

Streamlined Adoptions and Care

Tell us about the Arizona Humane Society and its role in the Valley.

The Arizona Humane Society saves the most vulnerable animals and enriches the lives of pets and people. AHS takes in more than 17,000 sick, injured and abused homeless pets each year through its Field Rescue Team and owner surrendered pets. We also focus on providing proactive solutions to decrease pet overpopulation like spay/neuter initiatives and providing pet owners in need of help with resources to keep their beloved pets in their home.

How has AHS transformed over the years?

AHS has changed greatly since it was formed in 1957, however, over the last seven years under Dr. Steven Hansen's leadership, AHS has transformed Maricopa County from one of the worst places in the nation to be a homeless pet to one of the best. We implemented a variety of programs to support the most vulnerable pets, those who are often euthanized in other shelters across the country; pets like newborn kittens, puppies and dogs diagnosed with Parvovirus and pregnant mothers, and collaborate closely with Valley shelters and rescues to take in pets when they're overloaded. In doing so, AHS has saved an additional 115,000 lives in the last seven years and has decreased euthanasia in the county by 82 percent.

What is the impact that AHS has made on Valley pets and pet owners?

In 2014, AHS implemented its Pet Resource Center (PRC), a call center comprised of compassionate individuals devoted to supporting and providing resources to pet owners in need. This past year, AHS' PRC Team fielded more than 90,000 calls/live chats and provided more than 68,000 resources to pet owners in need, thus keeping nearly 6,000 pets in their homes with their loving owners despite hardships they were facing. We also investigated over 6,000 animal cruelty complaints and



provided court testimony to ensure justice for those that have no voice.

How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected AHS?

The pandemic certainly required us to think differently, act quickly and modify accordingly. We did just that ... and we were able to do so thanks to our incredible donors who continued their generous giving. We immediately streamlined adoptions to a virtual adoption "matchmaker by appointment" program, and the amount of time pets stayed on our adoption floor plummeted from 12 days to 4 and we saw adoption returns decrease from 9% to 6%. We implemented curbside foster pet pickup and expanded our trauma hospital operations to 24/7. As always, keeping pets in homes with their owners remained a critical focus, so we expanded our veterinary clinic operations to seven days per week and implemented virtual pet training programs to support pet owners. Through it all, our Field Rescue Team continued to save injured stray animals and rescue abused and abandoned animals.

What does the future look like for AHS and animal welfare?

As AHS continues to focus on a visionary and comprehensive system of care that

includes rescue, medical and behavioral resources for the animals and people who need it most, it is clear that we are not limited by our vision or determination, but by our aged and failing Sunnyslope Campus. Sunnyslope has served us well for more than 63 years, but it is now time to replace it with a state-of-the-art centrally located campus, anchored by a regionally-serving Animal Medical Center.

How can people get involved?

We have made tremendous strides in the last seven years to save our community's most vulnerable animals, reduce needless euthanasia and keep pets in loving homes. We cannot stop now. The need will only increase with the rapid growth of the Phoenix-metropolitan area. Together, and with a new Central Campus and Animal Medical Center, we can accomplish what was historically considered impossible: rescuing and healing those who were needlessly euthanized before. To learn more about our proposed Central Campus and Animal Medical Center and the Campaign to Transform Animal Welfare, please contact Nancy Mitchell at 602.997.7585 Ext. 1023 or nmitchell@azhumane.org.