

## THE ARIZONA REPUBLIC

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ARIZONA HUMANE SOCIETY

Donations are one way to help Arizona animal shelters expecting a deluge of abandoned baby animals in the coming months.

## HELP SHELTERS HELP LITTLE ONES

**I**mages of puppies and kittens brighten up calendars and greeting cards.

But sometimes reality isn't so pretty.

Five newborn puppies were recently found wrapped in a plastic bag and left to die in an alley in Tucson.

The Southern Arizona Humane Society says they are being nursed back to health. These little dogs are among thousands of unwanted puppies and kittens that will wind up at shelters in Arizona this season. Most are brought in by people who have the decency to take them into shelters. These folks deserve credit for not simply abandoning the babies.

But people who allow their animals to produce unwanted litters are responsible for the annual flood of fur balls at the shelters. They should do a little soul-searching. Especially now.

Spring is the beginning of baby-animal season. Kimberly Searles of the Arizona Humane Society says it is starting to look like this year will be as bad as last year, when shelters filled fast and stayed full until Thanksgiving.

Aprille Hollis of Maricopa County Animal Care and Control says 10 litters of kittens were dropped off at the shelter on a single day last summer. The Arizona Humane Society took in 4,356 puppies and 9,849 kittens from March to October last year, Searles said.

There is no reason for this to go on year after year. The Humane Society offers low-cost spay and neuter services, and the county has a voucher program for people who cannot afford to do the right thing for their pets.

### Learn more

For information about fostering baby animals, donating needed items or to find out about low-cost spay and neuter clinics, go to:

» Arizona Humane Society: azhumane.org

» Maricopa County Animal Care and Control: pets.maricopa.gov

Make no mistake: Spaying or neutering Lady or Sylvester is the right thing to do. There are plenty of puppies and kittens already. So many that some are treated like trash.

Animal lovers of all kinds can help our community deal with the hard realities that animal shelters face every spring and summer.

The shelter environment is not healthful for very young animals that have not yet developed immunity, Hollis says. What's more, shelter staff can be overwhelmed with the demands of unweaned baby animals that must be fed frequently by bottle.

People willing to foster these animals in their homes can help tiny puppies and kittens grow strong enough to be taken back to the shelter and, with luck, adopted.

Shelters also need extra supplies this time of year. Gently used towels make a cage more comfortable. Puppy and kitten formula and bottles are essential for the tiniest ones. Kibble and canned food help with those that are weaned. Even paper towels can help, Searles says.

These unwanted animals and the shelters that take care of them need your help.