

Noah's Ark offers foster homes for pets

By Maura J. Halpern

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They may not realize it, but Frito Bando, Kendall, Bryson and Marilee are some of the lucky ones.

Seven weeks ago, the wide-eyed, playful kittens were rescued from a neighborhood where they had little chance of survival.

Now they have plenty of food, toys and warm places to sleep in the spacious "cat room" in Andrea Traganza's home.

As a foster volunteer with Noah's Ark Pet Adoptions, Traganza, who works in Peoria's community services department, has provided a haven for more than 200 cats and kittens over the past 4½ years.

Some stay for days or weeks — others months — until they are adopted.

The rescue organization does not have a shelter; so foster volunteers house the animals and bring them to the Arrowhead PetSmart store on the weekends for adoptions.

Individuals can also browse the group's "cyber shelter" on Petfinder.com to view available animals.

The need for fosterers has intensified as the Valley grows and shelters continue to overflow with stray, surrendered and abandoned animals.

"The more volunteers out there that can foster, the more animals we can help," said Traganza.

A 2005 study by the Society of Animal



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Andrea Traganza fosters cats and kittens for Noah's Ark Pet Adoptions.

Welfare Administrators revealed Maricopa County has the second-highest turn-in rate of unwanted animals in the country, behind Los Angeles.

Among the top reasons for relinquishing a pet includes moving, pet maintenance costs, landlord issues and allergies, according to the National Council on Pet Population and Study.

"It's a shame because in most cases,

Looking to foster or adopt a pet?

■ Glendale-based Noah's Ark Pet Adoptions is a volunteer-run organization supported through donations, memberships and adoption fees. The organization does not have a shelter, so foster volunteers are needed to temporarily house cats and dogs. For more information, call (602) 298-9108 or e-mail genie03@cox.net.

■ Noah's Ark holds adoptions every weekend at the Arrowhead PetSmart store at 73rd Avenue and Bell Road. Adoption hours are 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturdays and 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sundays.

■ To search adoptable pets, learn how to donate and find out more about the organization, log on to www.NoahsArkAdoptions.Petfinder.com.

problems can be avoided if pet owners would just plan ahead," said Traganza, who lives in north Phoenix. "People need to make a commitment when they adopt an animal. Anything less is irresponsible."

Noah's Ark volunteers scoop up animals from the euthanasia list at the county pound and rescue them from rural areas around Arizona, such as Snowflake, Pine-top and Grand Canyon National Park.

"There's a better chance of those animals getting adopted in the Valley," Traganza said.

Since its inception in 1999, the Glendale-based Noah's Ark has found homes for more than 6,000 cats and dogs.

Dawn Boyer, one of Traganza's co-workers in Peoria's community services department, also fosters.

Over the past eight years, she has temporarily housed hundreds of dogs and puppies for the Arizona Humane Society.

"A lot of our animals have been adopted to friends or people we work with," said Boyer, who lives in Glendale. "Almost everyone in our office has a rescued animal. My boss has two."

One main advantage of fostering animals is they can acclimate to a normal home environment, which makes them more suitable for adoption, Boyer said.

"Since I get to know the dogs' personalities so well, I can make a better match," she said.

While Traganza and Boyer acknowledge their work is a small part of a much larger effort, they celebrate their successes one adoption at a time.