Meeting Notes – Nov. 14, 2023

The LaFayette Rotary Club met on Tuesday, November 14, 2023. Rotarian Dantz Frazer (pictured on the left) introduced our guest speaker, Amber Mingin (pictured on the right) of the Chattahoochee Humane Society (CHS). Amber Mingin is the new executive director of the Chattahoochee Humane Society (CHS). She has been in that position since June 2023. She considers the job of the CHS to find every animal a home. In addition to promoting animal adoption, the CHS is trying to help people keep their pets, rather than turning them over to the CHS or abandoning them. CHS is able to provide food, medical evaluations, and even fencing to help pets remain in their homes. They offer a spay and neuter program as well. The number of strays has skyrocketed recently and the CHS is making every effort to address that. The CHS is striving to become a no-kill facility. Amber reported they have not had to euthanize any animals due to lack of space in a while. Those animals that have been euthanized were aggressive and unable to be rehabilitated. Some aggressive animals could possibly be rehabilitated but the budget does not allow for the necessary resources to be able to do that.

A push is on to rebrand the facility and to increase their brand presence, including increased use of social media. In conjunction with the rebranding, the center is working to improve their outreach efforts within the community. They are selling yellow t-shirts as part of their branding effort and are hoping the community will soon associate the color yellow with the Chattahoochee Humane Society. The CHS currently has three full time employees (including Amber) and two part-time employees. She expressed they really need at least one more employee, but do not have the funding to hire someone. Volunteers are essential to the success of CHS. Volunteers can be used at the facility or at the adoption events that are held.

It typically costs $100.00 to adopt a pet from CHS. That $100.00 covers the cost of the spaying/neutering. The CHS has contracts with the City of Lanett, the City of Valley and with Chambers County. Lanett and Valley each provide 25% of the $145,000 budget and Chambers County provides 50%. The budget allows for about $25 a day to be spent on each animal and the actual cost is about $45.00 a day. The CHS is also adding some benefits for employees in an attempt to retain them. The contracts have not been renegotiated in years and that is something that is currently being worked on. Amber is also exploring additional revenue streams to supplement their budget, since the budget does not cover all of their costs.

Since June, CHS has added 15 additional dog kennels, which doubled the number of dogs they could house. There are now 16 lower kennels and 13 larger kennels. CHS also has a cat room that houses about 10 cats and an additional eight kennels for cats. The CHS is currently at full capacity. They have recently opened a pet thrift store where people can pick up food, supplies, and toys for a donation. They have partnered with John Soules Foods and that company offers a donation bin for their employees to make contributions. CHS is striving to meet not only the physical needs of the animals, but the emotional needs as well. They offer calming toys for the animals, and they make sure the animals are walked each day.

Last year the CHS completed 54 adoptions. To date this year, they have completed 228. Not only have 228 pets found homes, but 228 pets have been spayed and neutered. This helps to address the problem of strays. Currently 18 animals are being fostered. Appointments for people who need help in keeping their pets in their home are currently booked through the end of December.

The CHS is open Monday-Friday from 10:00-5:00 EST. Previously, they were closed on Wednesdays, but are now open. They are open some Saturdays if they are not sponsoring an adoption event. They currently do not have enough staff to both stay open on Saturdays and to hold an adoption event. If you are interested in volunteering, please call the center at 334-756-9377.

Diane Sherriff