



Amy and Joyce focused on relieving suffering as a common goal; one which tribal families agreed was what they wanted for their animals. Often pet owners told them they wanted to do the "right thing" for their dogs or cats, but didn't know what the right thing was. And if they did know what to do they didn't know how to do it or pay for it.

Amy remembers several years ago walking during her lunch hour and passing by a home with a painfully thin young dog with his skin red and mottled with mange (See before and after photos of Bear on the right). She decided to visit the dog's owner and talk with him about his dog's health. The owner was quick to say that he was considering having his dog put down because of its poor health. The dog, Bear, refused to eat and was losing weight at an alarming rate while his skin only got worse. The owner shook his head sadly. He loved his dog, Bear, and didn't want it to suffer any longer, but didn't believe there was anything that could be done to save his dog's life.

Amy and Joyce convinced the man to at least let a vet examine Bear, and see if anything could be done to relieve the dog's suffering short of euthanasia. If the veterinarian said nothing could be done, then his dog could be euthanized humanely at the vet's office. Rez Animal Resources would pay the medical bills.

Bear had an abscessed tooth, which, once removed, allowed him to eat again and gain weight. He also had a severe, but treatable form of mange. At a crossroads in Bear's care, another conversation with the dog's owner was now needed: Would he commit to do the rather lengthy, extensive home treatment for his pet's mange? Happily, he did, and now, several years later, Amy is delighted to see a happy, healthy looking Bear on her walks around the Reservation.

Step by step, Rez Animal Resources and Education has reached out to members of the five tribes they serve. They balance visits with individual tribal members, talking with tribal councils and writing articles for the Tribal Newspapers. Rez Animal Resources attends the various community fairs and the yearly Tribal Health Fair. In addition to the small grants they have begun to get larger amounts of funding from the tribes themselves as the tribal council members realize the positive effect Rez Animals Resources and Education is promoting within their Tribal communities.

Amy and Joyce have goals for 2012 that include discussing with Tribal Councils the development of Animal Control Services, and a long term (5 or more years) goal of creating a Tribal Animal Shelter.

While continuing to raise the level of animal care on the reservations, Rez Animals now adds the focus of reducing the number of stray animals in tribal communities. Rescuing stray Rez dogs and cats and finding them forever homes is another focus in 2012. Lacey PetSmart and Olympia Petco host Rez Animals on weekends they have animals to adopt. Check their website: www.rezanimals.com and click on the Adoption Link to see available pets.

What Does Rez Animal Resources Need from Pet Connection Magazine Readers?

1) Foster families for dogs and cats who need medical care. Foster home volunteers must be willing to commit to provide medical care for the animal until it is healthy

Medical treatment for this dog provided by Rez Animal Resources & Education



Before: Severely emaciated dog with mange and jaw infection



After: 6 months later after receiving antibiotics and treatment for mange

Rez Animal Services

Improving the Quality of Life for Animals on 5 Tribal Reservations By Halina Kiljanczyk

When bags of dog and cat food are donated to Rez Animal Resources, the food isn't just left in a storage room at the Tribal Offices awaiting pet owners to come pick it up.

Amy Loudermilk and Joyce Bell, founders of Rez Animal Resources and Education, take the food to the tribal member's homes and visit with families and their pets. It's this kind of personal attention and respect that has made this non-profit a success among the 5 Tribes Rez Animal Resources serves: Chehalis, Nisqually, Skokomish, Shoalwater, and Squaxin Island Tribes.

In 2006, prior to establishing Rez Animal Resources Amy describes going to the Tribal Office each morning and finding the porch filled with stray dogs waiting for someone to feed them. Many of the dogs had fleas or mange; none had been vaccinated; and spaying and neutering was not even considered. Many were extremely thin, obviously malnourished. Whereas dogs were a part of daily tribal life, many members having multiple dogs and great affection for their pets, both resources and education for pet owners was absent, so the health and safety of tribal communities was at risk. Without any formal animal control services, stray dogs formed packs and dog bites were common. Without any spay or neuter services, dogs continued to breed. And without vaccinations, illness and death of pets were accepted as the norm.

Amy and co-worker Joyce both thought "There has to be a better way of life for animals on the reservations!"

Amy and Joyce had jobs at several of the Southwest Washington Indian Reservations over the years and both were animal lovers.

After rescuing a few stray animals (they still do limited rescue and are listed on Petfinder), they found that the need of tribal members was for resources to care properly for their pets and education as to the needs of their animals.

Amy and Joyce began looking for donated pet food and money to pay for tribal pets' vaccinations, medical care, and spaying and neutering. Small grants through various foundations helped, an area Target Store provided a steady supply of fresh pet food. Amy and Joyce set out to let tribal members know the resources they now had for their pets. They began to educate people about their options for their animals to live healthier lives and not suffer with treatable conditions.

At first, the offer of help, other than pet food, was met with disbelief- after all, generations of tribal families were used to their pets dying often without a thought that their dogs or cats could be saved an early death, or at least not suffer while living. It was reasoned that with all the stray animals around, a replacement pet would soon be found. Illness, suffering and death of their pets were accepted as the norm.

enough to be adoptable. In the case of mange treatment this can be 2-3 months. They prefer foster families to be in cities and towns near the 5 reservations they serve (i.e.: Olympia, Chehalis, Centralia, Shelton, etc.) You do not need to be a tribal member or live on tribal land to foster. Rez Resources will provide food and pay for medical care for foster animals.

2) Fresh dry and unopened canned pet food. May drop off at Hawks Prairie Vet

3) Large dog houses, to provide shelter from the weather for those dogs living outside their home.

4) Collars, leashes and harnesses, again most in large sizes. Mismatched colors are fine to donate!

5) Monetary donations. All donations will be used for direct pet care (medical treatment, vaccines, spay and neuter surgeries, etc.) Rez Animal Resources is all volunteer, and, unlike some animal welfare organizations, they don't limit the number of cats and dogs spayed and neutered per household (this way all pets in a household are altered, not just 1 or 2), thus their need for monetary donations will always be great, and are only used to directly improve the quality of life of reservation animals.

Contact for Rez Animals: Amy Loudermilk at 253- 370-6392 or visit website at www.rezanimals.com