

Shelter hopes to save many lives in 2016

The Mustang Animal Shelter had an amazing year in 2015 with the help of active volunteers; fundraiser to be held Feb. 26

By Traci Chapman
Contributing Writer

After arguably its busiest year on record, Mustang Animal Shelter – with the help of its recently formed support organization, Friends of Mustang Animal Shelter – is gearing up for even better things in 2016.

"We had just an amazing year in 2015 – we adopted more than 100 animals out of the shelter and we had a wonderful end of the year with our Angel Tree," Friends of the Mustang Animal Shelter, or FOMAS, President Shawna Bostick said. "We received so many needed items – leashes, food, toys, and so, so many more items we needed."

In addition, area school children also pitched in to the effort, Bostick said. Mustang Elementary substituted shelter pets for their traditional food drive, while Canyon Ridge Intermediate music students held their own fundraising effort.

"We were absolutely overwhelmed – in fact, we almost couldn't fit it all in the animal control truck," Bostick said. "And, it doesn't end there because just last weekend we had a local kid who wanted to have birthday gifts given to the shelter and its animals."

That doesn't mean the need is not still there and, sometimes, overwhelming, said Bostick and Jill Heck, Mustang animal control officer. That need helps spur new ideas for fundraising and awareness, as well as motivating those things that have truly clicked in the future.

One of those repeat events will be a Feb. 26 Quarter Mania event, held in partnership with Quarter Mania Wine OXC and Mustang Parks and Recreation Departments. Held at Mustang Town Center, doors will open that

evening at 5:30 p.m., with the auction beginning at 6:30 p.m. Paddles cost \$5 for one and \$10 for three, Bostick said.

"Quarter Mania is a cross between an auction, a raffle, bingo and a home party with friends, and it's a lot of fun to raise money for the shelter and for FOMAS," she said.

Something new Bostick and Heck hope will help shelter pets is WoodTraz, a new smart phone app that helps FOMAS raise money will those signed up get exercise walking their dogs.

"It's something will help garner a lot of interest and even those who aren't walking their dog can take part in it," Bostick said.

The free app is available online at www.woodtraz.com.

While fundraising is always a big task, Bostick and Heck said the constant need is to make sure all of the animals brought to shelter find permanent homes. And, sometimes that is more difficult than ever because of the city's limited space – nine cat cages and nine dog kennels.

"It's a situation where we often have double or even triple occupancy every week of the year," Heck said. "We just can't make it work without people opening their hearts and their homes for animals who have difficulties at the shelter or when we just can't fit them in."

That's where the Adoption Ambassador program comes in, Bostick said. The program not only helps provide temporary housing for pets awaiting adoption; it also helps those who take part in the program take a more active role in helping the animals they foster because they actually become that pet's advocate.

"It provides hands-on help to those animals in need

Friends
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Mustang
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that would otherwise be left in the shelter with time running out," Heck said.

The shelter provides everything needed to care for a pet – food, leashes, collars, crates, bowls and more, thanks to a \$5,000 ASPCA grant recently received by FOMAS. Heck and Bostick help the new program will help spread the word about how much fostering can really mean – not just to the animals, but also to those people who take part in the program.

"It's people like Mary Bishop – she has volunteered to be our canine coordinator for the Mustang Adoption Ambassador program," Bostick said.

"Mary is a perfect example of just how much of a difference doing something like this can make in your life."

Laura Holt will serve as Adoption Ambassadors' feline coordinator, Bostick said.

"One challenge is it is difficult to let go sometimes, but the more animals you help, the easier it is to



—Staff photo by Traci Chapman

Friends of the Mustang Animal Shelter President Shawna Bostick said she has enjoyed the support the shelter has received in the past year.

say goodbye," Holt said. "When you see that the dog or cat is going to a loving permanent home it is immensely rewarding."

If fostering a pet is too much right now, that doesn't mean there aren't volunteer opportunities at the shelter, Bostick and

Heck said. Dog walkers are always welcome each Friday from 10 a.m. until 11:30 a.m. Volunteers must be 18 year's old or over and must complete orientation first, and many other small jobs are always available, as well, they said.

"It really just takes a very

little amount of time to make a huge difference," Bostick said.

More information about the shelter and FOMAS are available on the FOMAS website at <http://fomas.wybo.com/> or in Facebook page, located at <https://www.facebook.com/>



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