**COMFORT ADOPTION CENTER – GRANT PROPOSAL**

**DESCRIPTION FOR VOLUNTEER TRAINING PROJECT**

A community-based dog and cat shelter called "Comfort Adoption Center" (CAC) has been established in Santa Fe, New Mexico. CAC will focus on saving lost and stray animals. In the admitting process each animal will be given a full medical examination. Before offering the dog or cat for adoption, the shelter will wait for a period of two weeks in case a current owner calls looking for a lost pet. Our expert trainers will assess each animal to be sure that they are ready for adoption. As needed, training will be given to make the animal happier and safer in a future home. No animal will be released to an existing owner or a new owner without an identity chip.

PIAS will utilize volunteers many of whom are students at Santa Fe Community College. Each volunteer will be expected to successfully participate in a 4 week training program at the beginning of their work with PIAS. This training program will cover:

Basic safety measures for working with animals

Shelter cleaning and hygene rules

Appropriate manners to work with the public and teach proper pet care

Emotional guidance for how to work with sad cases

Volunteers who demonstrate proficiency during the initial training program will be invited to participate in an advanced training program to learn effective nutritional counseling techniques for prospective adopters. Student volunteers from SFCC will be expected to contribute 3-5 hours each week and to continue with PIAS for a period of not less than 6 months in order to earn college credit.

PIAS will operate with 6 full and part time staff members. In addition, a Governing Board made up of community leaders and college staff will operate to provide overall sanctioning of the Center's operation. Periodic evaluations will be conducted to assess the value of PIAS on a) helping the volunteers to become effective animal handlers, b) the development of new understandings on the part of local families and c) the improvement of the well being of animals in Northern New Mexico.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION/STATEMENT OF PROBLEM**

Major obstacles to animal survival in the developing world include parasitic diseases, physical abuse, malnutrition and neglect . Some serious problem exists in the rural towns of animals dying from common illness and infections that are attributable to poor nutrition. Though high nutrition foods are available, it is apparent that some families do not have an understanding of exactly what foods contain the most value for their pets. Research has shown that the pets of families who have an understanding of how to provide good nutrition to their pets stand a significantly greater chance of prospering.

Providing comunity education is invaluable. Our emphasis has been exclusively on the providing of information to local pet owners on improved feeding, training and husbandry practices.

**PROJECT DETAIL**

**Goals and Objectives**

There are two major goals for the "Comfort Adoption Center" Project and specific objectives within each of the goals.

**Goal #1 -To rescue and rehome lost and stray pets.**

Objective #1.1 – Working in close association with our local Animal Control capture and bring in any/all stray animals.

Objective #1.2 – Review safe crating and fencing techniques with all adopting families.

Objective #1.3 – Train pets, especially dogs, to a basic obedience level.

**Goal #2 - To reduce the degree of neglect and/or malnutrition among pets**

Objective #2.1 - To recruit a group of undergraduate students (15-20 students each semester) at SFCC to become volunteers in the "Comfort Adoption Center" (PIAS) Project.

Objective #2.2 - To provide a 4 week training program for the volunteers.

**Staff/Administration**

The Project will employ three full-time and three part time staff.

* Project Director (full time)- Responsible for hiring project staff, overseeing project development and operation, establishing and maintaining links with local government agencies, and budget. The Project Director will be Jon Doe (author of this proposal)
* Center Coordinator (full time)- Responsible for establishing the Center, developing working relationships with formal and informal community leaders, establishing links to community organizations, and scheduling of Center programs.
* Volunteer Coordinator (full time) - Responsible for recruiting college student and community volunteers, scheduling volunteers for service at the Center. The Volunteer Coordinator will have a background in pet nutrition.
* Adoption Evaluator (part time) - Responsible for collecting entry level data regarding pet health and nutrition. Also responsible for developing and implementing a system for periodic formative evaluation of the work of the student volunteers.
* Center Assistant (part time) - Responsible for maintaining the structure and appearance of the Center, routine correspondence, and other forms of communication with adoptive families in the community.
* Graphic Artist (part time) - Responsible for creating illustrated posters to about upcoming adoption events.
* Governing Board - Made up of both community leaders and some SFCC staff. Responsible for sanctioning the operation of the Center and providing feedback to the Project Director on Center policies and operation.

**AVAILABLE RESOURCES AT THE CENTER**

* **Building** - a building for the Center with individual rooms for each animal, kitchen for preparing food, dog runs.
* **Outdoor exercise park** – A 4 acre fenced area.
* **Volunteer Meeting/Training Room and Office** - will be in an adjacent building.
* **Volunteer Coordinator** - this person is currently on staff.