



AUTUMN 2025 NEWSLETTER

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

"Diné Bikéyah bikáá'góó, ahil-neilnishgo léécha'a'í dóó mósí baa' ádahwiilyáago"

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One man's trash

Dumpster Diving is defined as the act of retrieving items in waste containers that are used for trash. While it is not usual to find living animals in dumpsters, it is, sadly, becoming more common. And even less common is when a dog takes it upon themselves to do their own dumpster diving. And that is where our story begins. On the reservation in Burnside, Ariz., is a shopping center where grease is sometimes tossed into one of the trash dumpsters. Apparently, a determined stray dog was hungry enough that she figured her way into the bin and the dilemma arose when she realized she could not get out again. It was the urgent barking and crying that caught the attention of Blackhat volunteer Davina, who was working in one of the shopping center stores.

As she and some helpers investigated the situation, they found this chocolate brown dog covered in grease and frantic to get out. We all know the likelihood of catching a "greased pig" and their initial attempts were just that. They finally resorted to stacking cardboard up in a step-like fashion and this poor pup was able to scramble



out. Catching her was another matter with her matted slick fur but a trap was quickly retrieved by another dedicated Blackhat volunteer, Winnie, and she was then safely caught. And it was discovered that she was very pregnant on top of everything else. So this caring volunteer followed through on her discovery and offered to house her in a shed at her home to protect mom and her future babies. The mom, now Dumpster Diva or DeeDee, took the trash to treasure saying to heart when she was rescued and brought to a safe place to have her beautiful babies. She is still unsure about her new world as she may have not known a kind hand in a long time but the compassionate patient care she is now receiving should bring her around to enjoy a better life. Her babies are in foster and several have been adopted.

— Toby Frost

The Numbers

June-Sept.: 62 animals taken in; 35 animals adopted; 70 remain in foster care

The Money

June-Sept. Vet \$14,405; Foster supplies \$9,018; Transport \$2,138; Community outreach & S/N clinic \$11,502

Ahehee' Thank you!

Airport Animal Hospital, Cedar Animal Medical, Continental Animal Wellness, Kaibab Veterinary Clinic, Montezuma Veterinary Clinic, Nav Nation Veterinary Services, Prescott Animal Hospital, Rez Solutions, San Juan Veterinary Hospital, Dr. Sand, Dr. J Karcsinski, S. Alden, K. Arrington, K. Ashcraft, P. Simonson, J & R Barbour, B. Carll, E. Caryl, A. McGregor, C. Greiner, E. Hardin-Burrola, D. Gruber, J. Hone, J. Jim, N. Shinn, M. Jones, L&M Krumdieck, B. Massey, S. Powell, J. Wood, L. Reed, A. Seavall, L. Smith, R. Sherwin, L. Stephenson, D. Wren, M. Pfothner, and all who fostered, adopted, donated, prayed, transported or contributed in any way.

Getting to the root of the problem: spay and neuter

There is no doubt that the main problem with the stray dogs and cats on the Navajo Nation is that there are just too many of them. An estimated 250,000 to 400,000 roam the

27,000-square-mile area — way more than we could ever find homes for in our wildest dreams. The majority of these homeless pets are the result of the inadvertent breeding of family pets, and when the time and expense of raising all those puppies and kittens becomes too much, some families resort to

abandonment rather than take them to one of the tribal shelters, which have a very high kill rate. That's where Blackhat usually comes in: fostering and finding homes for these abandoned animals. We generally

leave spaying and neutering to other groups that have veterinarians on staff and the infrastructure to host mobile clinics. This year, for only the second time ever,

we received a generous gift from C. Payne of Austin, Texas with the stipulation that we use it to host a spay-neuter clinic. We chose to partner with Rez-Solutions, a relatively new non-profit founded by former tribal veterinarian Kelly Upshaw-Bia. Over the weekend of Sept. 13-14, Dr. Upshaw-Bia and her hardworking



staff, assisted by Blackhat volunteers Tjasa, Maureen, Winnie and Cindy, fixed 57 dogs and cats, preventing thousands of unwanted kittens and puppies.

Bloody good times in October

The lion's share of our adoptions come from people who see a pet on our Petfinder page, but it never hurts to trot our pets out for people to meet in person now and then. Events also give us a chance to tell Blackhat's story and possibly meet some new potential foster providers and donors. In addition to our weekly adoption events at the Prescott PetCo, we recently participated in Barks and Brews in Flagstaff and Dogtoberfest at Watson Lake in Prescott, and had a total of four adoptions as well as several hundred dollars in T-shirt sales and donations. We rely on our regional volunteers to make these events

happen, and they never disappoint us. Thanks much to Toby, Ray, Lisa G., Chelly, Gail, Joy, Donna, Vivian and Jackie B. who manned the booth at Dogtoberfest; and Marguerite, Isaac, Susan M., Pete, Solana, Jacqueline, and teens Ellery and Ella who led the effort in Flagstaff. Mattison Hope painted the cutout scenes like the one pictured featuring Isaac. Susan and Pete drove all the way from Ramah with six or seven dogs for both events, and Marguerite and Isaac also turned up at both to help out. If you don't want to foster but would like to lend a hand, events are a fun way to volunteer and get to know us!



In Memoriam

Sadie and Kali were both Many Farms dogs who made their way as tiny puppies to Maggie in Arriola, Colo., thence to us in Trujillo, Colo. We lost them in February and May, respectively. They were really, really good girls, and we miss them terribly. Thank you for Sadie and Kali, and bless you for what you do.

— Kendall and Debbie McAlister



Maggie May (aka Black Mama), was one of our first Blackhat rescues. We knew she had puppies hidden somewhere but we couldn't find them, so we went out to the reservation every few days to check on her, take her water/food and search. Fellow rescuer, Tony Nester, was able to track her one evening to her puppies, and the entire dog family was rescued. Once rescued, Maggie turned her nose up at dog food as she was used to hot dogs from passersby. Maggie quickly found her way into our hearts and bonded with my eldest, with whom she lived a spoiled, comfortable, and sometimes adventurous life. We had to say goodbye to one of the sweetest, most loyal dogs I've ever known. May doggie heaven have all the hot dogs you could ever want, sweet girl.

— Kim Kalas

In memory of Phil Lambert, a man who loved animals, especially dogs.

— Susan and Stan Hutchison

In memory of Stephen Joyce, husband of Ms. Bobbi Roop.

— Jerome Jim and Neal Shinn

In memory of Vincent Meade, a fellow dog lover.

— Katie and Blair Volpe

In memory of Tamara Martin and the best BH dog she got me, Stella.

— J. Lando

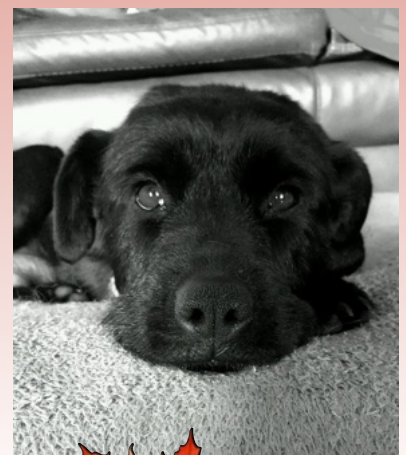
Honorariums

J. Hone: In honor of Scott & Betty Coyne and their dog Bear

M&R Kearny: In honor of Deb Potter, Pearl Edmondson & daughter, Aaron Murawa and Shae Noel

P. Stovall : In honor of Hattie & Letty

Berg was found listless and emaciated on a lookout of Canyon de Chelly in 2014. We put some weight on him and he started taking an interest in life, but after he was adopted, it was discovered he had brucellosis, a rare and debilitating disease. His adoptive family decided not to have him put down and managed the disease with antibiotics and other treatments. Berg lived a good full life, loved and cherished. He passed away at 12 1/2. His family says he was worth every penny of his expensive treatment.



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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

Blackhat pigs out: Our first-ever farm animal rescue!

Blackhat undertook its first-ever pig rescue this month, when Winnie in Burnside, Ariz., noticed a black sow wandering her neighborhood and getting into the dumpsters at the grocery store. She soon was fielding complaints about the critter from people who know she does dog rescue. Thinking it must belong to someone, she started making inquiries among her neighbors and the tribal authorities, but nobody knew anything about the porker or how it got there. Eventually she was able to lure it into her dog enclosure with a trail of bananas, but now what? A local farmer said he would pick up the creature, but was a no-show when the time came. Fortunately, our board member Maureen has a gorgeous ranch in Toadlena,



New Mexico, and while she knows nothing about pigs, she did recall her grandmother raising them and figured her mother could show her the ropes. Transporting the 300-pound hog, whom Maureen christened "Pumpkin" in honor of the season, was no small feat. Winnie and her husband eventually lured it into a dog trap, and between the three of them they were able to push it up a ramp into the back of Maureen's pickup.

Pumpkin is now residing happily in Toadlena, but Maureen is having trouble finding a vet who will work on pigs, so for now the lucky sow is in a 10-by-10 dog kennel until Maureen can ensure she has no diseases that could be passed to her other animals.

**Don't despair,
the 2026 Dogs
of the Navajo
calendar is
coming soon!**