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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Award recognizes HSSA Veterinarian, spay/neuter efforts**

The Humane Society of Southern Arizona's Lead Veterinarian, Dr. Erika Hartle-Schutte is one of four recipients of the 2014 Neighborhood Cats/Humane Alliance Veterinarian Scholarship. This is the first year for the scholarship program, which was launched to help increase spay/neuter capacity in communities facing a shortage of affordable spay/neuter care.



Dr. Hartle-Schutte will take part in a four-day state-of-the-art training for high-volume spay/neuter surgeries at the Humane Alliance training center in Asheville, N.C.

Upon returning home, Dr. Hartle-Schutte will be able to put her new skills to work and share her knowledge with colleagues at the HSSA. Ultimately Dr. Hartle-Schutte's training will help the HSSA clinic have a stronger impact on the community's overall ability to manage the feral and companion animal populations.

In the last year the Humane Society of Southern Arizona spayed or neutered 1,855 feral cats through the Trap Neuter Return (TNR) program and sterilized 10,603 owned pets and pets in our care. This number is something to be proud of, yet the number of homeless pets in the Tucson area has remained steady. Prevention is the key to decreasing this number, and the HSSA is working to expand its capacity for spay and neuter.

According to the Neighborhood Cats, Dr. Hartle-Schutte was selected because "Tucson is among the nation's most impoverished large metro areas. In 2011 it was ranked sixth-poorest with a poverty rate of 20.4%. The city urgently needs more free and affordable spay/neuter services for community cats and owned animals. HSSA has demonstrated its commitment to finding solutions for ferals by being the only clinic in Tucson to place no restriction on the number that may be treated per day, and by dedicating space within the clinic for their care. As lead veterinarian, Dr. Hartle-Schutte will be key to the success of the city's TNR efforts."

Dr. Hartle -Schutte comes to the HSSA with just as much experience as dedication. She received a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree from Colorado State University and completed an in-depth internship at VCA West Los Angeles specializing in small animal medicine and surgery. She has extensive experience working internationally in Mexico at high-volume, high-quality mobile spay/neuter clinics. Dr. Hartle-Schutte joined the HSSA in June 2014 after working in private practices in Tucson since 2007.

For more information about the HSSA's Low-cost Spay & Neuter Clinic and TNR program, visit [hssaz.org](http://hssaz.org).

For more information about Neighborhood Cats, visit [neighborhoodcats.org](http://neighborhoodcats.org).