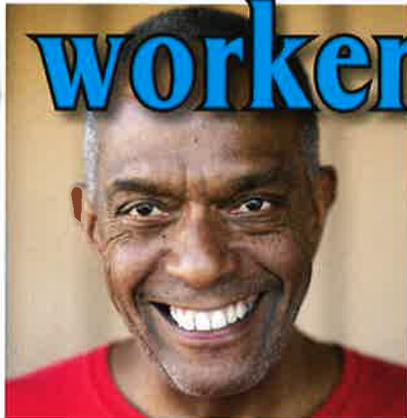
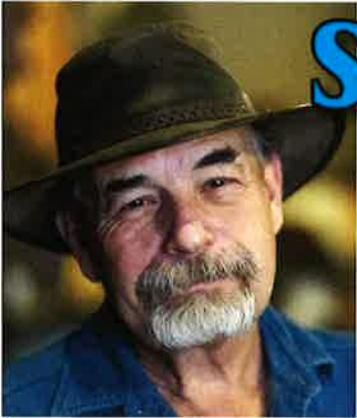
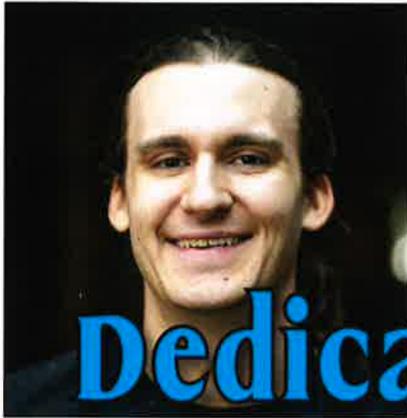


Lifestyles of Sedona

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Sedona's furry friends

find shelter at
Humane Society

By Jon Hecht



Photos by Daulton Venglar/Larson Newspapers

Yoda is a brown Chihuahua who got its name for his pointed but floppy ears. When he was first brought to the Humane Society of Sedona, he was terrified.

"When we were taking him out of the van, he wouldn't come out of the kennel," Interim Operations Director Sarah Porter said.

But just a few weeks later, Yoda is about as cheerful as a small dog can be. He runs around, chases a miniature tennis ball that the Humane Society has provided him [even if he is not great at understanding the rules of fetch] and he loves getting pet by anyone he meets.

Yoda is an example of the philosophy of the Humane Society in action. The institution has been operating in the city since the 1960s, with its current building on Shelby Drive in West Sedona constructed in 2009.

The shelter is relatively small, with few pets housed there most of the time. With a dedicated team of staff and volunteers, the Humane Society tries to use extra care to help dogs and cats

that need it. It is a no-kill shelter, committed to helping and finding a home for any animal that comes to them.

"One of the things that we are working toward here is more of a case management model," said Porter, who worked in health care administration before she started working for the animal shelter. "If animals come in and they have special needs, we focus on what we can do to help those animals become more adoptable. If they're scared, we work with them very carefully to get them calm — we have a quiet environment.

"We really focus on stress here. Our philosophy is, if an animal is stressed, they're more likely to get sick and less likely to get adopted, because once they feel less stress, they feel safe, they feel loved, they are more likely to connect with an adopter and find their family."

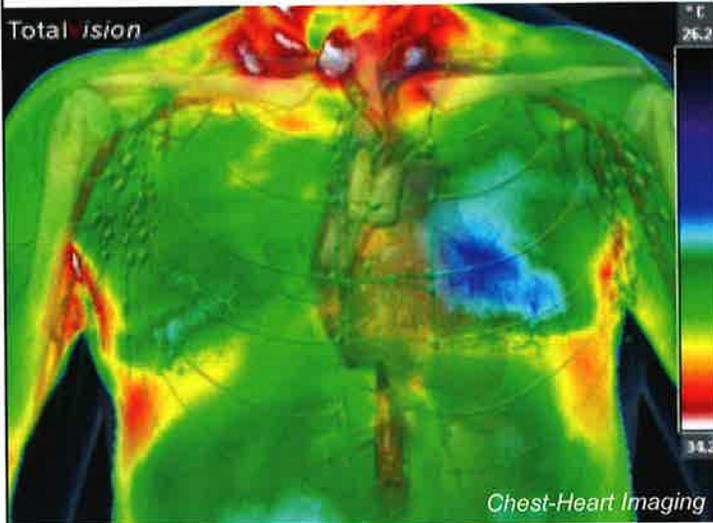
Sometimes this approach requires extra levels of care from Humane Society staff, costing the organization out-of-pocket expenses. Sheba, a large brown mutt with some Labrador retriever mixed in, required close to

MEGAN VEUGELER, above left, and long-time volunteer Linda Brecher, with Suey and Shiba. Part of the Humane Society of Sedona's success is the hard work and dedication from volunteers who go the extra mile for the animals in their care.



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DAKOTA JOHNSON plays with one of the cats at the Humane Society of Sedona on Oct. 7. The cat area of the building is described as library-like because of how quiet it is in order to make the cats feel more comfortable.

\$2,000 of dental work to be healthy, but is available to a loving home for just \$40, the adoption fee for a senior like her.

"There was a dog that was brought in with one eye missing, and one eye that maybe had to be taken out," volunteer Linda Brecher said of an older dog named Henry. "All he wanted to do was to get in your lap and be held. We found ... a place in New Mexico that would take this dog and take care of the eye, and take care of the other eye. We just need[ed] someone to drive the dog to New Mexico. I just happened to know someone who loves to drive and was a volunteer as well, and she said 'I will drive the dog halfway' — they only needed the dog halfway minimum and picked up the other half.

"So it was a little village that took this dog. They've already found an adoptee for the dog. So it was a whole journey for one dog that probably would have been put down somewhere else, because they couldn't afford it, they didn't know what to do."

According to Porter, few pets stay more than a few weeks in the shelter, even as the Humane Society takes additional pets from



SUEY

surrounding shelters, with many people in Sedona willing to foster or adopt a pet in need. The shelter engages in rigorous efforts to try to match pets to new owners well, so as to keep returns rare.

“We usually have a conversation with our adopter about their situation and needs, and then we introduce them to the pets,” Porter said. “What we try to do is match up what they need with what the animals need. Because we have just a handful of dogs, we can take the extra time.”

To be able to give this level of care, the Humane Society of Sedona depends on an extremely supportive community, not only of volunteers but also of others throughout Sedona committed to helping furry friends.

“Our volunteers come through,” Porter said, and added that in moments when a dog or cat needs special care, they are able to reach out on social media and usually can find help, be it from a collection of small donations or a generous donor paying for a whole operation. “They help us fund-raise for it. We look for grants for those things. If we need something, we take care of it and we find the money for it.”

“They need us,” volunteer Jerry Watkins said of the dogs he comes in to walk. “They need people who take care of them and help them find homes. I look at my dogs and think about the dogs in there that don’t have someone to cuddle them at night.” ■



MEGAN VEUGELER, above, plays with Yoda in the courtyard of the Humane Society of Sedona on Oct. 6. When Yoda first came to the Humane Society, he was scared and would not come out of his kennel. Now he has made a complete 180 and loves to play and be social. Yoda was adopted into a loving home a few days after this photo was taken. Interim Operations Manager Sarah Porter, below, goes over the ways volunteers help out at the Humane Society of Sedona on Oct. 6. One of the things that makes the Humane Society of Sedona so unique is their case-by-case approach to each animal.



RACHEL

