

RABBIT TRACKS

SUMMER 2018

NEWSLETTER ISSUE 15



NMHRS LEADERSHIP MESSAGE

In this issue, Kirstin Tyler, our new Chapter Manager & Board President, sits down for a Q&A

How did you get involved with NMHRS?

When I moved to Albuquerque, I accidentally started fostering five shelter rabbits in three days. So, I contacted NMHRS for guidance and essentially shifted my entire life plan to revolve around rabbits and volunteering.

What is your favorite part about volunteering with NMHRS?

I have two favorite parts. The first, of course, is the rabbits. I have had 36 fosters so far, and they are just the greatest! All of them have their own personalities and they bring me so much happiness. Anyone who has ever fostered knows there is no such thing as “just a foster” and all of my temporary residents in Kirstin’s Rabbit Hotel, past, present, and future, will always have my love.

The second is the volunteers. I have met so many wonderful people who are smart, funny, passionate, and all-around amazing. I love getting to hang out with them. They make me look forward to all of our events.

What’s it like being the new Chapter Manager and Board President?

It’s really scary! Bill was such an amazing leader, and I know that I have big shoes to fill. I’ve settled in a little bit now and it’s great to be in the position to be able to help so many rabbits. It’s a ton of work—people often assume this is my full-time job—and it comes with a lot of anxiety, but I think I’ve got a good rhythm going now.

What is the difference between Chapter Manager and Board President?

Basically, the Chapter Manager is responsible for the rabbits, anything related to the rabbits, anything related to the chapter, and following HRS policy. This is why the CM has to approve activities, events, publicity items, community outreach, any rabbits we take in, etc.

The Board President captains the Board which is responsible for ensuring we are financially stable, legally abiding, and staying within our mission (for example, the Chapter Manager can’t start rescuing horses without Board approval). The Board President leads all board meetings. The Chapter Manager can make operational purchases, but any major financial decisions must be approved by the Board.

What experience do you have that will influence your time as Chapter Manager?

I have a lot of experience as both a Brand Manager and Project Manager. I will use this experience to spread NMHRS’s message across New Mexico. One way to achieve this is to establish NMHRS as a brand which will increase recognition and visibility. Another goal is to take advantage of social media to reach the entire State and not just major cities like Albuquerque and Santa Fe. Through my years of work at a behavior-change agency, I have learned how to effectively reach our target audience. I will use this knowledge to take NMHRS to the next level.

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OPEN YOUR HEART & HOME

We are looking for foster families!

Contact Kirstin to learn more!
kirstin@newmexicohrs.org

Low Cost Spay/Neuter

Low-cost spay \$75, neuter \$50 for rabbits available by appointment only at Santa Fe Spay/Neuter and Wellness Clinic, 2570-B Camino Entrada, 505-474-6422.

Out-of-county surcharge may apply



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BUNNY BRAVO: A STORY OF LOVE AND SURVIVAL

by Laura Pressley

*"This is the process whereby pain of the past in its pastness
May be converted into the future tense
Of joy." – Robert Penn Warren*

At four, I had the Easter of my life. My father carved giant rabbit foot tracks in the fresh snow the morn before we woke. The whole family was then instructed to go look out to the backyard, to see the evidence that the Easter bunny had come. And one did, and left an albino in my Easter basket. I named him Charlie after my crush, Charlie Brown. It was a little girl's dream come true. We had an acre of property for him to hop around yet he ended everyday in his cage for safety. I loved him so much one day I left the cage open and said, "please come back" and he never did. I didn't tell my parents because I had a special relationship with Charlie and they just wouldn't understand my choice to set my love free. I forgive him though and understand why he left and I hope he enjoyed some freedom in what was probably a short life. Ever since Charlie, I have wanted another bunny to love.



© G. Wzorek

Fast forward a few decades later, where at work we hired a knowledgeable rabbit owner. One day she came in telling a story of a number of domestic bunnies that were abandoned in the Santa Fe National Forest (*Ed.—read about the Santa Fe Forest bunny rescue in the Winter 2017 issue [14]*). She went to the forest to help rescue them, since domestic rabbits do not fare well in the wild. Hearing her story inspired a talk with the team about adopting a bunny.



© L. Pressley

We went to the shelter and saw a number of albinos and baby bunnies. There were other bunnies too, including a beautiful 10-pound black rabbit named Carl, as well as another black one who was a bit ratty with helicopter ears. I photographed these two black ones, and later went back to get the ratty looking black helicopter ear rabbit. The shelter helper said this was "the best bunny" and "a confident rabbit." I adored this notion of a "confident rabbit" and I took this as my spirit animal persona.

I took him home and slowly introduced him to our multi-species household. The cats met him first with gentle sniffing introductions with bunny safe and comfortable in his own space. I then introduced him to the black lab and the Corgi. The Corgi, a herder and a generous barker, worried me a bit, but both dogs and cats all seemed to understand this was a new family member. After a couple of weeks, everyone could hang out in the living room and enclosed yard together—the two male cats (Barney and Speed) and the two male dogs (Herschel and Zugi) that I affectionately call my "5 Guys."



© L. Pressley

During the week, the bunny accompanies me to the office, being mischievous and chewing phone lines. The team feeds and tends to him happily. As photographers, he is a favorite model, and loved by his colleagues and some of our social media followers (including a major international photo magazine editor who believes he should have his own Instagram account). So this confident rabbit has made a number of new friends and is known by our many of our organization's constituents around the world.

Perhaps he is more confident due to his time in the wild, surviving despite the odds. His bravery and fortitude have allowed him to endure and go on to live another life with a new mom and dad, four brothers, several aunties, and many friends. His courage is a reminder to weather the hard times, to persevere, to be reborn and to live more fully as a result. His name, inspired by his courage, is now Bunny Bravo, and he is a shining, confident, daily inspiration to live bravely.

Read about Bunny Bravo's life before he met Laura on Page 3!

THE INCREDIBLE JOURNEY OF BUNNY BRAVO

by NMHRS and Santa Fe Animal Shelter/Humane Society volunteer Iris Klimczuk-Massion

The phone rang. This was the call to action I was awaiting. The Santa Fe animal shelter had earlier alerted me to a local loose rabbit situation and said I could expect a call from a homeowner who had seen two stray rabbits hanging around their house for months. Animal Services had been unable to capture them after multiple tries and might I be able to help? After answering the call, I learned one of the two rabbits was now injured, so capture was urgent. Off I drove to the remote location to use the remaining January daylight hour to attempt a capture with x-pens, broom, blanket, and leather gloves in the car.

I arrived at the address to find a wide open acreage with fencing along two sides and a small chainlink fence-enclosed winterized rose garden in the front yard. Both rabbits were inside this rose garden, nibbling on dried grass. I introduced myself to the homeowners and explained the capture strategy. We slowly advanced towards the rabbits, x-pens in hand, held close to the ground, attempting to corner the bunnies who watched us. Just as we seemed to close in on them, the rabbits bolted past us and the x-pens, both running out of the rose garden gate in opposite directions. We ran over towards the injured black rabbit, whose up ear had lopped according to the homeowners.

Black rabbit watched us as we carefully approached him again with our x-pens, but this time we easily corralled him. While easing him into the pet carrier, I saw what I believed to be the absolute worst case of ear mites I had seen in 8 years of rescue work! He must have been suffering silently for months outdoors in the dead of winter, and seemed in great discomfort. Since we were rapidly losing daylight, I decided to return another day to catch the other rabbit who had in any case disappeared. I named the poor mite-infested, ratty-looking rabbit Mateo and took him home since the animal shelter had closed for the day.

I quarantined Mateo indoors in a safe area away from my own house rabbits, provided him a fleece blanket to lie on, plus food, water and a cardboard hidey box and



(Left) This was Bunny Bravo (then known as Mateo) the day he was rounded up outdoors in Santa Fe county by a NMHRS volunteer. We believe his left ear had lopped under the weight of a terrible mite infestation. (Right) He received prompt veterinary attention thanks to NMHRS and remained in medical foster for a few weeks, before returning to the shelter for adoption.

left him. I immediately emailed the New Mexico House Rabbit Society Board to ask whether they would consider covering a vet visit for Mateo, attaching some explicit photos of his terrible ear mite infestation and poor condition. Fortunately, they agreed. As I already had an appointment with a rabbit savvy veterinary specialist in Albuquerque scheduled for one of my personal rabbits, I asked if I might bring Mateo along for treatment at the same time.

Mateo returned from the vet the next day with pain meds and a sore, yet cleaned, treated ear, and spent two more weeks in medical foster with me, before returning to the shelter kennels. His ear continued to heal and grow back fur, although he would always remain airplane-eared. I hoped his ratty fur coat, no doubt from malnourishment, would eventually turn lustrous again with a healthier diet. I was struck by how throughout his ordeal, Mateo remained affectionate and trusting. I knew he would make someone a wonderful companion one day soon...

The second rabbit at this site eluded us for another 6 weeks and was finally captured in a live trap. The two male rabbits were not bonded any longer (if they ever were). Sammy, the blue-eyed Dutch, has also now been adopted into a wonderful home.

WANT TO WORK WITH SHELTER BUNS?

Get in touch with a volunteer coordinator:

Ned (ABQ): nednever@aol.com
Iris (Santa Fe): iris@newmexicohrs.org
Victoria (Rio Rancho): pereztori10@aol.com



PATCHES

A BELOVED FIRST HOUSE RABBIT

by NMHRS volunteer and HRS Educator Palin Wiltshire

Eleven years ago, my new in-laws were visiting. For the first time, I found myself involved with people that saw life very differently. We took them sightseeing. We took them to our fabulous Farmers Market.

Nothing seemed to please them.

At the Farmers Market, I was drawn to a woman and her baby bunnies. Little children were sitting in a circle, all holding bunnies in towels. I got down on the ground and was given a bunny to hold as well. Bandit was later to become her name. My husband whispered to me that I could take a rabbit home, but after his parents left. Bandit went home with the original owner, but we had plans to pick her up soon. While I waited, it occurred to me that Bandit should have a friend. So we added Patches, another mini holland lop.

My beloved Patches turned 11 last August. She was still enjoying life, but had slowed down. She seemed to have a good, long life. In her last days, she seemed especially content.

Patches passed away in her sleep recently. Her companion, Allie, continued to groom her as her life slipped away. We will all miss her gentle, sweet personality. She started a passion for rabbits that I will never lose.

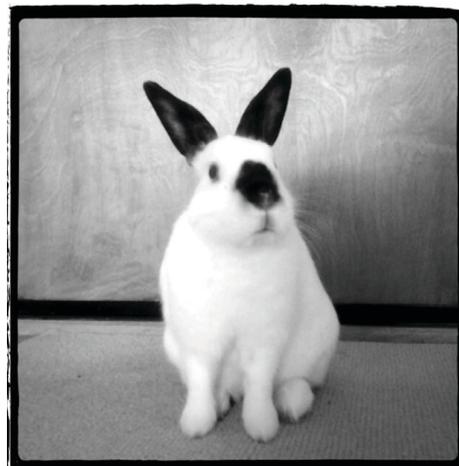


PATCHES & ALLIE

POSTSCRIPT

Allie joined us in 2012 to become our Patches' devoted companion. He was originally fostered by NMHRS volunteer, Beth Wagner, who had named him Pancake. She named him that as his little Himalayan rabbit body would completely flatten out to be petted. Being such an Anglophile, I had to change his name to Allistair.

What a wonderful little gentleman he became and he stole my heart especially. Unfortunately, he battled GI stasis frequently. On more than one occasion we almost lost him. It became apparent that Allie was a very sensitive individual. Still, he loved his life with Patch. Totally devoted to her even into her old age, blind and arthritic, he never waned in his attentions to her. Every



RIP ALLIE 2010-2018

night Patch enjoyed a foot grooming from Allie.

After losing Patch in May, our sweet Allie only lasted 2 weeks more. His unexpected death was heartbreaking for me. I've cried a river for my little guy. I do have some peace knowing that he is now with his Patch once again. Still we miss him terribly.

PATCHES & BANDIT



The sisters grew up together. We had a lot to learn regarding a proper diet. I was feeding them store bought treats, later I learned this diet was comprising their little lives. Bandit especially suffered from bouts of GI stasis. We lost her at the age of 4. This brought us to seek out NM House Rabbit Society. Bill Velasquez was our contact. It was the start of a years' long connection with the group. We found house rabbit, Allistair McCallister thru speed dates and Bill took Patches and "Allie" home to bond them.

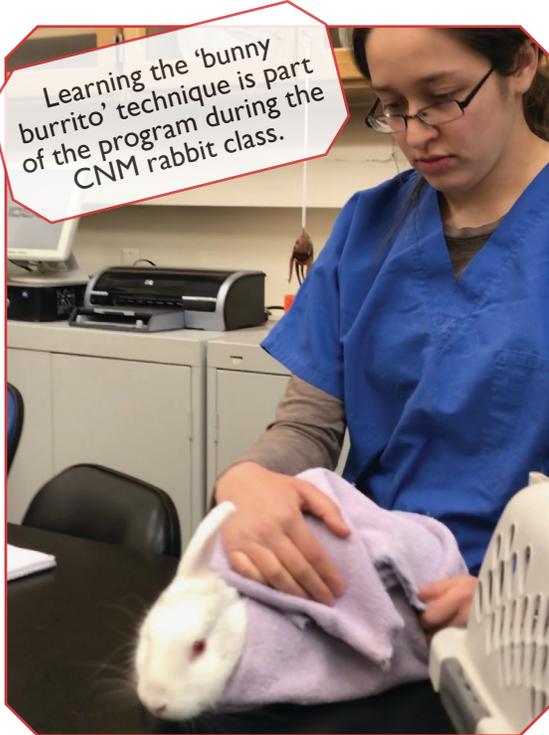
Allie became devoted to Patches and they spent over 6 years together as best friends and a great comfort to each other. When Patches went blind, Allie became her eyes. Every night Allie groomed Patch. The human race could learn a lot from these wonderfully, devoted creatures.

During all this time, I became active with the NM house rabbit group. I helped with education, outreach and fundraising. I found it rewarding to help these wonderful, but very misunderstood animals.

READY, SET, LEARN!

by NMHRS volunteer and HRS Educator Criss Starr

Bringing the house rabbit message to a new generation of veterinary technicians

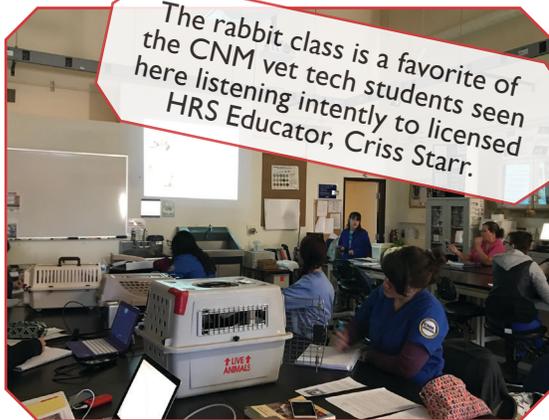


Learning the 'bunny burrito' technique is part of the program during the CNM rabbit class.

For over a decade, New Mexico House Rabbit Society volunteers have made an annual trek to the Central New Mexico Community College's South Valley Campus to bring the rabbit experience to students in the Veterinary Technology program. These students will go on to work for veterinarians or research institutes, and we are grateful to be able to share our love for and knowledge of rabbits with these dedicated, enthusiastic learners.

Our valuable outreach includes a one-hour PowerPoint presentation that gives a comprehensive overview of rabbit care, health, medical issues, and the importance of spay and neuter. House Rabbit Philosophy is introduced: why we feel rabbits are happiest and healthiest residing in the home. We explain the characteristics of rabbits and the ways in which they differ medically from dogs and cats. The proper diet, depicted by the rabbit food pyramid, is discussed in terms of rabbit longevity and optimal health into the senior years.

But it's the hands-on section that the students really enjoy! NMHRS volunteers bring rabbits with whom the students can interact. For some, it is the first time they have ever been around rabbits, while many others have extensive rabbit experience. Each pair of students is lent a rabbit for the session, which starts with safe handling and holds. Then a nose-to-tail examination on the rabbits is demonstrated. The students learn to take temperatures, clean scent glands, and give supplemental feedings and injections. Nail trimming and basic grooming is also shown.



The rabbit class is a favorite of the CNM vet tech students seen here listening intently to licensed HRS Educator, Criss Starr.

We are so honored to be welcomed to participate in the rabbit session of CNM's incredible Veterinary Technology Program, including our recent session on January 18, 2018. We have found the teachers to be top notch and the students to be enthusiastic and appreciative. For more on information on CNM Community College's Veterinary Technology program, visit cnm.edu.



CNM vet tech students enjoy the hands-on portion of the rabbit class.

BUS TAILS



**YOU ARE NOT SETTING ME FREE,
YOU ARE GIVING ME A DEATH SENTENCE.**

DOMESTIC RABBITS CANNOT SURVIVE IN THE WILD.

For more information about rabbits and their care:

Rabbit.org 

BUS TAILS

BUS TAILS



**You are not setting me free,
you are giving me a death sentence.**

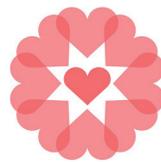
Domestic rabbits cannot survive in the wild.

For more information
about rabbits and
their care: **Rabbit.org** 

BUS TAILS

ADOPTABLE BUNS

LOOKING FOR THEIR FOREVER HOME!



View adoptable bunnies and adoption procedures at newmexicohrs.org



Cheesecake is a CABQ bunny in foster care. She was found as a stray by some kids in the valley who took her to their teacher. The teacher got her to a kind foster parent so she was safe until she finds her forever home.

Cheesecake is a spayed female, snow white with cherry eyes, approx 9 lbs. Although shy, she has been around older kids, cats and dogs. She's in the process of litter box and handling training. She is about 1.5 yrs old. She loves her pine cones and enjoys being petted. She will sit up and beg for healthy treats!



Bandit is a sweet girl who likes to rearrange things. She was born on July 10th and went into her foster home 3 days later where she has been ever since. Her favorite thing is her cottontail cottage so we highly encourage her forever home to provide multiple levels for Bandit to explore and lounge on. She also likes to chew on cardboard, especially cardboard tubes. She always runs up to greet you and enjoys sitting with people on the couch while being pet. Bandit is ok with dogs but will need to meet the dog first. If interested in Bandit, contact Kirstin@newmexicohrs.org

Dumped on streets of ABQ, former shelter bun Serafina is fostered in a loving home. She fought off abscesses requiring surgery but is now fully healthy again and ready to find her forever home. She is a sassy, confident bun who knows what she wants and settles for nothing less! Bursting with personality and antics, she needs a home where she can free range.

Since abscesses sometimes return, NMHRS is prepared to cover the cost of any recurrence at one of our trusted ABQ vets, D. Levenson, DVM. Contact Kirstin@newmexicohrs.org for more info.



I'm Nugget, a 9 mo old neutered, frisky, friendly, active lop boy! I enjoy doing zoomies & binkies and am litterbox-trained. I look forward to finding a new loving indoor home soon!

Available from Santa Fe Animal Shelter for a \$35 adoption fee. Contact Iris for more info: iris@newmexicohrs.org.

Lucky is a year and a half old, curious, love of a bun. He allows gentle handling, loves cheek rubs, and really enjoys company. He's one of the rescued forest bunnies from last October and has been waiting very patiently to find his forever home. His adoption fee is \$35. Contact Santa Fe Animal Shelter (505) 983-4309 or iris@newmexicohrs.org for more info.





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- MAKE A DONATION to support our work helping homeless rabbits in New Mexico!

We also accept donations of food and other needed supplies.

- I would like to support New Mexico House Rabbit Society.
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- I would like to volunteer for

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