

From: Volunteer Coordinator <volunteers@hssaz.org>

Date: September 6, 2023 at 12:34:44 PM MST

To:

Subject: HSSA: Pocket Pet Transfer - Update from CEO Steve Farley

Dear Volunteers,

There has continued to be public discussion on the recent rescue of 318 small animals involving The Humane Society of Southern Arizona (HSSA) and San Diego Humane Society (SDHS). Here are the facts:

1. 318 rabbits, guinea pigs, hamsters, rats, and mice were languishing in the care of SDHS and, due to overcapacity issues and lack of adoptive families, were at risk of euthanasia.
 2. SDHS contacted HSSA to ask for help.
 3. HSSA contacted an Arizona rescue who stepped up and was willing to take the animals into their care and find them homes.
 4. HSSA has worked successfully with that family-run, family-funded rescue for more than a decade.
 5. The rescue asked for privacy so that others would not dump pets on their doorstep.
 6. Starting in early July, well in advance of the transport, the rescue quickly began identifying forever homes for the pets.
 7. SDHS transported the animals to HSSA on August 7, HSSA transferred them to HSSA vans, then HSSA transported them to the rescue by midnight on that night.
 8. Many of the pets were immediately transferred to their new homes, and within three weeks of receipt, the majority had been rehomed.
 9. HSSA transported back the remaining 68 last weekend, 14 were already transferred to a local hamster rescue, and the rest have been microchipped and vaccinated and are currently up for adoption.
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This is a story of good people working together to save lives that would otherwise have been lost.

It's what shelters and rescues do every day, under stressful conditions, with not enough resources, and with love in our hearts. I see the sacrifices our staff and volunteers make to be there for the animals in our shelter, and I am so profoundly grateful for their presence. Those who work in this field around the world are true heroes.

Every day at HSSA, our dedicated staff and volunteers perform untold thousands of small and large acts of kindness for the pets in our care and the people who love them. The same unheralded acts happen by the millions across the country in rescues large and small. The love in this field is overwhelming, and my admiration for the people who work in it is unending.

For those who are upset that the rescue does not want to be publicly identified, I would ask if any of us would like to be subjected to the type of incendiary language and threats being said about them right now on Facebook, Instagram, and other outlets.

The rescue has told us that they have read malicious statements and death threats directed toward them. For a large act of kindness kept private.

They are regretting having answered the call in this case, and wondering if they should do their good work ever again - now that they have seen that a mob on the Internet can threaten their family for doing that work.

How many more rescues will see this happening and decide their work is not worth the threat to their families? And what will be the result if fewer rescues stand up to help? More animal lives will be lost.

I want to be clear to those who believe the attacks are justified in the name of "transparency": The facts of this rescue are clear, and have been shared repeatedly. The identity of the rescue has not and will not be shared in order to respect their privacy and to protect them from harm.

And: The absence of information does not constitute the presence of wrongdoing. Just because something didn't happen on the Internet doesn't mean it didn't happen.

And more importantly: Violence and violent threats against caregivers are repellent and are never OK, even in the increasingly uncivil society we find ourselves in.

At the end of the day, this is an uplifting story of good people from good organizations working together to save lives that would otherwise have been lost. I am hoping that we can celebrate the people who worked together to make it happen, and work together to find homes for the remaining pets (now back in our care) this week.

Thank you from the bottom of my heart for those who are working so hard to take care of these pets and all of the pets who depend on us for their well-being. You are my heroes.

Thanks!

Steve

Steve Farley

Chief Executive Officer

Humane Society of Southern Arizona

Helping pets and the people who love them since 1944
