

The Tucson

September/October 2026

DOG

A publication dedicated to promoting the human/animal bond and raising awareness of shelter and rescue animals.

Cover Story:

The Benefits of
Reading with Dogs:
How Our Canine Pals
Help Us Excel

Features:

Unsung Heroes:
The Search-and-Rescue Dogs
of Southern Arizona

September —
Deaf Dog
Awareness Month:
What it's Like Living
With a Deaf Dog

Cats &
Horses Too!



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Cover Story

- 12 Cover Story: The Benefits of Reading with Dogs
How Our Canine Pals Help Us Excel

Regular Features

- 7 The Leader of the Pack Speaks
17 A Visit to The Dog House: Dogs for Adoption
19 From the Director's Desk:
Growing Compassion, Confidence, and Community:
The Value of a Summer Youth Intern Program
20 The Scratching Post: Cats for Adoption
23 Training: Adjusting Your New Rescue Dog
to Your New Home

Special Features

- 5 Rural Metro Saves Canine from 14-Foot Hole —
A Great Feel-Good Story!
6 How Your Dog and Cat Can Become Friends
9 Think Dog Shows Are All About "Best in Show"?
Think Again.
14 September — Deaf Dog Awareness Month:
What it's Like Living with a Deaf Dog
21 The Search-and-Rescue Dogs of Southern Arizona
27 Just Another Tuesday!

Important Information

- 10 Calendar of Events
22 Pet Friendly Patios
24 Animal Resource Guide
26 Pet Directory: Pet Related Services

The Benefits of Reading
with Dogs: How Our Canine
Pals Help Us Excel

12



14

September —
Deaf Dog Awareness Month:
What it's Like Living
with a Deaf Dog



The Search-and-Rescue Dogs
of Southern Arizona

21





The Tucson Dog Staff & Writers



Heather McShea - Publisher/Editor - Heather is the former owner of a Home Health Care company, where she often helped hospice patients find loving homes for their beloved pets. She's worked with The Tucson Dog since 2017 and became its owner in 2022. A lifelong love for her own pets, Heather's home is frequently filled with visiting neighborhood dogs, earning it the nickname "the neighborhood dog park.. Email: heather@thetucsondog.com



Candice Eaton - Cover Photographer - The award-winning photographer behind C. Eaton Photography, captures the heart and soul of every pet and their owner's unique story so that they can keep them forever. With a deep passion for storytelling, Candice ensures that each portrait is a heartfelt tribute to the special bond between pets and humans. When she's not behind the lens, you'll find her soaking up Arizona's 300 days of sunshine or gearing up for her next big adventure.



Susan Stolar - Account Executive Susan has built an accomplished career in marketing communications & media relations. She started her career in New York City, her hometown. In 2000, she relocated to Tucson and established a consulting business. Susan now serves on the Board of the Father's Day Council, is a member of the Blues Music Foundation, and volunteers for animal rights organizations. After moving here, her first stop was the Humane Society, where she adopted two rescue dogs. While volunteering at Pawsitively Cats, she added a cat to her family. Susan's fur family now includes Homer, her senior cat, and her recently rescued senior poodle, Lucky.



Rebecca West - Staff Writer - Rebecca is a freelance writer and editor for print and digital who loves to travel the globe. A life-long pet owner, she adores animals and has taken part in fostering dogs for military members during deployment. She has given many rescued and surrendered dogs the forever home they always wanted, and her two favorite canine quotes are, "Be the kind of person your dog thinks you are," and "My dog rescued me."



Bonnie Craig - Staff Writer - Bonnie works as an educator and artist. She lives with her family which consists of 3 dogs, 3 cats, and lots of plants and chickens. They control her life, and she wouldn't have it any other way. As well as writing, she enjoys painting and playing music. She is passionate about the natural world and loves gardening, botanizing, hiking, and camping. Most evenings she can be found in the garden listening to the chickens and playing endless games of fetch with a certain ball-obsessed border collie.



Jeremy Brown - Staff Writer - An animal lover for life, Jeremy has been a dog trainer for over 16 years. As the Area Trainer for Petsmart he trained dog trainers for years and opened The Complete Canine 7 years ago. A therapy dog evaluator for years, he founded Kiennan's Kindness, a local therapy group that spreads kindness and also trains the Pima County Sheriff Therapy dog program. A Graduate from Indiana University and Applied Animal Behavior from University of Washington. He has four dogs; Archie, Lacey, Louis and Sabine, with the first two being therapy dogs. Email: completecaninetucson@gmail.com

THE TUCSON DOG

TheTucsonDog.com

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Want to share your story and comments with the Publisher?

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All stories and articles in this publication are written and reviewed by real humans.

The Tucson Dog reserves the right to editorial control of all articles, stories and Letters to the Editor. *The Tucson Dog* assumes no responsibility for errors within its publication. The views herein do not necessarily represent the policies of *The Tucson Dog* and should not be construed as endorsements.

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Rural Metro Saves Canine from 14-Foot Hole — A Great Feel-Good Story!

Story by Rebecca West | Images courtesy of Rural Metro Fire Department

This summer, the Rural Metro Fire Department had an unexpected guest of the best kind. The story begins on June 19th when someone rang the doorbell at Station 71 around 2pm. The reason for the visit was to inform them that a dog was trapped in a steel-lined hole about 3-4 feet wide and approximately 14 feet deep on Rex Street north of Valencia near I-10.

The purpose of the hole is still a mystery, but the lid was absent. We're not sure if this constitutes an attractive nuisance, but for a young black Lab-pit mix who apparently fell in and became trapped, it definitely was. After the alarm was sounded, Engine 71's A shift, along with Engine 81 and Tender 71, quickly leapt into action.

Once they arrived on scene, Captain Matthew Slanina of Engine 81 said they looked down to see a pair of big brown eyes staring back up at them. They lowered a ladder into the hole and firefighter MaKenna Garcia scrambled down to assess the situation. After determining that the dog was uninjured, they sent down a harness for Garcia to slip into and lifted her and the obviously stressed pup out.

From there, the grateful animal got to take a fire truck ride to a convenience store to grab some canine staples. Once they got him back to the station, he was fed and got a chance to chill in the AC. It was probably about this point that they began referring to him as Doug, a play on the word dug, as in dug a hole.

Thought to be about 1 because of the condition of his teeth and exuberant puppy-like behavior, there's no estimation on how long Doug had been

down there, but he seemed in good overall health. He was taken to a vet the next day to be checked out and scanned for a microchip, which he didn't have.

He hung out at the station for a few weeks, but no one came forward to claim him. During his time there, he slept in the recliners, played in the bays with the various crews on shift, and had a great time in general. Eventually, a neighbor of one of the department's fire inspectors ended up adopting Doug.

Three cheers for our first responders and thanks for the happy ending!



Doug and FF MaKenna Garcia

From left to right: Engineer Ferguson, FF MaKenna Garcia, Doug the dog, Emily Radcliffe, FF Mike Stokes, Capt. Matthew Slanina



How Your Cat and Dog Can Become Friends

Story by Meganne Carpenter, Regional Scout for Bow Wow

We all know the old “tail” of the cat and the dog not getting along. This trope, however, doesn’t have to be the case! There are many things that you as a pet parent can do to help your fur babies not only coexist but become friends along the way.

Consider Personalities

Breed doesn’t always matter when pairing up a cat and a dog; their personalities have more of an effect! If possible before adopting your new cat or pup, learn as much as you can about their personality and past. Have they lived with other animals before? Are they mellow or active?

Choosing pets with similar personalities will go a long way in helping them get along.

Train Your Pup Properly

Puppies (and many adult dogs!) are naturally curious and love to chase, play, and explore. Before introducing your dog to your cat, it’s important that your dog has a solid understanding of basic obedience commands such as sit, stay, leave it, and come.

These commands will help you redirect your dog if they become overly excited and prevent them from frightening your new feline friend.

Give Them Their Own Territories

Cats are very proud and territorial creatures. In order to feel in control, they need a spot that is truly their own to retreat to as they become tired or overwhelmed. Give them this space and allow them to become accustomed to it before meeting their new puppy companion.

You should also do your best to keep their food, water, and toys separate as they may be overprotective of their belongings.

Plan Their First Meeting

The first time your pup and cat meet should be carefully planned. One way to do this is to put each of them on opposite sides of a closed door at feeding time. They will not see each other, but they will be able to smell each other. Give them their food and allow them to eat in this position. This will help them associate the smell of dinner time with the scent of their new friend!

When they’re ready to see each other for the first time, keep your pup on a leash and allow them to slowly feel each other out. Over time you will be able to drop the leash and take it off all together. Soon, they’ll be best pals!



Dogs are social pack animals who often welcome new housemates.

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The Leader of the Pack Speaks

Dear Friends and Animal Lovers,

Fall is in the air...Sort of.

When September rolls around, we start yearning for fall. Cooler mornings. Evening walks. And the hope that Tucson might finally give us a break from the heat. Of course, living in Tucson, we know better. Fall will arrive eventually, but it may take its sweet time getting here!



September and October give us plenty of reasons to celebrate our pets, too.

Neighborhood Pet Store Day on Sept 27, National Pet Obesity Awareness Day on Oct 8, Veterinary Technician Week, Oct 19 - 24, and World Rhino Day Sept 22nd! To commemorate Deaf Dog Awareness Month our story takes a look at what it's Like Living with a Deaf Dog.

These are just a few reminders that there is always something new to learn, appreciate and celebrate about the animals sharing our lives. This issue is packed with stories that do exactly that.

You'll also meet some remarkable search and rescue dogs in Arizona, whose skills and partnerships with their handlers are truly extraordinary.

Our cover story explores a wonderful trend: children reading to dogs in class, at home and in libraries. There's something pretty special about watching a child gain confidence while a dog quietly listens without judgment. It's another beautiful example of the ways dogs can change lives.

Also in this issue, you'll meet rescue dogs who went from frightened strays and foster dogs to remarkable agility competitors. You'll read about a dog rescued from a 14-foot hole and discover how a summer youth internship can make a difference at The Animal League of Green Valley.

And, of course, there's another adventure from Leo - because apparently one dog can never have too many interesting and funny stories to tell.

And then there's Dogtoberfest Adopt-A-thon! On October 25, we'll celebrate Tucson's dogs, the people who love them, and the organizations working every day to keep pets and families together.

So here's to cooler days, happy dogs, new adventures and a, hopefully cooler, fall season filled with plenty of reasons to celebrate the animals who make our lives better.

With gratitude,
~ Heather McShea
Publisher & Editor-In-Chief



THANK YOU

Thank you to our readers, advertisers, and supporters for believing in *The Tucson Dog* and the mission we share. For nearly a decade, this magazine has connected pet lovers with valuable resources, promoted adoptions, and supported animal welfare throughout Southern Arizona.

A special thank you to everyone who has contributed to our GoFundMe campaign. Like many small publications, *The Tucson Dog* has been impacted by rising costs and a challenging economy. Your generosity is helping us continue publishing and distributing this magazine free of charge to our community.

If *The Tucson Dog* has ever helped you discover a rescue, learn something new, or simply brought a smile to your face, I invite you to learn more about our campaign and consider supporting our efforts to keep this publication available for animal lovers across Southern Arizona: <https://gofund.me/82afe76df>

DONATE

WE GREATLY APPRECIATE YOUR GENEROUS DONATIONS to *The Tucson Dog* during these trying times. Your donation will help us to continue serving our community by continuing to promote local shelters and rescues (at no cost to them), helping homeless pets find homes, providing local resources and events, and continuing to share heartwarming stories about local people who give their lives to saving animals and animals saving humans.

Please send donations and your story, if you'd like to share, to:
heather@thetucsondog.com or call 520-345-2801.

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Watch the world's best canine athletes, including rescue dogs and all-American super dogs, race over obstacles, guided by voice and hand signals of their human partner. The **FREE** event includes a **Vendor Trade Fair & Expo**, a dog-lovers' shopping extravaganza.

Think Dog Shows Are All About “Best in Show”? Think Again.

Story by Heather McShea | Photos provided by USDAA®

When most people hear “dog championship,” they might picture perfectly groomed dogs circling a show ring, waiting for a judge to decide which one is the best.

Agility is a very different kind of competition.

There are jumps, tunnels, weave poles and other obstacles. Dogs race through the course while their handlers guide them with movement, timing and verbal cues. It happens quickly, sometimes in the blink of an eye, and the slightest miscommunication can send a team off course.

But watch closely and you’ll see something far more fascinating than speed. You’ll see two teammates having a conversation without saying a word. And some of the dogs competing at the highest levels of the sport began life as strays, rescues or foster dogs.



Shannon clears the bar during her remarkable agility career earning a first-place finish in USDAA® Masters Standard Open in 1993.

pete in dog sports. Then, in 1989, he saw an agility demonstration. Shannon tried the equipment. She loved it!

Just five months after beginning training, Shannon and Stuart entered a United States Dog Agility Association® (USDAA®) event, finished second in Grand Prix® and qualified for the National Finals. At only their third show, they made the finals and placed sixth overall. Shannon went on to compete internationally, including at the FCI World Dog Show in Germany, where she placed third overall. She also won USDAA’s Grand Prix Finals and the Dog Agility Masters® tournament.



Bekkah in Action at Full Speed

entered a local USDAA trial simply to see how she would handle the environment. Bekkah qualified in Jumpers.

That first outing became the beginning of a remarkable partnership. Seven years later, Bekkah had earned championships in USDAA, AKC and UKI agility, three organizations offering agility competition - along with accomplishments in other dog sports. She competed in Barn Hunt, where dogs use their noses to lo-

From Frightened Stray to Agility Pioneer

One of the most remarkable examples is Shannon, a little brown mixed-breed dog who appeared as a stray outside Stuart Mah’s townhouse. Estimated to be only six to nine months old, Shannon was so frightened that it took weeks to coax her closer. Eventually, a trail of dog biscuits led her into the garage, and into a very different life.

After beginning obedience training with Shannon, Stuart discovered that mixed-breed dogs had limited opportunities to compete.

Her story helped embody an important idea at the heart of USDAA®, agility is a sport for **“all dogs regardless of lineage.”** In other words, a pedigree isn’t a prerequisite for greatness.

One Lucky Parking Lot

Years later, another rescue dog would prove the point. Bekkah was found wandering in a parking lot in July 2018. She had no microchip, no collar and hadn’t been spayed. Eventually, she went home with Chris Meyers, who was looking for an agility dog. But Bekkah didn’t arrive knowing how to be a championship competitor. She and Chris had to figure each other out. A few months after she came home, they

cate safely-contained rats hidden among hay bales, and Fast CAT, a timed 100-yard dash chasing a lure. In October 2025, she earned three USDAA achievements at a single trial. This amazing parking-lot stray had become a multi-sport competitor.

Foster Fail to Champion!

Then there’s Cali. If you’re familiar with rescues, you’ve probably heard the term “foster fail.” It’s what happens when someone agrees to temporarily care for a dog and then discovers that the dog has quietly become part of the family.

That’s Cali’s story. Lorry Minor agreed to foster a Doberman named Cali after she had been described by a pound as a fence jumper. Looking for a way to channel the dog’s energy, Lorry introduced her to dog sports. The foster arrangement didn’t exactly go according to plan. Ten years later, Cali was still by her side.

There is a little bit of Harry and Snowman in Cali’s story - the famous plow horse rescued from a slaughterhouse truck for \$80 who went on to become a champion show jumper. Like Lorry, Harry saw something worth saving, took a chance, and discovered there was far more potential there than anyone expected. Now 12½ years old, Cali has competed in agility, rally, Barn Hunt and Fetch Dog. Rally combines obedience skills and teamwork as dog and handler navigate a course together, while Fetch Dog is exactly what it sounds like: retrieving as a competitive sport. Cali continued trialing well into her senior years and was working toward her fifth PACH before retirement.

Lorry summed up their journey beautifully: Cali had inspired her, and she was glad she had taken a chance on her all those years ago.

Beyond the Jumps: A Bond in Motion

These stories reveal what makes agility skills so compelling. It isn’t simply about how fast a dog can run or how high a dog can jump. It is about trust, training, focus and communication. The handler must guide the dog through an ever-changing sequence while the dog learns to read those cues and make split-second decisions.

Over time, that shared work creates an extraordinary bond. And that’s part of what makes the rescue stories so meaningful. Shannon, Bekkah and Cali didn’t begin their journeys as polished competitors. They began as dogs who were frightened, homeless, overlooked or simply waiting for someone to take a chance on them. Their beginnings didn’t determine their futures. Neither did their pedigrees, or lack of one.

The World Games Comes to Tucson

This fall, Tucson will have the opportunity to watch some of the world’s top agility teams compete at the 2026 Cynosport® Dog Agility World Games Presented by Purina® Pro Plan®, November 11–15 at Kino Sports Complex. Admission is free. But the real reason to watch might have nothing to do with the scoreboard. You may come to watch an agility championship. But if you leave thinking differently about what a rescue dog is capable of, you’ve seen something even more remarkable.

For more news on USDAA® go to <https://www.usdaa.com> and <https://www.usdaa.com/events/cynosport/cynosport-world-games.cfm>



Loni Gaudet and Dolly, a rescued mix. The pair competed in Tucson in 2025 and made it to the podium.



Cali Dominates the Course

Calendar of Events

SEPTEMBER EVENTS

**Every Day from 10am-2pm
Moon & Stars Animal Rescue
Feline Adoption Events**
Sweet adoptable cats at the Grant & Swan PetSmart location waiting for furever homes! (520) 322-5080 4740 E. Grant Rd., moonandstarsanimalrescue.org

**Sat. Sept. 5, 11am-2pm
Southern Arizona Cat Rescue PetSmart Adoption Event**
Most Saturdays you'll find us at PetSmart located at 4374 N. Oracle Rd. with adoptable kitties! Visit sacatrescue.org or FB/IG @sacatrescue for more info.

**Sat./Sun. Sept. 5 & 6, 12pm-8pm
Rodeo Roundup at Four Tails
Saddle Up, Sip Up, & Stay Awhile!**
Saturday, September 5 & Sunday, September 6, enjoy special Western-inspired eats/Live music/Longer hours & sunset sipping with Boots, Bottles & Buckles — No One Does Rodeo Like Four Tails — www.fourtailsvineyard.com

**Sat. Sept. 5, 10am-2pm
Dogs-n-Donuts Adoption Events**
In conjunction with various local rescues, we now have adoption events most Saturdays at our bakery. Details available on our website. dogsndonutstucson.com

**Sat. Sept. 5, 10am-12pm
Southern Arizona Beagle Rescue Playdate in the Park**
We have a 'beagle play date' the 1st Saturday of each month at the small dog park inside of Reid Park. Bring your beagles & have some fun in the sun beagle style! Info at (520) 247-7720 or soazbeaglerescue.com.

**Sat. Sept. 5, 10:30am-2pm
Cherished Tails Senior Sanctuary Adoption Event at PetSmart**
The 1st Saturday of each month we will be at the PetSmart at Orange Grove & River with adoptable pets. 3850 W. River Rd.,

**Sat. Sept. 5, 8am-9am
Puppy Yoga at Sol Dog Lodge**
The most joyful way to start your day. Adoptable puppies from Humane Society of Southern Arizona. \$30 donation pp. Advanced registration required. Call (520) 886-7411 to register. 11862 N. Tangerine Business Loop, Marana 85658

**Sat. Sept. 5, 9am-10am
Pathways for Paws Drive-Thru Community Outreach Clinic**
at 7400 N. Oracle Rd. (Post Workspaces) offers vaccines, microchips & nail trims for a small donation via cash, Venmo, Zelle & Apple Pay. No debit/credit cards. More info at pathwaysforpaws.com.

**Sat. Sept. 5, 11am-2pm
Paws Without Borders Adoption Events**
at Petco. Find adoptable dogs at Petco on 9640 E. 22nd St., Tucson 85748. We'll also be there Oct. 3.

**Sun. Sept. 6, 9:30am-11am
The 3 D's of Dog Training**
Learn to train your dog like a professional! Reduce fear & anxiety, learn canine communication techniques, safety management, & handling with dog training & behavioral consultant Lynne Stott at Bark N Berry, 6121 E. Broadway, Ste. 138. Register in store or online at barknberryaz.com. Cost: \$30

**Wed. Sept. 9 & 23, 5pm-6pm
Pathways for Paws Drive-Thru Community Outreach Clinic**
at 2035 E. 17th St. offers vaccines, microchips & nail trims for a small donation via cash, Venmo, Zelle & Apple Pay. No debit/credit cards. More info at pathwaysforpaws.com.

**Fri. Sept. 11, 6pm-7:30pm
Hand-Crochet Cat Bed Class at Hunter's Kitten Lounge**
Join us for an evening of crafting while we learn to create the cute chunky crochet cat beds that everyone loves! Each entry will include supplies to create your own bed to take home. Ages 14+ Book at: hunterskittenlounge.org

**Sat. Sept. 12, 10:30am-2pm
Cherished Tails Senior Sanctuary Adoption Event at PetSmart**
Every 2nd Saturday of the month we will be at the PetSmart at Grant & Swan with adoptable pets. 4740 E. Grant Rd., Tucson

**Sat. Sept. 12, 11am-2pm
Paws Without Borders Adoption Events at CAL Ranch**
Meet adoptable dogs at 6363 E. 22nd St., Tucson 85710. We'll be there on Oct. 10, too. contact@calranch.com

**Sun. Sept. 13, 7am-10am
Rattlesnake Avoidance Sessions**
Sol Dog Lodge & Training Center partners with Animal Experts to offer Rattlesnake or Colorado River Toad Avoidance Sessions. Call Lee at (520) 591-2829 to get scheduled. 11862 N. Tangerine Business Loop, Marana 85658

**Thurs. Sept. 17, 10am-2pm
Food for People's Pets Pantry**
The Hermitage No-Kill Cat Sanctuary's Food for People's Pets Program at the Michael Cannon Community Pet Food Pantry collects donations of dog & cat food all year long & distributes it to organizations & people/pets in need. 5278 E. 21st St., Tucson 85711, (520) 571-7839

**Fri. Sept. 18, 6pm-7:30pm
Watercolor Pet Portrait Class at Hunter's Kitten Lounge!**
Join us for a super fun watercolor paint class fundraiser where you'll paint a cat-themed masterpiece, hang out with adoptable kitties, get step-by-step instructions, take home a matted 5x8" painting & support Southern Arizona Cat Rescue. Tickets: hunterskittenlounge.org

**Sat. Sept. 19, 9am-10am
Pathways for Paws Drive-Thru Community Outreach Clinic**
at 15921 S. Houghton Rd. (American Legion) offers vaccines, microchips & nail trims for a small donation via cash, Venmo, Zelle & Apple Pay. No debit/credit cards. More info at pathwaysforpaws.com.

**Sat. Sept. 19, 10:30am-2pm
Cherished Tails Senior Sanctuary Adoption Event at PetSmart**
Every 3rd Saturday of the month we will be at the PetSmart at Wetmore & Oracle with adoptable pets. 4374 N. Oracle, Tucson

**Sat. Sept. 19, 12pm-5pm
Rescue Me Tucson's 5-Year Anniversary Celebration**
Celebrating 5 years & nearly 2,000 dog & cat adoptions, we'll be serving cake & dog treats from Dogs n' Donuts while supplies last. Special cat-tastic surprises, too! Guests can take pictures with a dog or cat backdrop, plus other fun stuff. 6401 W. Marana Center Blvd., Ste 902. Text or call (520) 261-1616 or email info@rescuemetucson.org.

**Thurs. Sept. 24, & 30, 5pm-6pm
Pathways for Paws Drive-Thru Community Outreach Clinic**
at 7035 E. Broadway Blvd. (Floor & Decor) offers vaccines, microchips & nail trims for a small donation via cash, Venmo, Zelle & Apple Pay. No debit/credit cards. More info at pathwaysforpaws.com.

**Sat. Sept. 26, 10am-11am
Kitty Yoga with David at Hunter's Kitten Lounge**
Join David (Cat in Tree Yoga) for an hour-long yoga class with cats. This class is for all levels, but we do ask that all yogis be over 10 years of age. You're welcome to bring your own mat or we have a few to borrow. Spots limited so book today at hunterskittenlounge.org. \$20 pp.

**Sat. Sept. 26, 6pm-7:30pm
Pumpkin Painting with Cats at Hunter's Kitten Lounge**
Join us for a 1.5-hour lounge session while we prep for Halloween with pumpkin painting! All supplies included in the ticket. Ages 10+ Book at: hunterskittenlounge.org

**Sat. Sept. 26, 11am-2pm
Paws Without Borders Adoption Events at Petco in Marana**
Meet adoptable dogs at the Petco at 8050 N. Cortaro Rd., Tucson 85743. We'll be there on Oct. 24, too.

**Sat. Sept. 26, 9am-10am
Pathways for Paws Drive-Thru Community Outreach Clinic**
at 2812 W. Alvaro Rd. (Lazy V) offers vaccines, microchips & nail trims for a small donation via cash, Venmo, Zelle & ApplePay. No debit/credit cards. Info at pathwaysforpaws.com.

**Sat. Sept. 26, 11am-2pm
AAWL x Turnout Beverage CoLaunch Event**
Join the Arizona Animal Welfare League for the launch of this year's AleWagger can at The Gilbert House. There will be yummy food, beer, pet-focused vendors and of course some puppies! What more can you ask for?! Info: aawl.org

**Sat. Sept. 26, 11am-2pm
Soldier's Best Friend 3rd Annual Veteran Dog Fair**
Join us at Soldier's Best Friend Training Center located at 14505 N. 75th Ave., Peoria 85381 & help support the cause. For more info, go to soldiersbestfriend.org.

**Sat. Sept. 26, 10am-2pm
PAWS & Pages**
Sunshine Therapy Animals Book Market & Swap with Therapy Animals at 6430 N. Swan Rd. Ste. 100, Tucson 85718

**Sat. Sept. 26, 10am-2pm
EPAC Grand Opening**
The new Eastside PACC Adoptions Center is holding a Grand Opening event with FREE adoptions on all pets & gift bags for the first 10 families who adopt a large dog! Come celebrate & enjoy food trucks, music, a scavenger hunt, inflatables, giveaways & more! 7225 E. Broadway Blvd. Ste. 140, Tucson 85710

**Sat. Sept. 26, 12pm-4pm
Paws & Pours Dog Day at the Vineyard**
Bring your doggie out for a beautiful relaxing day at Autumn Sage Vineyards where they can enjoy some ice cream from Bark 'n Berry. 90 Elgin Rd., Elgin 85611

OCTOBER EVENTS

**Every Day from 10am-2pm
Moon & Stars Animal Rescue Feline Adoption Events**
Sweet adoptable cats at the Grant & Swan PetSmart location waiting for furever homes! (520) 322-5080 4740 E. Grant Rd., Tucson 85712 moonandstarsanimalrescue.org

Calendar of Events

Sat. Oct. 3, 10am-12pm
Howl-o-ween Pet Photos at Bark-n-Berry Dog Ice Cream Parlor
@barknberryaz professional seasonal fall & Halloween pet photos \$45, \$5 will be donated to charity. Book: tinyurl.com/BarknBerryEvents

Sat. Oct. 3, 10am-12pm
Southern Arizona Beagle Rescue Playdate in the Park
We have a 'beagle play date' the 1st Saturday of each month at the small dog park inside of Reid Park. Bring your beagles & have some fun in the sun beagle style! Info at (520) 247-7720 or soazbeaglerescue.com.

Sat. Oct. 3, 11am-2pm
Southern Arizona Cat Rescue PetSmart Adoption Event
Most Saturdays you'll find us at PetSmart located at 4374 N. Oracle Rd. with adoptable kitties! Visit sacatrescue.org or FB/IG @sacatrescue for more info.

Sat. Oct. 3, 10am-2pm
Dogs-n-Donuts Adoption Events
In conjunction with various local rescues, we now have adoption events most Saturdays at our bakery. Details available on our website. dogsndonutstucson.com

Sat. Oct. 3, 9am-1pm
Dove Mt. Holiday Market & Scariest Dog Contest -- Join in some early Halloween fun with spooky shopping from local resellers & vendors or dress up your pup & enter them in the scariest dog contest for a chance to win! Text (520) 589-9495 for info or sign up. 6595 W. Marana Center Blvd.

Sat. Oct. 3, 10:30am-2pm
Cherished Tails Senior Sanctuary Adoption Event at PetSmart
The 1st Saturday of each month we will be at the PetSmart at Orange Grove & River with adoptable pets. 3850 W. River Rd.,

Sat. Oct. 3, 9:30am-5pm
Tucson Reptile Show at the Pima County Fair Grounds
Come meet our special needs bearded "Bruni" & do some shopping! We'll also be there Oct. 4 from 10am-4pm.

Sat. Oct. 3, 8am-9am
Puppy Yoga at Sol Dog Lodge
The most joyful way to start your day. Adoptable puppies from Humane Society of Southern Arizona. \$30 donation pp. Advanced registration required. Call (520) 886-7411 to register. 11862 N. Tangerine Business Loop, Marana 85658
Sat. Oct. 3 & 31, 9am-10am

Pathways for Paws Drive-Thru Community Outreach Clinic
at 7400 N. Oracle Rd. (Post Workspaces) offers vaccines, microchips & nail trims for a small donation via cash, Venmo, Zelle & Apple Pay. No debit/credit cards. More info at pathwaysforpaws.com.

Wed. Oct. 7 & 23, 5pm-6pm
Pathways for Paws Drive-Thru Community Outreach Clinic
at 2035 E. 17th St. offers vaccines, microchips & nail trims for a small donation via cash, Venmo, Zelle & Apple Pay. No debit/credit cards. More info at pathwaysforpaws.com.

Thurs. Oct. 8, 6pm-7:30pm
Pumpkin Painting with Cats at Hunter's Kitten Lounge
Join us for a 1.5-hour lounge session while we prep for Halloween with pumpkin painting! All supplies included in the ticket. Ages 10+ Book at: hunterskittenlounge.org

Fri. Oct. 9, 6pm-8pm
City of Tucson Trunk or Treat Halloween Event
Come get a goodie bag & meet a bearded dragon at this fun family-friendly event! 1575 E. 36th St., Tucson 85713

Sat. Oct. 10, 12pm-8pm
Harvest Hounds at Four Tails
Raise a Glass to Fall at Four Tails! Enjoy Fall wine features, Special harvest-inspired food, Live music, & an Arizona wine-country sunset. Fall is best enjoyed with the Pack at Four Tails! www.fourtailsvineyard.com

Sat. Oct. 10, 6:30-8:30pm
Bingo at Hunter's Kitten Lounge
Enjoy an unforgettable evening with the purr-fect mix of games, cats, & good times! Tickets (\$25 each) include 5 bingo cards, one for each round. More cards available for purchase at the door (\$2 each). Max 4 cards per round. Win awesome prizes! Space is limited! Book at: hunterskittenlounge.org

Sat. Oct. 10, 10:30am-2pm
Cherished Tails Senior Sanctuary Adoption Event at PetSmart
Every 2nd Saturday of the month we will be at the PetSmart at Grant & Swan with adoptable pets. 4740 E. Grant Rd., Tucson

Sun. Oct. 11, 7am-10am
Rattlesnake Avoidance Sessions
Sol Dog Lodge & Training Center partners with Animal Experts to offer Rattlesnake or Colorado River Toad Avoidance Sessions. Call Lee at (520) 591-2829 to get scheduled. 11862 N. Tangerine Business Loop, Marana 85658

Thurs. Oct. 15, 10am-2pm
Food for People's Pets Pantry
The Hermitage No-Kill Cat Sanctuary's Food for People's Pets Program at the Michael Cannon Community Pet Food Pantry collects donations of dog & cat food all year long & distributes it to organizations & people/pets in need. 5278 E. 21st St., Tucson 85711, (520) 571-7839

Fri. Oct. 16, 5pm-7pm
Annual Haunted Hermitage
Bring an unopened pet food item & join the family-friendly fun! Trunk or treat, treat tables, & ghostly spooktacular decorations make this a community favorite year after year. 5278 E. 21st St., Tucson, 85711 hermitagecatshelter.org

Sat. Oct. 17, 9am-10am
Pathways for Paws Drive-Thru Community Outreach Clinic
at 15921 S. Houghton Rd. (American Legion) offers vaccines, microchips & nail trims for a small donation via cash, Venmo, Zelle & Apple Pay. No debit/credit cards. More info at pathwaysforpaws.com.

Sat. Oct. 17, 10:30am-2pm
Cherished Tails Senior Sanctuary Adoption Event at PetSmart
Every 3rd Saturday of the month we will be at the PetSmart at Wetmore & Oracle with adoptable pets. 4374 N. Oracle Rd., Tucson 85705

Wed. Oct. 21, 6pm-8pm
Spooky Movie Night with Cats at Hunter's Kitten Lounge
Film will be Pg-13 or R rated, no kids allowed. We have lots of kitties, though, who'd love to snuggle up & watch with you. *Free drink & snack with lounge entry for this 2-hour cat lounge session. For movies playing, email lounge@sacatrescue.org.

Thur. Oct. 22, & 30, 5pm-6pm
Pathways for Paws Drive-Thru Community Outreach Clinic
at 7035 E. Broadway Blvd. (Floor & Decor) offers vaccines, microchips & nail trims for a small donation via cash, Venmo, Zelle & Apple Pay. No debit/credit cards. More info at pathwaysforpaws.com.

Sat. Oct. 24, 9am-10am
Pathways for Paws Drive-Thru Community Outreach Clinic
at 2812 W. Alvaro Rd. (Lazy V) offers vaccines, microchips & nail trims for a small donation via cash, Venmo, Zelle & Apple Pay. No debit/credit cards. Info at pathwaysforpaws.com.

Sat. Oct. 24, 7pm-9pm
Spooky Movie Night with Cats at Hunter's Kitten Lounge
Film will be Pg-13 or R rated, no kids allowed. We have lots of kitties, though, who'd love to snuggle up & watch with you. *Free drink & snack with lounge entry for this 2-hour cat lounge session. For movies playing, email lounge@sacatrescue.org.

Sun. Oct. 25, 2pm-4pm
Día de los Muertos Painting Event
Join us in painting memorial boxes & simple altars. Whether you're new to the tradition or continuing a yearly ritual, this is a gentle space to create, reflect & celebrate the bond you shared. A free event, if you'd like to support our work, you can make a

(continued from previous column)
donation to the ALC Foundation. 4758 E. Grant Rd., Tucson 85712
aloyalcompanion.com/events

Sun. Oct. 25, 10am-3pm: The Tucson Dog Dogtoberfest Adopt-a-Thon 2026
The Drive Tucson & SAAFB invite you to join us for a fun-filled spooktacular day of adoptable dogs, costume contests, prizes, vendors, kid- & pup-friendly activities & a live broadcast with The Drive Tucson! It'll be a tail-wagging good time at Three Canyon Beer & Wine Garden, 4999 N. Sabino Canyon Rd., Tucson 85750

Thurs. Oct. 29, Time: TBD
Dogs 'n Denim Fashion Show
The University of Arizona Fashion for a Purpose class hosts their annual dog-centric fashion show where students create upcycled denim dog outfits. FREE to attend. VIP seats available for an additional fee. 650 N. Park Ave., Tucson

Fri. Oct. 30, 6pm-8pm
Spooky Movie Night with Cats at Hunter's Kitten Lounge
Film will be Pg-13 or R rated, no kids allowed. We have lots of kitties, though, who'd love to snuggle up & watch with you. *Free drink & snack with lounge entry for this 2-hour cat lounge session. For movies playing, email lounge@sacatrescue.org.

Fri. Oct. 30, 5pm-7pm
Howl-o-ween Costume Contest at Total Wine Park Place Mall
Don't miss out on this spooktacular event featuring a doggy costume contest plus Dogs-n-Donuts will be there providing beer & wine samples along with Sniff or Treat goodie bags for dogs dressed in costumes to this free event. Registration required.

Sat. Oct. 31, 12pm-5pm
Bark & Barrel Howl-o-Ween Artisan Fair & Dog Costume Parade
Come join us for shopping, wine tastings, & a super fun costume parade featuring your pups at Old Pueblo Cellars located at 10088 N. St. Patrick Rd., Tucson 85742 oldpueblocellarsevents@gmail.com

Sat. Oct. 31, 7pm-9pm
Spooky Movie Night with Cats at Hunter's Kitten Lounge
Film will be Pg-13 or R rated, no kids allowed. We have lots of kitties, though, who'd love to snuggle up & watch with you. *Free drink & snack with lounge entry for this 2-hour cat lounge session. For movies playing, email lounge@sacatrescue.org.

Sat. Oct. 31, 1pm
5th Annual Howl-o-Ween Pet Costume Party at The Carrick
Join The Carrick Hotel for an afternoon of fun, pets, costumes & prizes located at 39 Howell Ave., Bisbee 85603. (520) 234-5921 reservations@thecarrick.com



Cover Story The Benefits of Reading with Dogs: How Our Canine Pals Help Us Excel

Story by Rebecca West

In a classroom setting, few things can be as unnerving for a child as being asked to stand up and demonstrate their skills or knowledge in front of the entire class—particularly when it comes to reading.

According to the National Assessment Governing Board, the Nation's Report Card shows continued declines in reading for U.S. students. Considering our current addiction to social media and video shorts, it's no surprise our attention spans have shrunk, along with our writing/communication skills. Due to this, there's an entire generation that seems to have given up on punctuation altogether.

(FYI, immersing yourself in long-form text is said to train your attention span away from constant digital distractions.)

All in all, we're just not reading as much. Which is incredibly sad because the advantages of strong reading skills and being well-read are quite numerous. For instance, it improves cognitive function, enhances empathy, and expands one's general knowledge. Engaging with a wide variety of texts strengthens your mental abilities and broadens your worldview.

As for mental and cognitive health, reading is said to promote stronger brain connections by acting as a workout for your mind, keeping neural pathways sharp, and slowing mental decline in the process. That's right. Regular reading as we advance in years helps protect memory and lowers the rate of cognitive aging. But what about kids?

The Nationwide Children's Hospital notes, "Learning to read early builds a strong foundation for language skills, boosts brain development, and increases school confidence. It allows children to expand their vocabulary, practice critical thinking, and enjoy stories at a relaxed, playful pace before formal schooling begins."

But what happens after children enter the classroom if they haven't had an early start or they've experienced trauma, often leading them to turn inward? That's where groups like Paws for Youth come in.

Paws for Youth

Formerly known as Gabriel's Angels, Paws for Youth's ABC (standing for animals, books, and children) reading

program is built on the foundation of nurturing youth and their well-being by connecting them with the healing power of pets and compassionate adults throughout Arizona. They do this by giving kids the opportunity to read one-on-one with therapy animals. How does that help? For starters, pets lower stress levels and are nonjudgmental.

Therapy teams visit the same three kids 12-14 times in a semester for an hour, allowing each child 20 minutes of reading time. This not only builds confidence but also a connection with the same volunteer and therapy dog. The kids, who attend one of the 15 Title 1 schools Paws for Youth works with, look forward to the visits, as they get to sit on blankets and read with cuddly canines.

The children entering the program are selected by the school's reading specialist, social worker, or school counselor. A whopping 92 percent increase in reading confidence and a 97 percent increase in motivation to read have been reported among those participating.

At the end, the kids receive a medal for partaking in the program and write sweet thank-you notes to the dogs as a final goodbye. The program has become so successful that 18 schools are currently waiting statewide for availability.

Therapy Teams

Diane Allison and her therapy dog Doc are one of the volunteer teams. They've been with the ABC program since March 2024. She works at two schools and explained that the idea of comfort pet therapy appealed to her. Doc is a cockapoo rescue who is now 10 years old. He was 6 when she and Doc passed their test to get started with the program.

An avid reader with a Bachelor's in elementary education, the reading program is a great fit for her and Doc, as he gets to focus on one child for the duration of the session. Getting to know the kids and being able to be there for them—being an adult they can count on—is her favorite thing about being a part of the program.

At the end of the reading sessions, kids get a sticker, and Doc gets a dog treat, which the kids can give him by placing it in his little hippo bowl or by using a flat hand.

When asked, Allison shared that one of her all-time favorite moments with the program so far was being told by a little boy at one of the schools that Doc was his brother's "reading guide dog."

If you're interested, Paws for Youth could use volunteers in the form of more therapy teams and helping hands for events. You can sign up for one of their once-a-month info sessions on their website, pawsforyouth.org, to learn more.

Read to a Dog

And they aren't the only group that recognizes the value of a program where kids (and adults) can benefit from reading to a canine (or other pets). If your child doesn't attend a Title 1 school, the Pima County Public Library system regularly plays host to dogs and residents of all ages through its Read to a Dog, Read to Pet Pals (El Rio Library), and Paws for Grownups programs.

(continued on next page)



Diane Allison and Doc,
Courtesy of Paws for Youth



Kamella & Finn at El Rio Library
Courtesy of PCPL

Courtesy of Paws for Youth



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Read to a Dog has been around for more than a decade. It's designed to give youngsters the chance to read to an audience who won't judge. A being who contentedly accepts the words exactly as they're read without question or criticism. This environment provides them with an opportunity to experience stress-free reading in a space where they're able to relax, feel safe, and have fun.

The library system has received great feedback for this perennial favorite among kids and parents. The dogs and handlers who participate are certified therapy dog teams. Read to a Dog is suitable for preschoolers 3-5 years, kids 6-8 years, and tweens 9-13 years. Increasing a child's motivation to read is considered an essential element in becoming a successful reader.

Similarly, adults can take a pause from their everyday lives to attend Paws for Grownups, where they can listen to a story and enjoy a bit of canine companionship, too. Well-trained, loving dogs and their handlers (who participate in the Read to a Dog program for kids and are certified by the Alliance of Therapy Dogs and Pet Partners) will spend some time spreading joy and affection to program participants.

Reading is Fundamental

Reading to children from an early age can promote a lifelong love of reading. It stimulates the mind and fosters a fondness for learning more about the world around us. That inquisitiveness can serve them well later in life.

Per Psychology Today, "Studies point to early reading for pleasure is linked to enhanced thinking, feeling, and acting. And reading—rather than screen time—is connected to better cognitive, mental health, and behavioral outcomes and offers children a proven way to reduce anxiety and depression."

If you have pets, encourage your children to read to them. It's an activity they can do indoors or out, at home or in a park. Anywhere they can have a little privacy or quiet time, even if it's only 15-20 minutes daily. Someplace where they're able to relax, let their guard down, and have fun.

For a schedule of upcoming reading dates and branch locations, visit:
<https://pima.bibliocommons.com/v2/events?q=read%20to%20a%20dog>.

If you're curious about becoming a certified dog/handler team, check out
<https://www.library.pima.gov/faqs/how-to-become-a-certified-doghandler-team-for-read-to-a-dog/>.

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Darla, photo by Brandi Dilday

September is Deaf Dog Awareness Month — Two Dog Moms Spill What it's Like Living with a Deaf Dog

Written by Rebecca West

Deafness in dogs is a condition most of us never think about unless we've got an elderly pup experiencing diminished hearing. While common enough, the number of canines born with congenital deafness might surprise you. According to a study by Louisiana State University, "Congenital deafness in dogs (and cats) is primarily of the hereditary

sensorineural form associated with white pigmentation genes, although acquired forms of deafness are possible."

The highest prevalence in dogs is seen in Dalmatians, with 30 percent born deaf in one or both ears and about 8 percent completely deaf. Many other breeds are affected to some extent, but the rate is much higher in breeds with white, piebald, or merle coats. They include Boston terriers, bull terriers, English setters, and Australian cattle dogs, with the latter having an overall congenital deafness rate of 10 to 15 percent.

The condition is thought to result from degeneration of the cochlear blood supply at age 3 to 4 weeks, presumably resulting from suppression of melanocytes (needed for normal inner ear function) by white, merle, or piebald

gene patterns. The mechanism of inheritance is not fully understood for most breeds. (<https://www.lsu.edu/vetmed/deafness/vetclinna.php>)

Darla

On the upside, most animals afflicted with it live full and happy lives. We were able to quiz two Tucson dog moms about life with their own hearing-impaired pooches. The first is Darla, a 9-year-old English bulldog and American bulldog mix. Her mom, Brandi, told us Darla was 8 months old and already deaf at the time they adopted her from PACC.

Q. What's been the biggest challenge of having a deaf dog?

A. Keeping track of her, even at home. We tried using an AirTag on her for a while.

Q. Did you have help training Darla?

A. When we first got her, we tried taking her to puppy training classes, but it wasn't very helpful. Nobody seemed to know what to do. Ultimately, Darla trained us.

Q. We assume the commands are issued and interpreted predominantly through hand signals...

A. Usually, yes, but she checks in with us regularly and reads body language and facial expressions. We engaged with her a lot from the start, and she has a steady routine that works well for her.

Q. Does she have to be making eye contact for her to respond?

A. Yes. If she's not facing us, flashing a flashlight on the wall works. When she sees that, she knows to look to us. We also flash the porch light on and off at night to bring her in. But besides visual cues, she also needs to be touched
(continued on next page)

Tails of Tucson

Eaton PHOTOGRAPHY

Desert Oasis

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<https://ceatonphotography.com/tot>



Darla, photo by Brandi Dilday

(continued from previous page)

It's weird. She actually tunes her ears sometimes, as if she's hearing something, but we don't really know. We've tried dog whistles, but she doesn't seem to hear them.

Q. How do you approach Darla without startling her?

A. If she's sleeping or turned away, I give her two light taps on her butt to get her attention. If she's leashed, I give her two little tugs.

Q. What's the most frequently asked question you get from people about living with a deaf dog?

A. We get asked how she became deaf and whether we still talk to her like a hearing dog, which we do.

Q. How does she do when interacting with other dogs?

A. She's okay with them.

Q. What do you think is the biggest misconception about owning a deaf dog in general?

A. People make a bigger deal out of her deafness than it really is.

Q. What would you want people to know about being a pet parent to a deaf dog?

A. It's great! I would definitely get another dog with a hearing impairment.

Q. Any words of advice for people considering adopting a deaf dog or who have discovered their dog is going deaf?

A. Bonding. You really have to bond with the animal and spend a lot of time together so that you can read each other. *@darla.the.deaf.dog*

Minnie

We asked Minnie's mom, Caitlyn, the same questions. This is what she shared.

Minnie was born completely deaf, but deafness has never slowed her down. It simply means she experiences the world differently.

I was told Minnie could hear when I brought her home, but I quickly realized something wasn't right. After having her evaluated, I learned she was completely deaf. It was certainly unexpected, but it never changed my commitment to her. Instead, it motivated me to learn everything I could about training and communicating with a deaf dog. Looking back, I wouldn't change a thing. Minnie has taught me just as much as I've taught her, and she's become an incredible ambassador for deaf dogs.

The biggest challenge is communication at a distance. You can't simply call your dog's name, so training requires more intentional communication and consistency. Safety is also important because she can't hear traffic, other animals, or someone calling her, so I always prioritize secure environments and reliable visual communication. I trained Minnie myself through research, consistency, and positive reinforcement. Like any dog, she learned through repetition, patience, and rewarding the behaviors I wanted to see.

Yes, Minnie responds primarily to hand signals, body language, and facial expressions. Dogs naturally pay close attention to visual cues, so using consistent hand signals has been very effective.

As far as making eye contact to get a response, not necessarily, but she does need to notice me first. If she isn't looking at me, I'll gently get her attention by waving, stomping lightly to create vibrations, or using a vibration collar as a communication tool, not as a correction. Once she sees me, she's very responsive. The question I hear most often is, "Can she still be trained?" The answer is absolutely yes. Deaf dogs are just as intelligent and trainable as hearing dogs. They simply learn through visual communication instead of verbal commands.

The biggest misconception is that deaf dogs have a poor quality of life or are difficult to train. Neither is true. They can excel in obedience, sports, and everyday life just like any other dog. Their disability only changes how they communicate, not what they're capable of.

I avoid surprising her by approaching where she can see me whenever possible. If she's asleep, I'll gently create vibrations by tapping the floor or lightly touching her shoulder or side. Building trust and predictable routines has made startle responses very uncommon.

She does very well with other dogs. Dogs communicate primarily through body language, so her deafness doesn't prevent her from socializing. As with any dog, introductions should be positive and appropriately supervised.

I'd want people to know that a deaf dog is not a "lesser" dog. They deserve the same opportunities, training, and experiences as any other dog. Deafness requires you to adapt your communication, not lower your expectations. If you're willing to be patient, consistent, and learn how your dog communicates, you'll discover they're incredibly intelligent, resilient, and rewarding companions. I hope Minnie's story encourages more people to look past a disability and see the amazing dog behind it. *@minniethedeafdalmatian* on Instagram



Minnie, photo by Caitlyn Hartman

National Deaf Dog Awareness Week

Awareness on this topic culminates during the last full week of the month. This year, it will be September 21-27. Here are some helpful resources for readers to provide more information and support on the topic:

***allanimalsvet.com/awareness-for-deaf-dogs* and *deafdogsrock.com*.**

If you suspect hearing loss in your pet, consult your veterinarian.



PAWS & Pages



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Therapy Animals!**

**September
26th, 2026**

**Sunshine Therapy
Animals**
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Tucson AZ

**10:00 AM to
2:00 PM**



**Only registered therapy animals with
the Alliance of Therapy Dogs or Pet
Partners are allowed as plus-ones to
this event!**



A VISIT TO THE



DOGHOUSE

All the dogs on these pages are available for adoption now. If you are interested in meeting any of these adorable friends, please contact the group listed with the picture.

The Animal League of Green Valley (TALGV)

Adoption fee: \$125 • TALGV (Appointments 10-2 daily) • 520-625-3170

VANILLA WAFER

I'm a 4 y/o shepherd-mix girl who's been at the shelter & in a foster home for more than 3 years & earned Vet Care Support for Life when I'm adopted. A calm & friendly canine buddy helps my confidence, but no little kids for me. I'm house trained, love toys, walks, car rides & kiddie pools. .

WARWICK

I'm a 4 y/o, 61 lb. Staffie-mix male who likes to meet new people (with treats, please). Every day I get a little braver & a lot more fun! My muscular physique hides a sweetheart who just wants to trade belly rubs for loyalty. Call about me!

SUMMER

I'm a 2 y/o heeler-mix girl found a year ago in sad condition. Kind TALGV volunteers helped me heal, & now I love having a foster doggie brother to play, nap, & explore with. He's helped me master my leash skills & confidence. Now I'm learning how fun it is to be a dog.

Paws Without Borders (PWB)

(520) 289-0549 • pawswithoutbordersus@gmail.com

BUTTERCUP

I'm a 2 y/o Chinese Shar Pei/ German Shepherd mix girl who's ready to trade shelter life for couch cuddles & sunshine strolls in my new forever home! Calm & well behaved, I'd prefer a home without other dogs or with a respectful male dog my size. No cats or small dogs, please!

BUDDY

I'm a happy, affectionate 2 y/o boy who enjoys going for walks, soaking up love, & spending time with other dogs but am untested with cats. I had Valley Fever but thanks to dedicated medical care & a loving foster home, I'm almost in full remission now & thriving!

OSO

I'm a housebroken Carolina & Australian cattle dog/ blue heeler mix who's about 3 y/o. Strong & athletic, I'm protective, leash trained (but reactive to other dogs), very intelligent & know basic commands. I play well with larger dogs off leash, love hikes, snuggles & belly rubs but I can be destructive when bored & weary around small dogs. No cats!

Cherished Tails Senior Sanctuary

Main Campus: 520.616.0171 • PO Box 631, Marana, AZ 85653
<http://form.jotform.com/cherishedtails/dog-application>

COCO

About 5 y/o, I'm great with kids, walk nicely on leash, & only bark if I hear something outside. I have some protective tendencies when a new person enters but display no aggression. Crate trained, I love to play & adore stuffies. I'm not fully housebroken yet but smart & eager to please, so I'll need additional time & effort..

DALLAS

About 6 y/o, I'm a super active boy full of love & life. I'm mostly house trained & use the doggie door plus I crate easily with a treat & walk nicely on leash. A little apprehensive in new situations & surroundings, I'll need time to adjust. My favorite thing is to play with other dogs, regardless of size. I'm untested with cats.

VANNA

I'm a 12 y/o girl who's likely a Chug or Cheagle. I warm up quickly when meeting new people & would do great in a calm senior home, though I still have pep in my step & would love going for short walks & adventures. Good mannered & housebroken, I do well on my potty routine & good in a crate.

Hope of Deliverance

hopeofdeliverancerescue@gmail.com
hopeofdeliverance.org/adoption-application
(330) 647-9963

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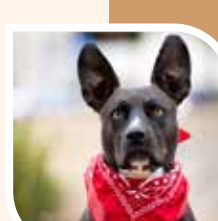
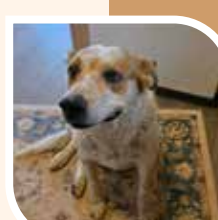
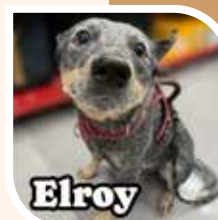
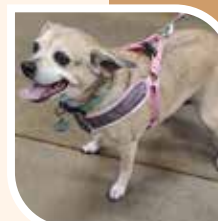
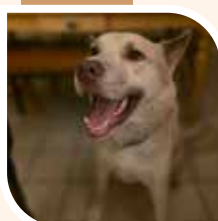
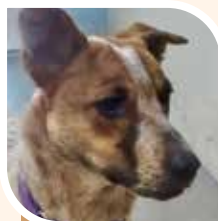
I'm an adorable fella who takes a little time to warm up. But once I do, my curious, goofy personality comes shining through & my smile can light up a room! I'd do especially well with a confident canine companion who can help me continue to blossom.

EDDIE MONEY

I'm deeply loyal with a strong instinct to protect. I adore smaller dogs & respectful kids. I'd thrive in a calm, patient home that gives me time to adjust. Once I'm safe, my affectionate, playful personality shines. I need a secure home with a 6-8' fence & an adopter committed to supervision & thoughtful management.

AMBER

I'm a playful, goofy, cuddle bug who loves snuggling up with my people. I'm a textbook Pibble—and if you've ever known Pittie love, you know just how special that can be. I need to be your only pet, but I love kids & do just fine on neighborhood walks, car rides, & vet visits.





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at The Animal League of Green Valley today!



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Andy



Apollo



Delilah



Pumpkin



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Green Valley, AZ




www.talgv.org

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From the Director's Desk

Growing Compassion, Confidence, and Community: The Value of a Summer Youth Intern Program

Story & Photos by Kim Eisele, President - The Animal League of Green Valley



Makiala and Legend

often uncertain, and over the course of the summer they grow into confident, dependable young adults. They learn that showing up on time matters, that teamwork is essential, and that every task - whether it's folding laundry, washing dishes, cleaning kennels, or comforting a nervous kitten - contributes to the well-being of the animals in our care.



Andrew holding a cat

enrichment, exercise, and the importance of preventive veterinary care. They see firsthand the commitment required to care for a pet every day, regardless of the weather or how busy life becomes. These experiences help create future pet owners who understand that adopting an animal is a lifelong responsibility.



Charlee and Legend

Each summer, The Animal League of Green Valley welcomes a special group of young people who spend eight weeks learning what it truly means to care for animals and serve their community. These youth interns - students who will be attending high school in the fall - do much more than volunteer. They become part of a team dedicated to giving homeless cats and dogs a second chance while gaining life skills that will benefit them for years to come.

For many of these students, the internship is their first introduction to a real workplace. They arrive eager but

Working with shelter animals also teaches empathy in a way few other experiences can. Many of our cats and dogs have experienced abandonment, neglect, or loss. Interns quickly discover that patience, kindness, and consistency can help frightened animals learn to trust again. These lessons extend far beyond the shelter walls, helping young people develop compassion and understanding in their relationships with family, friends, classmates, and their community.

The internship also introduces students to the responsibilities that come with animal ownership. They learn about proper nutrition, sanitation,

Beyond animal care, the program fosters important personal growth. Interns practice communication skills as they interact with staff, volunteers, and visitors. They learn to solve problems, accept constructive feedback, and work alongside people of all ages. They discover that asking questions is encouraged and that mistakes are opportunities to learn rather than reasons to quit.

One of the most rewarding aspects of the program is watching friendships

develop. Students who may have started the summer as strangers become teammates united by a common purpose. Together they celebrate successful adoptions, comfort animals waiting for their forever homes, and take pride in knowing their efforts truly make a difference. Those shared experiences often create friendships that continue long after the internship ends.

The benefits extend well beyond the interns themselves. The Animal League gains enthusiastic, energetic helpers whose contributions allow staff and volunteers to devote even more attention to animal care and adoption efforts. Their positive attitudes bring fresh energy to the shelter, and visitors are often inspired to see young people dedicating part of their summer to serving others instead of simply seeking entertainment.

The community benefits as well. Programs like this help cultivate the next generation of compassionate leaders and volunteers. Today's youth interns become tomorrow's advocates for animal welfare, responsible pet owners, veterinary professionals, educators, and community leaders. By investing in young people now, we are helping build a future where kindness, responsibility, and service remain valued principles.

Perhaps the greatest measure of the program's success is the transformation that takes place over eight short weeks. Shy students become confident communicators. Hesitant animal handlers become capable caregivers. Young people who initially came to "help with the animals" leave with a deeper understanding of service, responsibility, and the power of making a positive difference in the lives of others.

At The Animal League of Green Valley, our summer youth intern program is about far more than caring for cats and dogs. It is about nurturing compassionate hearts, building confidence, teaching responsibility, and inspiring a lifelong commitment to community service. While our animals certainly benefit from the extra love and attention, it is the interns themselves who leave with gifts that will last a lifetime.

For more information contact: Kim Eisele, The Animal League of Green Valley 520-223-3955



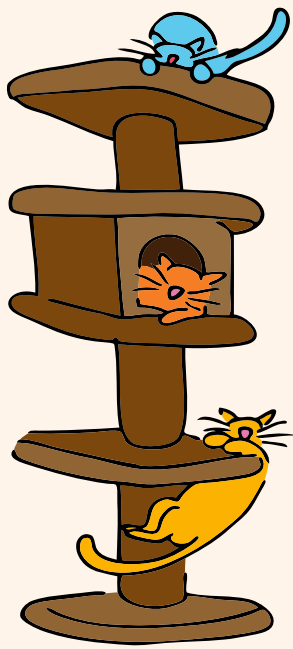
Lyric, helping to feed a puppy



Madeline comforting a cat

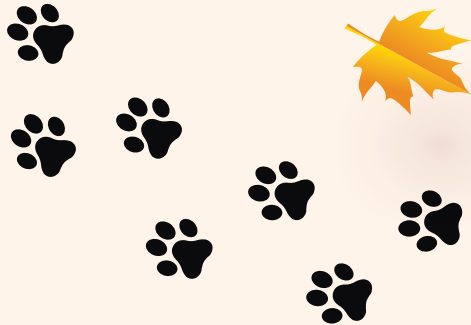


Viviana and Marshmallow



The Scratching Post: Cats for Adoption

All the cats on this page are available for adoption now. If you are interested in meeting any of these adorable friends, please call the group listed with the picture.



SOS Cat Rescue AZ

info@SOScatrescueAZ.org • (520) 445-3889
soscatterescueaz.org/adoption-application



SIMBA

I'm a 3 y/o snuggly boy with just the right dash of personality to keep things interesting. I began my journey needing a little extra care—my pigeon-toed stance led to a diabetes diagnosis—but I've handled my twice-daily insulin like a pro. I'm full of love, charm & resilience, & looking for a home that's either experienced with diabetic cats or excited to learn about caring for me.



SILVER & MERLIN

A 3 y/o bonded pair, together, we balance each other perfectly. (Merlin) A gentle & snuggly boy with a dash of playfulness, I love stretching out besides my human keeping at least one paw touching them! I'll even groom you when I'm feeling extra affectionate. FYI, I'm a stable diabetic who receives insulin twice daily & shares diabetic dry food with Silver, whose lab values are on the higher end of normal.

(Silver) I'm affectionate & love to share my thoughts, so you never have to guess what this girl wants! We are looking for a home that's either experienced with diabetic cats or excited to learn how to care for & help them thrive.

The Animal League of Green Valley (TALGV)

Adoption fee: \$75 • TALGV (Appointments 10-2 daily) • 520-625-3170



INDIGO

I'm a petite 2 y/o girl with beautiful gray fur who's looking for a safe place to start a new life after my owner could no longer keep me. I'm a little shy, but I'm getting used to being stroked & brushed by the nice volunteers. I'm betting I could warm up to a patient person pretty quick.



LOGIC

I'm a 4 y/o long-haired gray tabby whose family developed health issues & brought me to TALGV to find a new home. I've been a bit shy but now I'm friendly & more sociable than ever if you'll take time to play with me. If you're looking for a beautiful feline companion, I could be your green-eyed girl!



WEE WEE

I'm 14-year-old shorthaired silver-haired tabby lady who still likes to play despite my senior status. I also like petting, chin scratches, & lots of attention from TALGV volunteers. My age has earned me Vet Care Support for Life when you take me home, so please call soon for an appointment to meet me.

Hermitage No-Kill Cat Shelter & Sanctuary

5278 E. 21st St. • Tucson 85711 • www.hermitagecatshelter.org
Adoption application: shelterluv.com/matchme/adopt/HERM/Cat



GRACE

Hi! I'm Grace, & I just turned 5. I'm a quiet & sweet gal who likes watching everyone go about their busy day. Content to play by myself, I also like to play with toys. I adore tasty treats & scritches, & would love to share your kick toys (humans have them, right?) Come down & let's meet!



TRAVELER

I'm Traveler, & I'm 6! I'm a Montana gent, but through a series of unfortunate events, I made it to Tucson! I got hurt on the way, but now I'm ready to find my forever family. I'm afraid of dogs, but love humans. Do you like headboops? I'll exchange them for scritches & love!



CORBETT

I'm Corbett, & I just celebrated my 2nd birthday. I used to be a community cat, but now I'm ready to be a beloved house kitty. I've been through a lot & would love the snuggles & stability of a forever home. I'm a sweet, gentle boy who get along with other cats. Please come down & say Hi!



Southern Arizona Cat Rescue

(520) 200-1643 • sacatrescue.org, sacatrescue.org/contact-us
sacatrescue.org/adoption-application



CELINE DION

Like my namesake, I have a big personality & love to "sing"! I'm also funny, loving, & adore attention. At 2 y/o, I'm looking for the right cat-savvy family to appreciate all the diva energy I have to offer. I do well with other cats that don't want to be friends or kittens I can be the boss of. No dogs or small kids.



RUBY

Want a pal for watching movies, chatting about your day, or making you laugh? I'm your gal! I'm a total lap cat, snuggling for hours on end with my huge purr. I'm a healthy 3 y/o but due to a previous nerve injury, I need to be expressed to go potty twice a day. It's easy! I do well with other cats & dogs who respect my space & older kids. Meet me at Hunter's Kitten Lounge!



OREO

I'm a senior lady who needs a patient, cat-savvy adopter who understands trust takes time. After a few weeks, you'll see a smart, independent companion who loves being part of your daily routine. Despite cataracts, I see well enough to follow you everywhere & chase my favorite ball! I currently take meds to help manage anxiety & do best as an only pet in a calm, predictable home.



Doc, handled by Jamie Carpenter



Nunca, handled by Andy Reifel

The diverse landscape of Southern Arizona offers some of the most scenic terrain to explore in all of America, with unforgettable State and National parks, extraordinary mountain chains, and, of course, the beautiful—yet unforgiving—Sonoran Desert.

If you're properly prepared and respect the curveballs Mother Nature and life can throw your way, you'll likely do just fine. But things don't always go to plan. Vehicles break down, and traffic accidents happen. You may get lost. Flash floods can occur. You might slip and fall or have an unforeseen medical emergency. In truth, any number of things you weren't banking on could arise.

Thankfully, the area has one of the best emergency response teams in the state. We actually have five, all told. They are listed under the heading of SARCI (Search & Rescue Council, Inc.) and include Southwest Rescue Dogs, Inc. (SRDI). Formed in 1993 as members of the Southern Arizona Rescue Association (SARA), they're a non-profit, all-volunteer search-and-rescue organization serving Southern Arizona and Pima County. (sarci2.org)

Originally founded by Pam Phillips, George Cubic, Laurel L. Muir, Lisa Smith, and Jon Ruttencutter, the group now has five certified handlers. The dogs include four certified Human Remains Detection canines (HRD) and two certified in air scent. The latter are deployed when searching for live beings. Only certified dogs go out on actual search-and-rescue operations, as opposed to those in training, of which there are currently seven.

Comprised of rescue dogs and family pets, working breeds reportedly do best. On average, only 25 to 30 percent of the animals fail to make the cut. Training takes place among the four cardinal directions of Pima County and includes rugged topography such as Mt. Lemmon.

SRDI has two professional trainers, Karen Paquette, who's been with the team since 2003, and Tracy Kopp. Both hold a professional certificate in training. Paquette, who has had five canine partners to date, explained that the dogs usually work with the same handler and that the average age at which training begins ranges from about 6 months up to 5 years.

"Search-and-rescue animals are generally trained in three disciplines: tracking and trailing, air scent, or human remains. The process takes approximately two years before they are ready to be certified."

She added that desirable traits in canine candidates include nerve strength, meaning they aren't easily rattled. "Nerve strength is not something you can build. They either have it or they don't. You can enhance it to a certain extent, but that's it." The other sought-after trait is hunt drive, meaning they have to be persistent and keep searching regardless of their level of interest or desire.

Career-wise, the dogs typically retire at around age 9 or 10, which is about the time handlers begin watching for signs that stepping down might be suggested. It could be due to diminished hearing or failing eyesight, physical limitations brought on by arthritis or dysplasia, and/or other factors.

Regarding gear, all handlers are required to have booties on hand should the landscape or conditions call for them. According to Paquette, most dogs wear GPS collars now to have an electronic record of where they've been. Vests

Unsung Heroes: The Search-and-Rescue Dogs of Southern Arizona

Story by Rebecca West

Images by Southwest Rescue Dogs, Inc.

are the handler's choice, but tracking dogs need a harness they can be leashed to. Air scent dogs sometimes have a bell attached to their collar so they can be heard in low-lighting situations or hilly terrain.

Some recent examples involving the use of dogs in Southern Arizona search-and-rescue efforts are the Wild Burro area search this past spring when a man went hiking and didn't return. He was eventually found unresponsive. Another was at Patagonia Lake when a Pima County deputy lost his life.

While they aren't currently accepting new applicants because of the time it takes to train the animals, you can take your pet to sniff-training classes to provide mental enrichment. Paquette absolutely recommends these types of activities and noted that the AKC has various clubs you can join for nose work, like the Sonoran Desert Scent Club. There's also the National Association of Canine Scent Work®.

Sniffing is said to have physical and emotional benefits. For instance, it helps to decrease heart rate, lower blood pressure, and even improve a dog's optimism. If you're interested in learning more, she suggests googling Nathan Hall, associate professor of Companion Animal Science at Texas Tech. He's a researcher in canine behavior whose work investigates canine olfaction.

As to volunteers, SRDI could always use people to act as trace subjects for the dogs to try tracking during training. (sarci.org/srdi1)

Be prepared:

Tips for staying safe when out include bringing a tracking/mapping/communication device like a GoTenna (gotenna.com), a motion- or solar-powered product for charging batteries, a hat that shades your face and the back of your neck, plus plenty of water.

Finally, make sure someone knows where you're going, and if plans change, make sure to update your itinerary.

Below: Jack, handled by Martha Miller



Breicne, handled by Mark Paquette



Polly, handled by Karen Paquette

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Training **R E S E T** From Uncertainty to Belonging: Helping your newly adopted dog find safety, trust and a place to call home

Story by Jenny Cain & Jeremy Brown *The Complete Canine*



Bringing home a new dog is exciting, filled with hope and the best intentions of giving them a wonderful new life. But for your new family member, this transition can feel overwhelming.

As you prepare for your newly adopted dog's arrival, it's important to remember what they may be experiencing. Their entire world has changed, and for some dogs, this may be the second or even third major upheaval they've experienced in a short period of time. Suddenly, they're surrounded by unfamiliar sights, smells, people, surfaces, expectations, and handling experiences.

They may not know if they'll be fed, where they'll sleep, where they're supposed to potty, who they can trust, where they're allowed to go, or what is expected of them. These are things we often take for granted - but to a dog entering a new home, they are all unknowns.

To help your new dog feel safe, secure, and confident as they settle in, give them time and space to R.E.S.E.T. with these five simple guidelines.



R...Rest... This is the most important! With any change comes stress. Stress activates the sympathetic nervous system which produces adrenaline and cortisol to help them stay alert and manage the stress. This can lead to a dog feeling overwhelmed and that can affect their behaviors. The best way to help them relieve this stress is plenty of rest time in a quiet area of the house. A dog can sleep anywhere from 12-20 hours a day, depending on their age and health. So, give them their nap times!

E...Establish Routines... Consistency is also the best way to help them relax (remember, their nervous system is on alert!) Providing clear routines for eating, sleeping, walking, playtime and bathroom breaks is incredibly helpful. This will help them trust their new people and environment. Regarding bathroom breaks - give them frequent opportunities the first few days as they will be unsure of where to go. This will help prevent any accidents in the house.

S...Space... I know you want to cuddle and play and bond with your new furry family member. Other furry family members may be excited to play with their new sibling too! But it is more important to give them space to relax. This goes hand in hand with rest. If they are crate trained, that is a great place for them to relax. Otherwise, a quiet room in the house. Some dogs come in and become quickly attached and clingy. This is a result of their stress hormones and it can lead to future problems, such as separation anxiety or resource guarding a person. Try alternating short sessions of together time and giving them space to rest during their first week.



E...Exposure... Too many new things too soon can increase their stress levels. This means people and environments. For the first 3 weeks, keep their interactions to household members only. Family members that visit frequently would also be included in this. After the three weeks are up, then slowly and gradually introduce to new people, such as close friends or neighbors. Avoid hosting any gatherings at your house or taking them to new places until the dog has fully settled in.

T...Time & Trust... The best gift you can give your new dog is time. Time allows them to decompress, become familiar with their new surroundings and routine, and, most importantly, learn that they are safe. While every dog is different, a general guideline is about three weeks for a dog to begin feeling comfortable in their new environment. It can take three months, or even longer for especially anxious dogs, to truly feel at home and stop worrying about what might happen next.

Be consistent. Be patient. And remember that mistakes are part of the process.

Most importantly, remember that we humans are the ones who need to earn their trust and love - not the other way around. Many rescue dogs have been failed by humans at least once, and some have experienced that disappointment over and over again. Rescuing means accepting a dog as they are, giving them the time they need, and showing them they are not disposable. It means choosing patience over frustration, commitment over convenience, and unconditional love. For more information contact jeremy@thecompletecaninetucson.com



For more information contact, jeremy@thecompletecaninetucson.com

Animal

RESOURCE GUIDE

Area Shelters

Animal League of Green Valley

Onsite Adoptions
7 days a week – 10a-2p
1600 West Duval Mine Rd.
Green Valley 85614
(520) 625-3170
www.talgv.org

The Hermitage Cat Rescue & Sanctuary

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5278 E. 21st St.
Tucson 85711
(520) 571-7839
www.hermitagecatshelter.org

HOPE Animal Shelter

Onsite Adoptions: Mon-Thurs, by ap-
pointment, Fri-Sat-Sun noon-4p
8950 N. Joplin Ln. · Tucson 85742
(520) 792-9200
www.hopeanimalshelter.net

Humane Society of Southern Arizona

Onsite Adoptions Tue-Sat: 11a-7p, Sun:
11a-5p Closed Major Holidays
635 West Roger Road · Tucson 85705
(520) 327-6088
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savecats@PAWSitivelycats.org
www.PAWSitivelycats.org

Pima Animal Care Center (West)

Onsite Adoptions
Weekdays noon-7p, Weekends 10a-5p
4000 N. Silverbell Rd.
Tucson 85745
(520) 724-5900

Pima Animal Care Center East

Onsite Adoptions
Weekdays noon-7p, Weekends 10a-5p
7225 E. Broadway Blvd, Tucson · 85710
(520) 724-5900

Area Shelters (continued)

Pima Animal Care Center Ajo Substation

Onsite Adoptions
Mon-Wed-Fri 11a-1p, Wed 4:30-6:30p
1259 Well Rd. · Ajo 85321 (520) 387-
7502

Pima Paws for Life

Onsite Adoptions
7 Days A Week, 7a-11a & 3p-7p
2555 W. Zinnia Ave, Tucson 85705
(520) 867-1193
info@pimapawsforlife.org
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Nokillpimacounty.org
Resources for your pets and community cats

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Pet food assistance in an effort to keep those
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help pets in need, SAAFB accepts monetary
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feeding their pet. Call: 520-268-7299

Local Rescues

Animal Rescue Foundation Tucson

ARFTucson@Gmail.com
(520) 319-9292

Arizona Basset Hound Rescue

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Local Rescues (continued)

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Central Arizona Animal Rescue

Mike@caaronline.org
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Lil' Bit Of Love Rescue

lilbitofloverescue@gmail.com
(520) 869-9537
https://www.facebook.com/
lilbitofloverescue/
http://www.lilbitoflove.com/

Miss Maggie May's Rescue

(520) 256-3073
missmaggiemay@cox.net

Paws Without Borders (PWB)

Rescue, rehabilitate, and rehome dogs
(520) 289-0549
pawswithoutborders.org/contact-us
pawswithoutbordersus@gmail.com

Portuguese Water Dog Rescue

pwdcarescue.org
Sharon Rollins 520-603-9345

RAD Rescue Inc.

Rehabbing and Advocating for Dogs
www.radrescueinc.com
radrescueinc@gmail.com

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www.regaldanerescue.com
www.regaldanerescue@gmail.com
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6401 W. Marana Blvd, Suite 902
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rescuemetucson.org

RUFF Rescue

www.ruffrescuetucson.com
ruffrescuetucson@gmail.com
(520) 490-0401 or (520) 339-0841
SAFE (Saving Animals from Euthanasia)
(520) 349-8637 or (520) 250-5080
www.safeanimals.com

Local Rescues (continued)

Saving at Risk Animals

(520) 499-0546
www.savingatriskanimals.org

Southern AZ Beagle Rescue Tucson

(520) 247-7720
Information@soazbeaglerescue.com

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 (see pg 19)

Just Another Tuesday

Story by Leo, Alpha of Anecdotes



I should probably begin by explaining something. Humans have a habit of giving ordinary days very dramatic names. "Miracle." "Rescue." "Hero."

Out here, we have simpler definitions. Sometimes you just notice someone who needs you. And then you stay.

Now, before anyone starts spreading rumors about me being a "working dog," I would like to remind everyone that I have spent years developing a very respectable reputation as a large, fluffy piece of porch furniture with exceptional hearing.

It's an important job.

The shade must be monitored. The breeze must be evaluated. The occasional suspicious chicken activity must be reported.

People think lying around is easy. It isn't.

You have to be alert to the possibility of being disturbed. A guardian cannot simply abandon these responsibilities. Well...Unless the night presents an opportunity.

There is a small detail my humans do not know. The fence has always worked exactly as intended. Beyond that, I decline to comment.

Every guardian deserves a hobby. Mine happens to involve the occasional midnight inspection of the neighboring farms and ranches. Okay - snooping. Strictly professional, of course.

I walk. I sniff. I observe. I make sure everyone is exactly where they should be.

Jax knows. Of course Jax knows.

Jax knows everything. He is an Australian Shepherd. It is physically impossible for him not to know everything. He thinks he's a theoretical philosophy professor. He has theories about everything. None of them are particularly useful, but he is extremely confident.

Most nights, my adventures are uneventful. A rabbit pretending she's invisible. A coyote who thinks he is far more intimidating than he actually is. The cattle, of course.

They still give me the side eye after that little incident when they decided the grass was greener on the other side of absolutely everything. Jax and I were merely assisting with their return home.

They seemed less appreciative than expected. Cattle are like that.

Then one night, my nose found something different. A tiny human. Alone.

Now, humans have many words for this situation. I have only one. "Unacceptable."

A tiny human should be with its own kind. The small ones are never supposed to be alone. That is how it works.

When the tiny human saw me, he reached for my fur. Not cautiously. Not like he was unsure. Like he already knew. That was the interesting part.

The little one was tired. Very tired. The kind of tired that reaches deeper than a long walk.

I know fear. Every creature does. But sometimes fear has already spent itself, leaving only the need for someone to stand beside you.

He didn't know my name.

He didn't know where we were going.

He only knew one thing.

He was no longer alone.

Humans like to think trust is something they grant us. They forget we're assessing them, too, and we tend to figure them out fairly quickly.

This tiny human had already decided.

I was safe.

He held on. I walked. Very carefully, because tiny humans are surprisingly determined but

not especially equipped for long-distance travel. They also seem to have remarkably few survival instincts.

Honestly, I don't know how they make it through a day. Unlike Great Pyrenees, who are built for endurance and the occasional dramatic sigh.

I considered returning through my private entrance. Unfortunately, tiny humans are not designed for secret fence negotiations. Mostly, I didn't want to give away my secret. So we took the longer route. By the time we reached the homestead, the night was quiet. The front porch seemed like the obvious choice. Humans eventually come out of front doors. Usually carrying coffee. Sometimes food. Either way, they emerge.

The tiny human curled up beside me. I stayed. Not because I was brave. Not because I expected praise. Because that is what guardians do. Well, a small statue, perhaps. Nothing excessive.

The next thing I knew, morning had arrived.

The door opened. Humans staggered out and stopped dead. They stared at me. I stared back.

Their expressions went through several stages: confusion, disbelief, and what I can only assume was the sudden realization that something had gone terribly off-script. None of those stages involved coffee at this point.

Apparently, waking up to find a tiny, sleeping human curled up beside their giant, white, rather heroic-looking dog was not part of most people's morning routine.

I thought my overall presentation was quite impressive, if I may say so. The snoring somewhat undermined it.

Eventually, the questions began to form.

There was some noticeable human buffering. Then: In a whispering yell - LEO!

"Where did he come from?"

"How did Leo find him?"

"How did this happen?"

I understand nearly every word humans say. The unfortunate part is that they have no idea what I am saying back. And humans consider themselves the superior species. I've never seen any reason to correct them.

I explained everything. The midnight patrol. The tiny human. The walk home. The porch. The excellent decision-making.

They heard none of it. Then something remarkable happened.

Nobody asked how I got outside the fence.

Nobody checked the gate.

Nobody searched for a broken board or suspicious opening.

Usually, when Jax and I escape, humans become excellent detectives. They look for damage. They look for clues. To be fair, our previous adventures have involved some questionable engineering decisions. This time was different. Apparently, if you return home with someone else's tiny human, people become astonishingly forgiving about your own whereabouts. Noted.

The humans called me a hero. Appropriate. Finally, some recognition! But I was simply doing what I know to do.

And, apparently, doing what I know to do exceptionally well.

Somewhere out there, another big white canine with a different name is probably pretending he doesn't understand what all the fuss was about. Good dog, Buford. He understands.

Humans are funny. They call it a miracle when a dog does what he was born to do.

Personally, it's just another Tuesday.

With a respectful tip of the hat to Buford of Arizona...

and every guardian who understands that perimeter checks occasionally require leaving the perimeter. It's a community service.

Leo (Still the alpha. Barely.)

Loosely based on some true working-canine events, filtered through Leo's "couch-potato" lens.



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