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Phoenix Dog

DEDICATED TO PROMOTING THE HUMAN ANIMAL BOND

September / October 2018

**Main Story:
Humane Animal
Rescue and
Trapping Team**



The NAGI Foundation

MCSO Tough Dog Tarzan

Mogollon Rim Fall Color Hikes

THIS MAGAZINE
FREE
TO A GOOD HOME

Phoenix Dog[®]

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Cover dog Taco was a stray, caught by HARTT, and now available for adoption at Lucky Dog Rescue!



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MAIN STORY

Humane Animal Rescue and Trapping Team

By Rocio Hernandez Photos HARTT



Shari Griffin was expecting to enjoy a fun Mother's Day weekend with her daughter Breanna, son-in-law Justin, the two dogs, and the rest of their family, when she got a call telling her it would be anything but.

Breanna called Shari to say that there'd been a car accident on their way to Prescott. Everyone was pretty okay, but Luna, the couple's Border Collie-Golden Retriever mix, had bolted out of the car and disappeared as soon as Justin opened the door. Justin followed Luna across three lanes of highway traffic and into the desert for over a mile, but eventually had to give up and return to the car to tend to Breanna, seven months pregnant and injured.

Shari joined the couple at the hospital as soon as she could. She did the only thing possible at the time - she started sharing what happened, and Luna's disappearance, on her Facebook page and with every group she could think of.

"... it's pretty tough knowing that she's out there in the desert and there is wildlife and coyote and all that kind of stuff and she's never been away from her 'mom' and 'dad,' how is she going to survive?" Griffin recalled. That's when Cheryl Naumann and her team of volunteers stepped in.

Six years earlier there had been a dog living alongside a freeway. Cheryl Naumann learned about the dog from a woman who had been feeding her for two months. Having worked in animal welfare for more than 15 years, Naumann thought she could help. She



Trio trapped and now safe at Second Home Resort

came out to the site with a humane trap and successfully captured the dog. That freeway dog, subsequently named Roxy, and adopted by her caregiver, sent Naumann down a rabbit hole.

In 2017, getting more calls for help than she could handle alone, Naumann, then 56,

founded her nonprofit organization, the *Humane Animal Rescue and Trapping Team*. She began by hosting training sessions on humane trapping practices and establishing her own team of trappers in Maricopa County.

Today, HARTT has 14 humane trapping specialists and 20 other volunteers who conduct lost dog searches and support trapping efforts. Naumann estimates that she and the HARTT team have

helped rescue about 500 animals, including 250 in the last year.



Lucky the Shepherd enjoys a feeding station just days before being humanely trapped

HARTT's work is broken down into four parts: lost dog and pet searches; lost pet search consulting for pet owners outside of Maricopa County; humane capture training; and the fourth and biggest component, humane trapping.

Naumann told **PDM** that almost all of her volunteers are people with full-time jobs who contribute their spare time because they are passionate about helping animals.

HARTT's volunteers learn about animals in need through social media and a vast network of volunteers. Maricopa County Animal Care and Control (MCACC) also forwards difficult cases to HARTT. Naumann said they focus on animals that are in distress, hard to capture strays, and lost pets.

Naumann also said the dogs they trap aren't hard to catch because they are aggressive. Rather, they are shy and not confident. She thinks 99 percent of the dogs would never hurt a human. They are just socially awkward around people. "Pets go into complete flight mode when they are lost and scared. They won't even come to their owners," Naumann continued.

Another thing that sets HARTT apart from other animal organizations is the hours they operate. Unlike most animal welfare organizations, HARTT does most of its trapping between dusk and dawn, which is when most of the shy, skittish animals they seek are active.

"Most organizations can only be out on the scene for ten or 15 minutes to try to rescue a dog ... and then there are so many other calls, they have to go on to the next animal. There was just this unmet need," Naumann said. "We are filling a void right now that no one else is filling."

Sydney Zordani got involved with HARTT



Angie Casto reunited with her lost dog

after she learned about them from a volunteer who trapped a dog who had been living at a park near her home. Zordani got her first assignment last October and helped by putting out food and water for a stray dog near her home. She never thought she would



Cotton enjoys ice blocks provided by HARTT volunteers to keep him cool, prior to his capture

work on the trapping aspect of the job.

Other than caring for her own pets, Zordani had little experience working with animals, but she decided to step up and become a trapper.

"It's just so gratifying to be able to get a scared dog off the street and out of the heat," Zordani shared with **PDM**. "Some of them turn around so quickly and you can just see them understanding that they are safe."

A dog that HARTT recently trapped was also one of their most difficult cases because the Pit Bull was extremely skittish, very trap smart and very fast. They estimate that he had been living in a field for at least ten months. That case required Naumann to build a large custom dog trap.

To desensitize the dog to the trap, Naumann assembled it slowly, piece by piece, until the dog grew comfortable with it and she could finally place the door on the trap. Zordani grew close to the dog in the months that it took to rescue him. She named him Cotton because he was living in a cottonfield south of the University of Phoenix Stadium.

"I can finally exhale now that he's safe, because there's a ton of construction going on over there," she said, days after they caught him. "It was very scary because he was possibly running out of time and with how hot it was getting, we definitely wanted him to be out of there as quickly as possible."

Aside from helping MCACC with difficult cases, Al Aguinaga, manager of shelter and field operations, says that one of HARTT's most important contributions to the community is its humane dog trapping classes, which are essential for the safety of the trappers and the animals they are working with.

Naumann said they currently have more calls than they can handle, so they prioritize the cases involving lost pets and animals who are injured, sick or in imminent danger, or those who are in close proximity to volunteers, allowing for speedy trappings.

HARTT aims to increase their volunteer base to 250 within the next three years. If people don't have the time to volunteer, Zordani encourages them to help HARTT through donations.

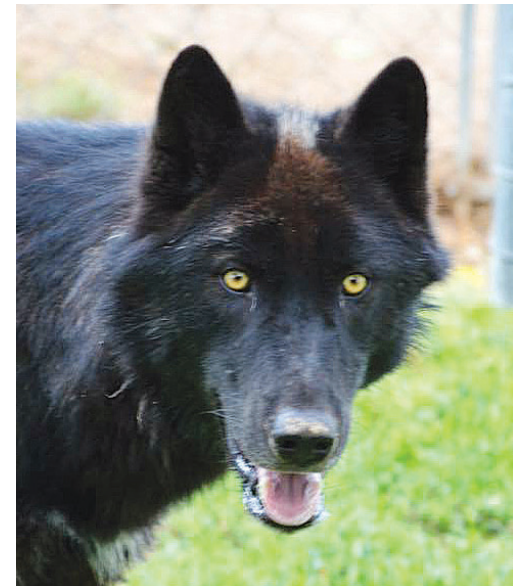
"We all not only donate our time, but the gas, miles in our car, dog food. The traps and all the equipment that HARTT uses are expensive," she said. "As we are growing, we are going to need to buy more equipment and we can't keep doing that all on our own. We definitely rely on the public and people who feel compelled to donate."

As for Luna, nine days went by and although plenty of people had reported sightings of Luna, she kept moving. Each time the

HARTT volunteers received a call, by the time they got there she was gone. On May 21, she finally walked into the trap set in a desert wash close to where she had been most recently spotted.

Everyone was relieved when Luna was finally back home, but Griffin thinks the reunion was more emotional for Justin because he felt personally responsible for what happened.

"Watching what his wife went through for a whole week, crying every day, I think he was the happiest to see her," Griffin said. She still tears up when she talks about their ordeal.



Lobo the wolfdog safely trapped by HARTT in July 2018



Luna FINALLY finds and enters a humane trap after 8 days loose near Anthem

"There are so many people that were involved - if it weren't for all those people, we wouldn't have her back today because there is no way we would have been able to do that," Griffin said. "The amount of people that put their time and energy into helping our family, it's just something that you can never repay."

Track down more info on HARTT and keep their information handy in case the need comes up in your community: www.azhartt.org or facebook.com/azhartt.org