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Phoenix Animal Care Coalition is dedicated to saving the lives of thousands of hopeless animals. This holiday season, add joining in the fight to reduce the Valley's stray population to your wish list.



A few years back, one woman dedicated herself to picking up stray animals she found throughout the Valley in hopes of saving their lives. She says early on that the organizations that took in her strays and nursed them back to health were counterproductive and didn't work well together. This woman, Bari Mears, held a meeting to find commonalities between the organizations and, after putting differences aside, founded a one-of-a-kind group, Phoenix Animal Care Coalition (PACC911).

PACC911 was founded in 1999 as an "umbrella organization" that supports smaller rescue groups. "PACC911 is really the only one of its kind in the United States," says Mears, explaining that her group funds health procedures, fundraisers and adoption events for rescue animals, as well as youth animal-compassion classes. "Rescue groups desire to be with us."

The organization holds adoption events about 10 times a year that are free of charge for the rescue groups, allowing them to adopt out their pets any way they choose as long as the furry friends are rescues and their policies are ethical. So far, PACC911 has given more than 6,000 animals new homes through adoption. Since 2004, the Emergency Medical Fund has paid out more than \$400,000 to their groups, saving rescue animals that need extra care and medical attention from being euthanized.

To support its programs, PACC911 holds fundraising events throughout the year. Groups have the opportunity to get creative to make pledges, including through bake sales, makeshift hairdressing salons and auctions. Every dollar raised by each group stays with them. "We collectively raised \$253,000 this year," Mears says.

Sales of the PACC911 cookbook, "Simply Delicious, Too!", began in October at numerous stores across the Valley and PACC911 events as a means of raising money, as well. (Books are \$25.) Inside the cookbook, pages are filled with recipes, photos and dedications by readers, making it a one-of-a-kind publication. The cookbook has brought in more than \$60,000 to help rescue animals thus far.

Mears explains that her organization "needed to happen." It was, at first, a struggle because it is a highly emotional subject, but "when society kicked in, it was meant to be." PACC911 is now supporting more than 120 smaller rescue groups, and the organization is continuing to grow. Mears is willing to go wherever PACC911 takes her in the future. "If I had set a goal, it would never have been as big as it has become. I want it to continue forever beyond what I can do."

To Learn More
Phoenix Animal Care Coalition
www.pacc911.org .