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Dear Mayor Miyagishima and Animal Service Center of the Mesilla Valley Board of Directors,

As you know (and as some of you have agreed in our most recent communications with you), today is a sad day for Las Cruces. Courtesy of the global reach of social media, people around the world have now watched in horror as the very person put in charge of carrying out the mission "*to provide safe shelter for all lost, mistreated, and abandoned animals of the Mesilla Valley and surrounding communities*" for the city of Las Cruces squandered away precious television air time that could have been used in so many ways to make a case for the adoption of animals. It even could have been used to launch a multifaceted broad based appeal to the community for their help, involvement and support but instead, shelter director Dr. Beth Vesco-Mock made a decision to stage the execution of a dog on the 5 o'clock local television news. While this morbid, if not twisted stunt may shock a number of people into adopting a few animals, it pales in comparison to the tens of thousands of people that have now been disgusted and alienated. This act is equivalent to cutting off your nose to spite your face.

What may be more disturbing and unacceptable is that we have just learned that unfortunately, Las Cruces has been here before. We now understand that this act was actually the second televised execution of an animal from this facility by Dr. Vesco-Mock within the past year, yet no action of real remedy was taken by anyone at that time. Unlike the past, we fully expect that swift and appropriate action be taken today. Not tomorrow. Not next week but TODAY.

Whether or not Dr. Vesco-Mock and her appointed supervisor of killing, Mr. Curtis Herring, suffer from some level of psychosis or PTSD resulting from being involved in the daily killing of so many innocent healthy and treatable companion animals matters not. The decision to commit this stunt for families and children to view is completely unacceptable and completely out of alignment with the mission of ASCMV which states in its entirety:

*"The Mission of the Animal Service Center of the Mesilla Valley is to provide safe shelter for all lost, mistreated, and abandoned animals of the Mesilla Valley and surrounding communities. The Center utilize...s all avenues available to it in placing each animal into a safe, loving, and permanent home whenever possible. We strive to meet the highest standards of humane animal care and husbandry, and to promote responsible pet ownership through public education and outreach."*

The horrific decision made and act performed by Dr. Vesco-Mock and Mr. Herring under service to the animals she pledges to "*provide safe shelter for*" and to the Las Cruces tax-payers funding the ASCMV payroll, warrants nothing less than an immediate resignation from both Dr. Vesco-Mock and Mr. Herring or a complete dismissal of them both and immediate removal from their positions. They are not only unfit to carry out the mission of on behalf of the tax-paying public, they are unfit to act whatsoever in the interest of these animals who have come to the Las Cruces facility. With their removal we are demanding that this history not be allowed to repeat itself. We are demanding that their positions be filled with employees who have a serious mandate to save the lives of every healthy and treatable animal that enters the Las Cruces shelter system and who will make a commitment to the community of

Las Cruces to implement a key series of life saving strategies (copy attached) that have been proven again and again to be highly successful in various communities across the United States.

Dr. Vesco-Mock and Mr. Herring are sadly mistaken and in their filmed musings are ignorant of the positive state of animal welfare progress taking place all around them in many parts of the country. The homelessness of companion animals in Las Cruces is BOTH a community problem (which deserves the attention and assistance from the shelter through education) AND a shelter problem. Once an animal enters your shelter (ASCMV), they are VERY much YOUR responsibility, regardless of how irresponsible the public is or how that animal came to arrive at your shelter. The excuses given by Dr. Vesco-Mock and Mr. Herring are tired, old and completely inappropriate for the 21st century. Their excuses sound very much like the endless, common excuses presented for the daily killing of healthy and treatable dogs and cats by many other 'sheltered' shelter directors all across the United States. Yet there are many shelter directors across the United States including those in Austin, TX - Reno, NV - Tompkins County, NY - Williamson County, TX - Washoe County, NV who have made it their mission to save lives and PARTNER with their communities. The result? They've gone from saving 10% of the healthy and treatable animals in their shelters to saving 90% (and more in some cases)! The only difference between your shelter and theirs is the WILL of leadership to save lives rather than fall back on tired excuses. Most of the shelters achieving No Kill status are located in cash-strapped communities so How Did They Do It?? Bonney Brown, formerly with Best Friends Animal Society, who now runs one of the busiest and most successful municipal animal shelters in the country can tell you how. When their cash-strapped shelter reached No Kill status, she generously created a map on how they did it for others to follow: <http://www.nevadahumanesociety.org/pdf/HowWeDidIt11-08.pdf> It's quite easy to follow and also allows for flexibility.

When shelter directors have a mandate to focus on life saving rather than killing, MUCH can be accomplished. When there's a mandate to embrace and educate the public rather than vilify them for their lack of knowledge or understanding, save rates of 90%+ can be accomplished WITH the public's help. When you partner with the public and ask for their help (rather than taking your cues from an outdated playbook using the media for a killing sideshow act) look what the public + media + a shelter director's WILL to save lives can accomplish: <http://btoellner.typepad.com/kcdogblog/2011/07/whos-side-is-the-public-on.html>

Before Dr. Vesco-Mock and Mr. Herring decided to kill this dog on TV, did they?:

1. Think at all about how it might be better to utilize their media resources to have them film this dog in his best light and making a case for her adoption and all the other animals waiting for adoption rather than waste your media resources on filming her execution instead?
2. Create offsite adoption events to take this dog too along with others? They did? How many in a 7 days period? How many per month?
3. Upload this dog's photo to the ASCMV's website (oh wait, yes, I see you have uploaded a whopping 113 photos out of the thousands of dogs that are coming into your shelter needing a forever home), email it out to your email lists, your newsletter email list, your rescue groups email list and also upload to Petfinder (another free service to help animals find homes that you can take advantage of)
4. Have a volunteer or volunteer party blanket the dog's photo and other cats and dogs needing adoption from your shelter throughout Las Cruces and beyond using facebook, twitter and even good old paper flyers to all local businesses in Las Cruces who might want to help spread the word?

These are only 4 ways not to have had to kill this dog. There are 100's more ways to save lives being created everyday but the next leaders of the ASCMV MUST change the shelter's focus to saving lives. The public may be the reason the animals enter your shelter but leadership chooses to inject the lethal dose to kill them rather than choosing to save them.

Stop wasting your time and tax payer's dollars. Hire leadership who will start partnering with the public to save lives. The people and animals of Las Cruces deserve nothing less and the city deserves a chance to show the world that these dark days are behind it and the sunshine is finally coming through. Let's turn this around 180 degrees and make Las Cruces the most pet-friendly city in New Mexico. It can happen if you have the will to make it so.

Most sincerely,  
Melissa Roberts, President/Executive Director  
New Mexico Pets ALIVE!