

AZ Giving Spotlight: Jan Wilkins from PetSmart Charities

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Founded in 1994, PetSmart Charities is an independent nonprofit organization that creates and supports programs that save the lives of homeless pets, raises awareness of companion animal-welfare issues, and promote healthy relationships between people and pets. The largest funder of animal-welfare efforts in North America, PetSmart Charities has provided \$134 million in grants and programs benefiting animal welfare organizations.

AFM: What is the goal of your nonprofit?

JW: PetSmart Charities' vision is a life-long, loving home for every pet.

AFM: Why were you drawn to this mission?

JW: I've always had adopted dogs in my life, but one in particular touched my heart more than I ever expected. The life lessons I learned from Chloe truly made a difference in me. I've wanted to give back in a way that would honor not only Chloe, but all homeless pets. In my role as Executive Director at PetSmart Charities, my team and I have the opportunity to make a difference every day. As a leader in pet adoptions and the largest funder of animal welfare efforts in North America, we really do make a difference in the lives of homeless pets.

AFM: What is one of your favorite success stories?

JW: In an effort to build a model for saving the lives of community cats, while at the same time reducing their numbers and environmental impacts, PetSmart Charities awarded Best Friends Animal Society a \$700,000 grant to work with the Albuquerque Animal Welfare Department on the Community Cats Project. The project aims to sterilize 3,500 community cats a year for three years, or a total of 10,500 cats. Thanks to this program, not one feral cat was euthanized in Albuquerque in the past year.

AFM: How can readers best contribute to the nonprofit?

JW: The two biggest ways are through adopting a pet or donating through our website, www.petsmartcharities.org, or at the check-out of every PetSmart store. Even a dollar helps us toward our mission. And every \$25 helps us save another life! We have PetSmart Charities Adoption Centers in every PetSmart store – where dogs and cats are looking for homes. And if you can't donate or adopt, all of our animal welfare organizations would love more help. Please consider volunteering at your local shelter.

AFM: Where to the donated dollars go/what do they help?

JW: Donations to PetSmart Charities provide a life-support system to homeless pets both locally and nationally. Through these donated dollars, we are able to help find homes for more than 400,000 pets each year (more than 27,000 in Arizona in 2012) and provide spay/neuter surgeries for more than 340,000 pets. Donor dollars also support life-saving programs such as our Rescue Waggin' transport program, which transports puppies and dogs from communities with too many pets to communities where adoptable pets are in demand. And also, our Emergency Relief Waggin' program, which helps animal victims of natural and man-made disasters.

AFM: What impact has social media had on the nonprofit?

JW: Not only does social media allow us the opportunity to tell our life-saving stories, but it also gives us instant feedback and provides our adopters and donors a forum to tell their own heartwarming stories.

AFM: What do you see for the future of the nonprofit?

JW: PetSmart Charities continues to focus on preventing pets from entering shelters through spay and neuter programs as well as helping those already in shelters find a way out. Our work also helps to educate animal welfare organizations and the general public about the needs of homeless pets and what we can all do together to find a lifelong, loving home for every pet.

For more information on PetSmart Charities, visit [here](http://www.petsmartcharities.org).