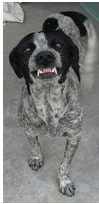


## Shiprock couple committed to saving Navajo Nation dogs

Written by Rachael Merilatt Sun Correspondent  
Friday, 15 May 2015 08:35

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For Isadore “Izzy” and Yvonne Alire, rescuing, fostering and transporting dogs are all part of being good community members.

The couple began rescuing animals four years ago when they joined Shelby Davis, the director and creator of Soul Dog Rescue, whom they credit for being an integral part of controlling the stray pet population in the Four Corners area.

These days, they devote an impressive amount of their time rescuing and fostering stray dogs in the area for Soul Dog Rescue, some of whom may be injured or in poor shape. Any animals they find are immediately picked up and taken back to their farm in Shiprock where they are fed, bathed, and vaccinated.

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Izzy and Yvonne work with a number of different organizations in the Four Corners area, including the La Plata County Humane Society in La Plata, Colo.; the Park Valley Shelter in Buena Vista, Colo.; Best Friends Animal Society in Kanab, UT; and several others.

When it's time for the foster dogs to be placed for adoption, Izzy and Yvonne transport them to their new temporary homes, which can be a lengthy commute. "There is a lot of drive time," Yvonne shared. "It really depends on where we need to go."

An unfortunate part of pet rescue is taking in dogs who are severely neglected or injured, which can lead to uncertainty regarding their recovery. Izzy shared the story of Arwin, who was found emaciated and injured from a suspected snake bite.

"She was in a bad way," he said.

With regular feedings, comfortable surroundings and a newfound trust in people, not only did Arwin recover, but she is now a therapy dog.

"That's what [pet rescuing] is all about," he said proudly.

Navajo nation's Senior Animal Control Officer Stacey Daw expressed gratitude for all that Izzy and Yvonne do around the reservation to help control the stray dog population, including picking up animals that have been surrendered and can no longer be cared for.

"It takes a very big heart to do this," Daw said. "I really appreciate everything they do for me and the Animal Control department."

While the couple are committed to reducing the stray dog population on the reservation, they wholeheartedly believe that providing the community with information and resources can help to turn things around even more.

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“It starts with neutering and spaying,” Izzy insists. And while spaying and neutering services are costly — they can run from \$250-\$300 — there are low-cost options available.

Equally important are vaccinations, which are vital to the well-being of all animals. Without it, dogs can suffer from a host of debilitating disease.

“Parvo is very common in dogs,” Yvonne said.

Parvo is a highly contagious viral infection that can cause vomiting, weight loss and lack of appetite. Dogs are also vulnerable to Distemper, a potentially fatal disease that has no cure but can be avoided with regular vaccinations and checkups. Luckily, there are also affordable options for members of the public who cannot otherwise incur the costs.

When asked what they wanted the community to know, both Izzy and Yvonne had two simple, yet powerful statements to share:

“If you see an animal in need, call somebody,” Yvonne urged. “You can call Soul Dog Rescue, Navajo Nation Animal Control or your local rescue organization.”

“To me, it’s one of your responsibilities as a community member,” Izzy said. “This is what we choose to do the help the community.”

For more information on low-cost services for cats and dogs, visit the Animal Protection of New Mexico (ANMP) website at [www.apnm.org](http://www.apnm.org).

For information on Soul Dog Rescue, including how to volunteer and donate, visit [www.souldog.org](http://www.souldog.org).

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