



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Local Animal Heroes Honored at Valley Fundraising Event

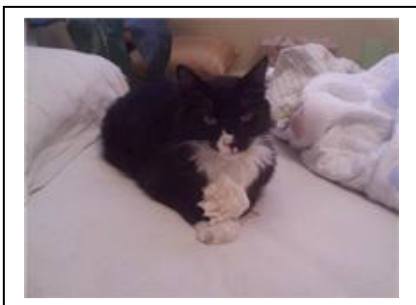
Phoenix – Friends of Animal Care & Control (“Friends”) has announced the honorees for their 9th annual Hero Awards. The awards show is presented by PetSmart and will be held on October 29th at the Arizona Biltmore Resort & Spa in the Grand Ballroom.

Six amazing animals and one human hero will be recognized at the fundraiser, which will raise money to support Maricopa County Animal Care & Control’s Spay Neuter Assistance Program.



Honey (now *Penny*) has a very sad story. What Maricopa County Animal Care & Control (MCACC) shelter workers originally thought was dirt on the back of her neck, turned out to be a badly infected and very painful infection caused by two rubberbands that someone had put around her head and had grown into her skin. During surgery, they discovered that the bands had been on there so long that the skin on her neck had grown over the bands and she was literally being choked by them. She may have also lost hearing from the embedded rubber bands but after her surgery she began to regain strength and her appetite. She was adopted by a wonderful family in **Snowflake, AZ** where *Penny* now serves as a source of comfort to a woman who suffers from depression. *Penny* helps with her depression by providing comfort and love and helps her new owner get out of the house on walks which helps lift both of their spirits.

Adopted from Maricopa County’s (MCACC) old facility on 35th Avenue – *Chance* is retired and resides with his family in **Chandler, AZ** and was one of the sixteen team members for the Arizona Search Dogs who work for the **Phoenix Fire Department**. They provide a vital service to the people of Maricopa County and the United States of America. As part of FEMA Urban Search & Rescue, Arizona Task Force 1, these dogs have been deployed for events such as the World Trade Center attack, Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, Gustav and Ike – they are on-call 24 hours a day. *Chance* is a veteran of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. For being a dog from the “Pound”, *Chance* has gone on to have a very full and amazing life. A true testament that shelter dogs have a lot to give! For more info on *Chance* and his team go to: <http://www.arizonasearchdogs.com/>



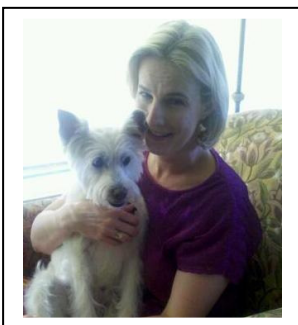
Now living with Maricopa County Animal Care & Control (MCACC) Shelter Vet, Dr. Monika Durgin in **Phoenix, AZ**, *Zeus* was a special case at MCACC. It’s as though *Zeus* had a sixth sense that he was scheduled for euthanasia, because when the Vet Tech went to get him, he had disappeared into a loose roof tile into a 54,000 sq. ft. attic. The shelter workers looked for him day after day. Over 30 days later, *Zeus* appeared smelling horrible with a life threatening horrible infection in his paw caused by an ingrown claw. Because the infection was so bad it was suggested that he be put down, however Dr. Durgin wanted to try and save this boy. Today he enjoys the good life with his friend “Trouble” where they rough house and play and groom each other!

Tameeka (now *Lily*) was picked up by MCACC as a stray, listed as a lactating mother, *Lily* came in without any pups. When the foster mom met *Lily* it was almost as if *Lily* was begging her to find her pups. Determined to find her pups after Rescue a Golden rescued her through the MCACC New Hope Program, they went on amazing search for her pups by finding out the vicinity where *Lily* was picked up. After several hours of driving around, miraculously *Lily* led the foster mom to her puppies at a random home! After negotiating with the couple who had the pups, the foster mom and *Lily* were able to leave with two of the pups. Today, *Lily* lives in **Los Altos, CA** with her new family.



Imagine starting your day being purposely cut and made to bleed. Then after you start bleeding you're thrown into a ring and attacked by dogs – dogs being trained to fight in a dog fighting ring. Imagine this happening to you over and over again until you're either killed by one of the dogs or killed inhumanely by your owner. Imagine a life full of no love. A life of no caring touch, your sole existence is pain and fear. This is how *Lazarus* (now *Guido*) lived his life. He escaped his torturous confines and was found as a stray, roaming the streets in horrific condition. He was taken to safety at Maricopa County Animal Care & Control (MCACC) East Side Shelter. By just looking at him, one could see the pain he endured. He ended up on the “e-list” and was desperately being championed by MCACC employees and volunteers. As *Guido* began his recovery, the rescue volunteers could see a change in him. The fear turned to trust – he felt love for the first time. He did not know what a bed was, what stairs were or a couch. Today, even though people had betrayed him in the past, he is good natured, happy, sweet and full of life. In fact, today he prances around and swims in a pool at his home in **Apache Junction, AZ**. He is a beacon of survival and brings out the good in humanity to anyone who hears his story.

Since winning a Hero Award in 2006 for Animal Survivor, Rocket (a Maricopa County Animal Care & Control Alumni) has gone on to become a loving ambassador for all homeless animals in Maricopa County. He has done this through the program, Rocket's Rangers which is a FREE animal welfare education program for children grades 2-4. The program teaches children about the problem of pet homelessness by retelling Rocket's traumatic story of abandonment, starvation, rescue and adoption. There is an activity book that the children also get which teaches the children about the importance of spay and neuter among other humane values. Since his first class in January 2010, Rocket has taught over 2,000 children a new way to look at making a difference in the lives of animals. Rocket lives with his family in **Scottsdale, AZ** and spends his summers in **Ridgeway, CO**.



The Hero Awards also recognizes one Human Hero each year. This year's honoree is Gretchen Roberts, long time supporter and former board member of Friends of Animal Care & Control. Gretchen adopted her long time companion, Maggie in 1997 from Maricopa County Animal Care & Control. Maggie would not only change Gretchen's life, but also be the inspiration for many contributions to help save animals in Maricopa County by helping to substantially fund the SNAP (Spay Neuter Assistance Program) Program over the past years. Friends of Animal Care & Control is proud to honor this extraordinary individual and her loving canine companion at this year's awards.

For more information about the Hero Awards or Friends of Animal Care & Control, visit www.azfaccs.org or call 602.909.5291.

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Friends of Animal Care & Control is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization. Our mission is to end euthanasia of healthy and adoptable dogs and cats in our community by raising funds to support the non-mandated programs of Maricopa County Animal Care & Control. For more information, visit www.azfaccs.org.