. 2, 2011, she found Gimli, who is still with her. "I had just come back from Christmas break," she recalled. "It was really snowing. There was this tiny puppy out in the snow, looking all pathetic." So of course she brought him home. And then there was another ... and another. "The dogs were piling up," she said. "There was no way I could keep all of them."

She talked to the school's counselor, Maggie Gruschow, also an animal lover (and now Blackhat secretary/treasurer) and Maggie told her about Blackhat. Micheala began fostering, and eventually became the group's president.

By the time she left the reservation in 2017 to take a job in Nashville, Tenn., she had rescued or transferred 372 animals.

But she wasn't done. When she moved back, she had a puppy in tow for her parents, Jami Lyn and David Brady, who had already adopted Spike, a cat Michaela had fostered (Michaela had also ended up with two rez cats, one of whom is still with her).

Michaela's brother Ethan had almost ended up with a rez dog when he went to visit his sister shortly after she had moved to the Navajo Nation. "Basically I just hung outside and played with all the dogs," Ethan said. "I almost brought one home, but I was fresh out of college and didn't have a place yet."

As luck would have it, Dr. Jim Eubank, a veterinarian who had been working for the Career and Technical Education program in Kayenta, was driving home to Pennsylvania this summer and agreed to bring Ethan a pup. Ethan chose Rosie, a big bundle of happy energy so mixed that even Dr. Eubank wouldn't venture a guess at her breeds.

"I love how the rez dogs are all mixed breeds," said Ethan. "You never know what you're going to get. But I've never had a bad experience with a rez dog."

Rosie turned out to be the perfect fit for Ethan, his two roommates and his male cat. "Even my big fat female cat has finally accepted her, after hiding in the basement for a couple of weeks," Ethan said with a chuckle.

The three Brady rez dogs got to meet earlier this summer. Sage and Rosie hit it off right away. Gimli was, well, Gimli. "He hates everyone and everything," laughed Michaela.