



# SUMMER 2026 NEWSLETTER

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

"Diné Bikéyah bikáá'góó, ahil-neilnishgo léé'chaa'i dóó mósí baa' ádahwiiláago"

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## The Curious Case of Cootie Doo

anywhere near them. Any new sound, smell or sight made them dash for cover. The two males were a lost cause, the couple concluded; they would have to stay with them in sanctuary. But Cootie Doo and her sister, Cookie Dough, began making progress, taking treats and learning to walk on a leash. Cookie was adopted in October of 2023, and, after a rough start, is living happily in Colorado. By the spring of 2025, Susan thought Cootie had made enough progress to take her to Woofstock, a pet fair and adoption day in Prescott, Ariz.

Margaret, from a community south of Prescott Valley, saw the frightened dog and her heart went out to her. Although Susan warned her Cootie would never be "a normal dog," she decided to take a chance.

Once at Margaret's, Cootie immediately regressed. She dove under a bush in their yard and stayed there for days. She wouldn't take treats and wouldn't come in the house until one day when a neighbor set off a firecracker and Cootie ran inside for safety. After that, she would come in but it would take a half-hour of coaxing, moving away from the doorway and even moving furniture. Margaret and Mike tried training and anti-anxiety drugs, which helped a little.

A breakthrough came when they decided to add another dog to the mix, fostering Scrat, who had been with Cootie at Susan's. Cootie was just starting to gain confidence when Scrat was adopted. She regressed again, but at a slightly higher level.

The heartbreaking thing was, "You could tell that she always wanted love," Margaret said. "She was just too scared to come and get it."

*(Continued on back)*

### The Numbers

May-July: 21 animals adopted; 13 transported to other rescues; 44 still in foster care

### The Money

May-June: Vet \$3,800;  
Foster supplies \$4,490;  
Transport \$1,861;  
Community t \$547

### Ahehee' Thank you!

Airport Animal Hospital, Continental Animal Wellness, Kaibab Veterinary Clinic, Montezuma Veterinary Clinic, Nav Nation Veterinary Services, Prescott Animal Hospital, Rez Solutions, Rez Vet, San Juan Veterinary Hospital, Dr. Sand, Virga Foundation, K. Arrington, K. Ashcraft, P. Simonson, C. & B. Brady, M. Dewey, C. Greiner, E & A Hardin-Burrola, J. Howard, P. Massey, L. Reed, A. Seavall, D. Wren, M. Pfotenbauer, and all who contributed in any way.

### In Memoriam

In memory of my mom, Joan Kaliher, a dog lover from Illinois.

— S. Robertson

A good percentage of the rez dogs we take into foster come with scars. Whether it's a deformed leg from a fracture that healed on its own, a spattering of bird shot embedded in a hip, broken teeth from trying to eat a grease-spattered rock, or a face criss-crossed with battle scars, they bear witness to the tough life of a stray on the Navajo Nation.

Sometimes, the scars are invisible. These are the hardest cases.

In the snowy winter of 2023, our volunteer Susan was delivering dog food to some of her indigent neighbors in Ramah Chapter (east of Gallup, N.M.) when she came across a mother dog chained to a tree quite a distance from the home of her owners. She had lived her entire life on the chain, the family admitted, and now she had four puppies, about four months old. The family had built a small fence of pallets around the pups to protect them from their other dogs and children, who had been throwing sticks and rocks at them. The tiny square of earth was their whole world. The pups had had no human contact other than someone throwing food over the fence once or twice a day.

The family wouldn't relinquish the mom but gave Susan the pups.

Susan had had feral foster pets before, but these pups were at a new level. Even after several months, neither she nor her husband could get

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## B L A C K H A T H U M A N E

### Cootie Doo (continued from Page 1)

After about six months, Cootie decided Mike was OK. “But the closer she got to Mike, the more she hid from me,” Margaret recalled. “It was so hard for her to get to that level of trust she couldn’t extend it to another person.”

The couple tried adding another foster dog from Susan, Beanie Boy. But that backfired.

“Beans was the protector,” Margaret said. The two would “go feral” together while outside, and Cootie’s distrust of the doorway rubbed off on Beanie.

After a year, the couple made the difficult decision to give Cootie Doo back to Susan (they ended up adopting Beanie Boy, who is doing much better).

Mike and Margaret arranged to meet Susan at Woofstock 2026, the same event at which they had adopted Cootie a year earlier. But also at the event were Lynne and Tom, experienced foster volunteers who also have five of their own dogs.

Like Susan and Margaret, Lynne saw something in Cootie’s eyes, frightened as they were. “It really felt like there was potential there,” she recalled. She and Tom offered to give Cootie one more chance as a foster dog.

At first, Cootie Doo’s eyes were fearful, wide-open and rimmed with white. “We just left he alone for a couple of weeks,” Lynne said. Eventually, she transferred her affection for Margaret’s

husband Mike to Lynne’s husband, Tom. “It was great to see her eyes go from terrified to soft,” Lynne said.

Recently, the couple felt confident enough in Cootie to take her camping. When they let her out in the RV resort’s small dog park, something miraculous happened.

“She met a friend and started playing,” Lynne said. “We hadn’t seen her play like that before. I don’t think she knew how to be a dog.”

Lynne and Tom don’t take credit for Cootie’s transformation.

“Margaret laid the foundation,” Lynne said. “Cootie just got a little stuck and needed a new situation.”

At this point — three-and-a-half years after being rescued — Lynne and Tom think Cootie is ready for a permanent home, before she gets too attached to them.

“It will have to be the right family,” said Lynne. “Someone who will continue to work with her. She really is an amazing dog.”

If you’re willing to continue Cootie Doo’s incredible journey, call Lynne at 206-890-2226.

*It's calendar time! Send a high-resolution pic and bio of your Blackhat pet to [blackhatcalendar@outlook.com](mailto:blackhatcalendar@outlook.com) for possible inclusion in our 2027 calendar!*