



"making Shelter Lives Better"

Paws



Summer, 2008

Alliance for ALBUQUERQUE ANIMALS

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ON THE WEB

www.abqanimals.com

Albuquerque's newest blog full of animal news, info, inspiration, and fun

www.abqdog.com

Your best resource for canine living in the Duke City

www.allianceforABQanimals.org

Don't look yet, but our website is being completely revamped and updated. Stay tuned!

Board Member Spotlight: Rena Distasio

I first met Debba Colman during a Home for the Holidays event in November 2004. As a freelance writer, my job can be very isolating, so to get out of the house, that spring I had started volunteering as a dog walker at the East Side Animal Care center. There, I focused mainly on exercising and interacting with the many pit bulls and pit bull mixes that were under the city's care.

Debba and I started talking in a general way about shelter animal issues and eventually she told me about an organization she'd just established called the Alliance For Albuquerque Animals, whose purpose was to oversee the welfare of the animals housed at the City of Albuquerque's two Animal Care Centers. What struck me immediately about Debba was not only her passion for animal welfare, but also her level-headedness and general good humor.

"What a great idea!" I thought. A private, non-profit animal welfare association that works with shelter management to ensure that all the animals housed

under the city's care are made as comfortable as possible during their stay. An organization that ensures the animals have clean bedding and blankets. Chew toys and balls. A group of dedicated, caring volunteers who take them out for walks and provide them with human interaction. Not only that, the Alliance planned to work with management to help ensure that adoptable animals of every breed had the best chance possible of finding a loving, responsible forever home via Alliance-run off-site adoption events. How cool is that? Well, sign me up!

In the summer of 2005, I was invited to join the Alliance board. Six months later, I went to Debba with an idea. How about I form within the Alliance a program that specifically oversees the welfare of the shelter's pit bulls? After all, pit bulls and pit mixes make up the largest majority of dogs impounded at the shelters, yet they are also one of the most feared and misunderstood breeds out there. Debba loved the idea and gave me permission to start the group,

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South Valley Canine Comforts Campaign

Many Albuquerque dogs live outside and need some "Canine Comforts". The Alliance for Albuquerque Animals, with a generous grant from the *Stocker Foundation Junior Board*, developed a new program to help these dogs and their humans by providing basic supplies (such as a doghouse, leash, harness, toy and ID tag), a spay/neuter voucher, information on proper care of outdoor dogs and on integrating dogs into the family structure.

On four Saturdays, April 26 through May 17, the Alliance for Albuquerque Animals was at the Mountainview Community Center giving away "canine comforts" to large breed dogs and their families. Each dog (weighing 45 lbs or over) was offered the following "canine comforts" for FREE: doghouse, toy, harness, leash, ID tag, and a micro-chip. We also provided dog food and vitamins to some dogs. All dogs left with the Alliance's new brochure on proper outdoor dog care. If they were not already spayed/neutered, we gave them a free voucher to use for that service!

Humans didn't leave empty-handed either! *CiCi's Pizza* donated lunch for all the humans that included lots of pizza and desserts. There was



One of the lucky pups who got some much-needed Canine Comfort

Canine Comfort Stats

- ▶ 70 dogs were served
- ▶ 56 dogs got supplies, a voucher and/or microchip
- ▶ 22 dogs are on the waiting list for a doghouse (see "Give a Dog a House" below)
- ▶ 27 dogs got a spay/neuter voucher
- ▶ 7 dogs got a microchip

Canine Comforts

Continued from page 1...

enough food provided to send each family home with dinner as well.

For the Alliance volunteers, this was an incredibly rewarding experience. There were dogs who came to the event with just a rope tied around their neck. To see them leave in a comfortable harness and leash with an id tag and a toy was wonderful! We spent a great deal of time just talking to the people about proper care of dogs and dispelling myths about spaying/neutering. Everyone who participated was very thankful for the information and supplies!

Thanks to our generous sponsors and Alliance volunteers, the campaign was a huge success!

Special thanks to the following for making this campaign possible: Stocker Foundation Junior Board, Dr Terry Wheeler of Blue Cross Animal Clinic, Three Dog Bakery, The Dawg House, Long Leash on Life, Viki Elkey, Cici's Pizza, Alliance Volunteers: Vanessa Ami, Pat Anderson, Erin Crooks, Lou Ann De Vargas, Margaret Keller, Micheal Lowder, Jami and Jessica Sanchez, Jami Sanchez, Melanie & Carly Sparks, Sheila Trudo and Alisa Wright

Board Member Spotlight

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which we called Responsibly Adopting Albuquerque's Pit Bulls (or RAAP for short).

In the past two years, RAAP has assessed and re-homed dozens of fabulous pit bulls, provided training and socialization to both puppies and adults through our free training classes, given talks to shelter workers and the public at large on pit bull temperament and conformation, and passed out informational "pit bull packets" to folks at the shelter who are interested in adopting a pit bull. Further, every person who adopts a pit bull from the city shelters goes home with one of these packets.

Our work, however, whether with pit bulls, other dogs, and cats, has not been easy. We thought shelter management would welcome our assistance. But when we started noticing certain things were amiss at the shelters and brought our concerns to the attention of management, suddenly, we were no longer treated as helpmates, but as pariahs. It's been an uphill climb that sometimes feels like a battle. But, it is our hope that the City of Albuquerque recognizes that much still needs to be done to make Albuquerque's shelters progressive and humane places for our city's homeless animals, and takes the necessary steps to ensure that happens.

Until that time, I'll remain a member of the Alliance.

Rena Distasio

Pet Briefs



Turn your Pit into A RAAP Star!

FREE Classes Every Saturday

Where: Animal Humane Association of New Mexico, 615 Virginia St SE

When: Puppy Class: 9:00 am
Adult Class: 10:00 am

Taught by certified dog trainer Tristan Rehner, these classes use positive reinforcement methods to teach social skills and correct handling methods.

Pre-registration is required. Call 232-2142 or 281-4864

Have Fun and Bond with Your Dog!

Give a Dog a House!

During the Canine Comforts Campaign, the Alliance for Albuquerque Animals met 22 large breed dogs who live outside and need shelter from the hot summer and cold winter weather here in Albuquerque. We are working on plans to repeat the program in the fall, where we are sure we'll meet even more dogs who need shelter.

You can help us help those dogs by sponsoring a dog house! With your donation, the Alliance will purchase the doghouse, deliver it to the dog's house and help his/her family determine the best location for the doghouse.

So, sponsor a doghouse (or two, or three) today!

Simply fill out the form at the bottom of the page, and return it to the Alliance along with your check today.

Thank you!



Name: _____
Address: _____
Phone: _____
Email: _____

I'd like to sponsor ___ doghouses (\$50 each). My check for \$___ is enclosed,

Return this form and your check to:

the Alliance for Albuquerque Animals, 6701 Guadalupe Trail NW, Los Ranchos de Albuquerque, NM.



Alliance Volunteer Michael Lowder

The Alliance for Albuquerque Animals is incredibly fortunate to have numerous dedicated and inspiring volunteers. In this issue, we would like to introduce you to one of our “stars” – Michael Lowder. We asked Michael some questions to let us all get to know him better.

Q How long have you been an Alliance volunteer?

A Since about March of '08.

Q Why did you become an Alliance volunteer?

A I am extremely passionate about the rights of animals. Specifically, I want to work to reduce the suffering of animals on a local and national level. I was moved to action after reading Debbra Colman's matter-of-fact President's letter in the last newsletter. Her letter seemed to be a firm but fair assessment of the state of things at the City's kennels. After meeting Debbra in person, I knew I wanted to get involved and make a difference.

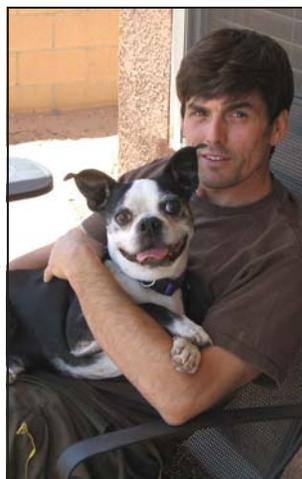
Q What have you found most difficult in volunteering for the Alliance?

A Honestly, when I think of the volunteer work I have done

with the Alliance I don't think of difficulties. The Alliance has been a positive experience for me - an outlet for me to make things better for our four-footed friends.

Q What are some of your fondest experiences volunteering?

A My dearest thoughts are associated with the people in the Alliance: three in particular- Debbra Colman, Tammy Fiebelkorn, and Lannie Alexander. Debbra is a results driven woman. I feed off of Debbra's ability to get to the heart of the matter. Tammy is an unbelievably inspiring person. Her dedication and commitment to her beliefs is something from which we can all learn. Lannie is a warm-hearted volunteer that I had the pleasure to work with at her yard sale. I look forward to volunteering with Lannie in the future.



Alliance volunteer Michael Lowder and Moezu

**VOLUNTEER
SPOTLIGHT**

**Intrigued?
Take the plunge and
become an Alliance
volunteer yourself!
Call Debbra Colman at
350-7357 for details.**

Pachelbelle Fund—Encouraging Multi-Cat Adoptions from Albuquerque Animal Care Centers

As part of its efforts to benefit the cats housed at the Albuquerque Animal Care Centers, the Alliance for Albuquerque Animals has established the Pachelbelle Fund. The fund is named in honor of long-time Alliance donor Kathy Smith, whose beloved 13 year old cat, Pachelbelle, died last year after consuming contaminated cat food for several weeks. Says Smith, “she was diagnosed with kidney disease on the day of the recall. Remarkably, she held on for another 9 months, thanks to lots of medical care. I'm lucky to have had 13 purr-filled years with her.”

In honor of Pachelbelle, Smith, made a generous donation of \$2,000 to the Alliance to directly help the cats and kittens housed at Albuquerque's municipal shelters. After conferring with the shelter volunteers who work with the cats on a weekly basis, the Alliance has identified several cat-centered initiatives for 2008, including gift certificates, comfort items, and educational materials for new cat adopters.

The Alliance recently purchased two-for-one gift certificates to be used by the volunteers at both east and west side shelters to encourage multi-cat adoptions of adult cats over one year of age.

If you are a shelter volunteer and would like to distribute some of these certificates, or if you are an Alliance supporter interested in a multi-cat adoption from the city shelter, please contact the Alliance at 344-PETS.



One of many wonderful kitties housed at the City of Albuquerque's shelters.



"making Shelter Lives Better"

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Los Ranchos de Albuquerque,
New Mexico 87107
505 • 350 • 7357

Check us out at
allianceforABQanimals.org

Board of Directors

Debra Colman
President
Rena Distasio
Secretary
Sheila ter Bruggen
Leba Freed
Sharon Holland, DVM

DONATE TO THE ALLIANCE!

You can help needs animals—with a donation of any amount! Below are some examples of what the Alliance can do with your generous donation:

\$25: Buys a bed and a toy for a homeless animal

\$50: Buys a doghouse for a needy dog who lives outside – providing shelter from the harsh New Mexico weather

\$125: Provides a free spay/neuter, micro-chip implant and shots for a needy dog

\$200: Sponsors a month of RAAP (Responsibly Adopting Albuquerque's Pit Bulls) training classes for pit bull mixes. Provides free weekly training by a certified trainer for anyone who adopts a pit mix.

\$350: Sponsors a weekend of Canine Comforts Campaign. Free give-away of harnesses, leashes, id tags, food, proper care information, micro-chip implant and registration, and spay/neuter voucher for any needy dog.

Attention Federal Workers!

The Alliance for Albuquerque Animals is once again registered with the Combined Federal Campaign. That means you can donate to the Alliance via your workplace giving campaign. When it's time to sign up for the CFC this year, please remember The Alliance – CFC # 21828. We'll put your funds to good use for the animals!

"The wrong in the world continues to exist because people talk only of their ideals and do not strive to put them into practice."

Abdhu'l Baha



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