



FALL 2023 NEWSLETTER

“Working together to improve the welfare of reservation dogs and cats”

“Diné Bikéyah bikáá’góó, ahil-neilnishgo lééchaai’i dóó mósí baa’ ádahwiilyáago”

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Blackhat’s first 20 years

Editor’s note: In honor of Blackhat’s 20th anniversary as a registered non-profit, volunteer Susan Mayne wrote this brief history.

Blackhat Humane Society has always been grounded in the health and welfare of the stray animals of the beautiful and vast Navajo Nation. Our mission statement, adopted a few years ago, states “Working together to improve the welfare of reservation dogs and cats.”

When Tamara Martin moved to Ganado, Ariz. in 1999 with her husband, two dogs and a couple of cats, she had just left a successful rescue she had formed called the “Pound Rescue of Athens, Ohio.”

After meeting Mary Furney, a dedicated cat



Rez Dog Reunion hike in Flagstaff, 2014

rescuer, and becoming friends, they worked together to help the stray animals they encountered at the Sage Hospital compound and surroundings. Welcoming the help of Dr. Oldham, a veterinarian running the Double D Clinic in Tse Bonito, N.M., they began the work of building an organization, starting with educating

themselves on the culture, diseases, and challenges of life on the “Rez.” The inspiration behind the name came from a large rock formation seen from the clinic called “Blackhat” because of its coal-covered summit. A friend of a friend drew the logo and by 2003 Blackhat Humane Society was incorporated. Tamara remembers these years as

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The Numbers

May through August

67 new dogs/cats taken into foster care

62 adopted

67 dogs/cats in foster care looking for their forever homes

The Money

\$ 20,102 spent on veterinary services

\$ 9,705 spent on foster animals support/supplies

\$ 3802 spent on transport

\$ 1382 spent on community service/outreach

Ahehee’ Thank you!

Cedar Animal Medical, Continental Animal Wellness, Kaibab Vet, Montezuma Veterinary Clinic, MASH, Nav Nation Veterinary Services, Rez Solutions, Dr. Sand, San Juan Veterinary Hospital, S. Alden, L. Burke, T. Burgess, J&C Enns, L. Gilbert & T. Sharp, G&J Gipple, J. Goheen, E.& A Hardin-Burrola, K. Hood, M. Jensen, J. Jim N &. Shinn, A. Klein, P. Massey, M. Mitchell, J. Patterson & B. Peacock, S. Powell & J. Wood, L. Reed, J. Roberts, Cat Roberts, R. Sherwin, K. Underhill and all who fostered, adopted, donated, prayed, transported or contributed in any way.

First 20 years (continued from Page 1)

a blur of rescue, transport, and people.

The need to be everywhere at once led to the exclusive use of foster homes as Blackhat supported the people who were already taking in strays, wanting to help but not knowing how. Blackhat not only paid the vet bills for their foster pets but helped them spread the word of preventative health care for their Navajo neighbors' pets. In 2006 Tamara and family relocated to Saint Johns, Ariz., but she continued to help run the organization until she started Good Dog Rez-Q to focus on the southern part of the Navajo Nation and surrounding areas in 2013.

As Blackhat grew so did the need to communicate with the greater public. Fortunately, this need coincided with the spread of the Internet and its many tools.

Around 2005 a website was created. In 2009 Blackhat joined

Facebook, allowing for online fundraising in lieu of the events, raffles and silent auctions that had been the mainstay before. Petfinder was employed to advertise adoptable pets — a huge jump in efficiency over in-person adoption days. In 2010 the first “Dogs of the



Navajo” calendar came out and paid for itself.

Cindy Yurth took over as President in 2013 after being a volunteer since 2005. Over the years, others have filled that role: Ben Peacock, Michaela Brady, and Chris Cape, each adding their personal strengths and resources to continue the growth. Cindy, with her job as a reporter for the Navajo Times, spread the word about Blackhat and its mission. Other organizations, such as Soul Dog, were springing up, bringing the chance to partner for events, spay/neuter clinics, and transport to other states.

Blackhat continued to grow in reputation and size until tragedy struck on April 23, 2018, when then-president Chris Cape was killed in a vehicle accident coming back to her home in Sanders, Ariz. from a

meet-and-greet in Durango. Cindy stepped up as president for the second time, ensuring the stability and ongoing rescue work as Blackhat continues to grow in foster homes, outreach programs, and transport across the Four Corners region. A focus on



Tabling at Barks and Brews in Flagstaff, 2019

preventative health was added, with booths, support for spay/neuter clinics, and fundraising events.

In 2021 Covid made things more difficult but rescues, medical emergencies, transport, and adoptions continued. One service added was an expanded community outreach to help pet owners feed and care for their pets to reduce abandonment and neglect.

Over the years Blackhat has averaged 200 adoptions and 80 transfers to other shelters and rescues every year, bringing the total animals saved to somewhere around 5,600! Now, in the middle of 2023, fosters, volunteers, and support groups are working together better than ever as puppy/kitten season is in full swing, and we are looking forward to the next 20 years!



Crystalline Curley, Speaker of the Navajo Nation Council, attended the conference and pledged to support the efforts of the rescue groups working on the Navajo Nation.

Our friends in rescue

Three representatives of Blackhat Humane Society attended the Nihik'is Conference for rescues on the Navajo Reservation in late August. Nihik'is is "our friends" in Navajo which conveys such a powerful message. Participation at the conference included the Navajo Nation Vice President and Speaker of the Council, Diné Animal Control as well as other influential

rescue groups such as Nuzzles & Co., the Parker Project, Rez Dawg Rescue and Soul Dog. The conference was sponsored by Best Friends Animal Sanctuary in Utah.

The plight of over 400,000 street animals on Navajo lands may feel daunting but the exciting news is that people who can effect a change, are coming together to do just that.

By
Toby
Frost

One big plan is for the new Western Agency S/N Clinic and Pet Resource Center opening in Kayenta, thanks to another Best Friends grant. Veterinary services, pet care information, a pet food bank and resources for pet issues are also offered. The big bump in the road is finding licensed vets who are willing to live and work on Navajo.

The Nation recently lost its only remaining tribal veterinarian and is limiting the three vet clinics — which are staffed with veterinary technicians until vets can be hired — to large animal care.

Currently, there are only 4 small shelters and 4 animal control officers to cover the entire Nation, which is the size of West Virginia. With assurances from Best Friends and other invested rescues, the staff at these holding buildings are trying to keep adoptable pets long enough so that they can be retrieved for rehoming to other areas. They are also opening up days for animal surrenders so the pets are not abandoned on the street.

Best Friends has dedicated a new Navajo Nation Pets Facebook page and website as a clearing house for information, S/N and vaccination clinic dates and education/resources. It can be found at www.navajonationpets.com.

Best Friends is also going to collect and analyze data from the Navajo chapters including numbers of strays, financial needs, number of dog bites, animal injuries and altercations, so that priorities can be established. Again, rescues with available resources are a very important player in achieving resolution for so many animals without homes or options.

IN MEMORIAM

In memory of Pedro and Coleman, loving companions of L& Q Odegaard, and M. Hovorka and B. Day.

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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



It's not too early!

Christmas is right around the corner, and Blackhat has the perfect gifts for the animal lovers on your list!

The highly anticipated 2024 Dogs of the Navajo calendar will be coming out around the end of October, so watch for it on our website! It sold out this year.

T-shirts and sweatshirts are always a welcome gift, and you can find our selection by clicking "Shop" on our website as well.

Finally, consider making a tax-deductible gift TO Blackhat in the name of someone you love. \$200 provides a spay or neuter for a foster pet; \$45 a complete set of puppy or kitten shots. We'll send a thank-you note to the person in whose honor you donated.