



# SPRING 2022 NEWSLETTER

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

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

Email: [blackhathumane@gmail.com](mailto:blackhathumane@gmail.com)

[www.BlackhatHumaneSociety.org](http://www.BlackhatHumaneSociety.org)

Facebook: Blackhat Humane Society

When someone inquires about fostering for Blackhat, we don't sugar-coat it. Fostering is tough. When we pick up a dog on the backroads of the Navajo Nation, we don't know its history, its medical condition, and most of the rez dogs are so mixed that even their breed is a mystery. In the immortal words of Muhammad Ali Jinnah, you expect the best and prepare for the worst.

But it's even tougher for our Navajo volunteers, many of whom live in family compounds on rugged dirt roads, hours from the nearest vet or even the nearest grocery store, who struggle just to keep their foster pets safe from predators and people.

Foster mom and board member Maureen Bohler took a few minutes this week to reflect on her fostering experience, especially with one of her current fosters, Nera the tripawd. Maureen lives on her family ranch in tiny Toadlena, N.M. and has to drive an hour and a half into Farmington for all but the most basic necessities. Here are her words:

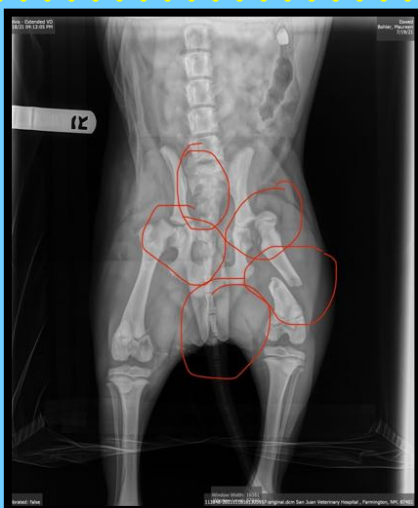
Every time I leave the house, I worry about my dogs. Usually I tell myself, "What's the worst that can happen?" But what happened to Nera was so much worse than I could even imagine.

I was 40 minutes down the road when my uncle called and told me someone had hit Nera with a car in our driveway. She had dragged herself into the igloo doghouse, was lying very still and he couldn't tell if she was alive or dead. I turned around and sped back to the house as fast as I dared over the bumpy dirt road.

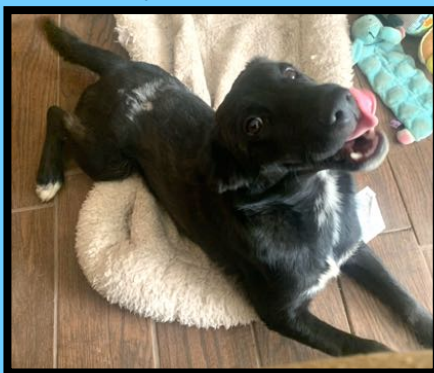
I loaded her up and just took off again. It's an hour-and-a-half to the vet and it was getting near closing time. Nera was whimpering softly and her nose was cold, but she didn't seem to be in that much pain. I kept telling myself, "It can't be that bad."

I got to the vet's just before closing. Some people had already gone home. They stayed open for me. When they got the X-rays back it was horrible. Both back legs were broken. One of the femurs was snapped in two and the bone had been forced up into the joint. On the other leg, the head of the hip, where it fits into the socket, had snapped off.

## Fostering: Not for the Faint of Heart



X-ray after the accident



Happy tripawd Nera after surgery and Maureen's very dedicated post-op care

Of course I thought we might have to put her down, but the vets said there wasn't a lot of internal damage and they could probably save at least one of the legs. They said there was a specialist in Albuquerque (another three hours away) who might be able to patch her up and save both legs, but there could be nerve damage and even with the best surgery she probably wouldn't be able to run and play like a normal dog. The other alternative would be to leave her at the vet in Farmington and they could amputate the worst leg.

I asked if she was in pain and they said she was probably in so much pain she had gone into shock; that's the only reason she wasn't just crying.

I didn't know what to do. I called (BHS treasurer) Maggie and she said Blackhat would support whatever I decided. Finally I decided I just wanted her out of that pain as soon as possible, so I left her at the vet. I was able to pick her up five days later as an amputee.

It was a long road to recovery with daily physical therapy. Nera would whimper as I put her through her exercises but now she can run and play and do most things a normal dog can. Every time I look at her I wonder if I did the right thing by not taking her to Albuquerque, but you can't just beat yourself up as a foster provider. Nera is much better off now than if I had left her where I found her and her siblings last fall. And the good news is that she has a dedicated adopter, so will be transitioning to her new home in a week.

It never occurred to me to stop fostering, because I can't. If I see an abandoned, starving animal, I'm not going to just drive by. I'm not the perfect foster, and I don't have the perfect setup, and sometimes bad things are going to happen. But that doesn't mean I won't do what I can to help. ...When you foster with a group like Blackhat, you're not alone. You always have access to advice and financial support to make you the best foster you can be. That's all any of us can ask of ourselves."

~C.Yurth

# Next-gen Love

For 14 years, Tom and Betsy enjoyed the company of Shellie, the best dog ever. They had adopted the little shepherd mix from Blackhat volunteer Peggy in 2007 when they



“Ummm... thats more water than I could ever drink!”

lived in Phoenix. She had moved with them all the way to Washington, D.C., been on numerous vacations with them and rarely left their side. When she passed a few months ago, they at first thought about adopting their next pet locally. But they had been Blackhat supporters for so long, reading the newsletter and following Facebook posts, they still felt a connection even from 2,000 miles away.

“Adopting a Blackhat dog had been a great experience,” Tom said. “We decided we wanted that experience again.”

Scrolling through Blackhat’s Petfinder page, Celeste caught their eye. “She was like a bigger version of Shellie,” said Betsy. Celeste, who was being fostered by Susan in Ramah N.M., had been part of a pack running around the Ganado school campus. She had had a litter of puppies, all of whom had been adopted. Only Celeste was left.



“This lawn is AMAZING! Ball anyone?”

After several conversations with Susan and videos sent back and forth, “more and more she seemed like the right dog for us,” Betsy recalled. “So we bought tickets to Albuquerque.”

Once in New Mexico, the couple rented an SUV “so Penny (Celeste’s new name, after her copper-colored eyes) would have plenty of room to stretch out on the long drive,” Tom said. “Then we high-tailed it back to D.C.”

Stopping only in Amarillo and Nashville, the couple and their new fur kid made it back to Washington in three days. They worried that it would take a while for Penny to adjust to urban life, but it fit her like a glove.

“We have a lot of dog parks and grassy areas nearby, so we make sure to take her out a lot,” Tom said. “We’re both home a lot because of the pandemic, so it was a perfect time to adopt.”

Tom and Betsy are confident that Penny will be as good a dog as their beloved Shellie. “We’re looking forward to 15 years of really good companionship,” Tom said. And that makes the journey more than worthwhile.

~C. Yurth

## The Numbers

Dec. 2021– Feb. 2022

\$15,775.00 spent on veterinary services and medications

\$11,373.00 spent on foster dog support / supplies

\$282.00 spent on community service

71 dogs adopted into forever homes

18 transferred to partner rescues

50 animals in foster care on March 1, 2022

## Ahéhee’

### Thank You’s

4 Corners MASH, Airport Animal, Dr. Burns, Cedarwood Animal Hosp, Continental Animal Wellness, Kaibab Vet, Montezuma Veterinary, Navajo Nation Veterinary Services, Pets Return Home, Dr. Sand, San Juan Veterinary Hospital, Blackdog Foundation, J. Brenninkmeyer, E. Caryll, A. McGregor, D. Cummings, K. Ashcraft, P. Simonson, J. Deuby, J. Enns, H. Gernatt, G&J Gipple, J. Jim, N. Shinn, J&G Kimbrough, S. Merrion, K.& J. Parr, J. Price, S. Radu, L. Reed, R. Sherwin, everyone who contributed to the Betty White Fund raising campaign (!) and all who fostered, adopted, donated, transported or contributed in any way.

## In Memoriam



Rascal Mr. Handsome

• From Kris Trottingwolf for Rascal Mr. Handsome who passed last year: “I know you’ve heard “best cat ever”, but for sure he was a once in a lifetime. Miss him daily, but so many special memories.”

• From Karen Reuter in memory of Chris Cape who brought the last foster dog to her son & daughter in law Mike and Nanette Rueter, and in memory of Barney, Nanette & Mike’s other dog who recently passed.”



# Love Was In The Air

Long-distance adoptions are nothing new to Blackhat. There are Blackhat pets in Maine, Maryland and Vermont; Washington state and California; even Alaska and Hawaii.

But when two puppy siblings end up flying cross-country and living across the street from each other ... well, that's a tail that bears telling.

Jon and Jessica of Easton, Mass., a pleasant college town not far from Boston, had been wanting a dog for some time. They had been perusing Petfinder, but were looking mostly in their own area.

"We weren't looking in Arizona, but somehow Nana came up on our search," Jessica said.

The precious little fluffball immediately won their hearts.

"I was like, 'Oh, she's in Arizona,'" Jessica recalled. "Then I was like, 'Wait, we're going to Arizona. That's weird timing!'"

The couple had already planned a trip to Tucson and Sedona in January. "I thought, 'I'll just reach out, it can't hurt,'" Jessica said. "We had such a great video chat with Nana and her foster mom, Tjasa, we just knew we had to make it work. It just all came together."

Tjasa was a bit taken aback to get a call from Massachusetts, but the active young couple seemed like the perfect parents for spunky little Nana.

"It was far, but once they told me that they would be coming to Sedona, I knew it would work," she recalled.

There was only one problem. Both Jon and Jessica have full-time jobs, and they worried about leaving an active young pup home



Nana will take all the hugs she can get from Jessica and John



Everyone is happy: Naya, Nicole, Tom and Ezra for sure!



Rez puppy Nana practices waving for city parades



Rez puppy Naya looks "just somehow" for the camera

alone. They approached their neighbors across the street, Nicole and Tom. Nicole had recently quit her nursing job to start a photography business so she could stay home with the couple's two-year-old, Ezra.

"We told them we'd be happy to watch Nana during the day," Nicole recalled. "Then Jess said, 'By the way, there are other puppies in this litter!' We just laughed. But then we started thinking. We have a house, we have a yard, we have a kid ... it might be the perfect time to adopt a puppy."

But ... a cross-country adoption? Sight unseen?

"We actually bought this house from San Francisco, where we lived before," Nicole said, "and it worked out great. We figured if we could buy a house from across the country, we could adopt a puppy."

Once again Tjasa, who lives in Burnside, Ariz., got a phone call from two time zones away. "Tjasa was great," Nicole recalled. "I could tell she was excited about the prospect of the puppies being neighbors and getting to grow up together, but she kept saying, 'No pressure, no pressure, it's a big decision, take your time.' She made the whole thing simple."

So it was that Nana and her sister Ichan (now Naya), who had the humblest of beginnings as the offspring of an unwanted stray on the reservation, ended up in little crates under the seat of an aircraft hurtling toward a new life on the East Coast. And two fluffy Rez pups, two young couples and one rambunctious toddler couldn't be happier.

"It's been a lot of new starts for us," said Nicole. "A new place, a new business, and now I have a new model to photograph! We're so glad the stars aligned to make this happen."

~C. Yurth

~Photos courtesy of SpottedPhoto.com

## In Memoriam



Snap

From Cindy Yurth: "Shortly after we moved to Chinle in the summer of 2005, I saved a half-grown kitten from the jaws of the neighbor's Rottweiler. Her leg was completely crushed but Dr. Jensen of Red Rock Animal Hospital was able to replace it with a titanium implant. She was our first foster failure and stayed with us almost our entire tenure in Chinle. She was smart and brave and an excellent mouser. RIP Snap."

P.O. Box 3123  
Durango, CO  
81302  
www.blackhathumanesociety.org

TO Blackhat Humane Society Fans and Supporters  
In many towns and cities  
Across the USA and beyond



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

## Be Part of the Solution

The handful of off-reservation non-profits offering low-cost spay-neuter on the reservation was recently joined by an entirely grassroots effort!

Rez-Solutions and Animal Shelter Inc. (the animal shelter part is still in the dream



stage) is the creation of Navajo Nation veterinarian Kelly Upshaw and Olivia Holiday, who runs the tribal program Operation Puppy Rescue. These women spend all week working with animals at their day jobs, and then turn around and volunteer on the weekends! They have offered spay/neuter and vaccination clinics all over the reservation.

Blackhat volunteers have helped man the clinics and provided snacks and meals for the crew, and on March 13 will sponsor a special clinic in Chinle for pets of indigent elders and fosters in the community.

As one of the few humane entities actually based on the reservation, we applaud the Navajos' efforts to provide their own solutions to the stray animal problem and hope to continue our partnership with this new entity.