

Pet Costume Contest with a cause

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Halloween is not only for humans to wear costumes. So do do pets. And the cuteness factor is off the charts

The 3rd annual pet costume contest pawed its way into Rio West Mall the night of Oct. 27, bringing pet lovers together for a cause. Whether dressed as a Bumble Bee, Wonder Woman, Beauty & the Beast, Duck Dynasty, Sleepy Hallow, and so on, each costume and contestant dazzled the audience.

The event was hosted by Rio West Mall and Four Corners Pet Alliance, which is a small nonprofit organization founded in 2015.

The money raised from the event goes into a fund for vaccinations, spay and neuter, and supplies for foster homes.

Director of Four Corners Pet Alliance, Babette Herrmann, stated they are currently working closely with Rez Dawg Rescue, Inc. They are looking to grow FCPA as a foundation in the area to raise money for larger local needs as to help save as many dogs and cats as possible.

Purpose of FCPA, according to website:

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- A no-kill rescue
- Was launched to form a bridge of interaction between rescues/shelters in the region
- To better promote and support fostering
- Spay/neutering
- Transferring
- Education
- Animal advocacy
- Adoption programs
- “We don’t have a board yet, though,” she said. “I’ll be asking for people to join our board this year so we can do some things that will make a difference.”
- Working with a partner organization has made all of the difference.
- “Without Rez Dawg, we wouldn’t be able to save so many lives,” she said.

CATWALK

Rio West Mall General Manager, Anita Artalejo, emceed the event and stated that the money fundraised will go towards FCPA.

Entry fee for each pet was \$8. Each contestant was judged based on creativity as they walked the catwalk, or dogwalk in many cases.

This year, they had 27 entries. Mainly dogs, few cats and for the first year, two ducks.

First, second, and third place were awarded. And a special recognition for best owner and pet costume duo.

Prizes included a huge bag of premium dog food valued at \$40 - \$50, treats, a lot of toys, and premium hair products for the owner. The first 10 entries received a goodie bag full of treats.

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“We mainly see dogs, roughly cats and I was surprised to see ducks,” Artalejo said. “Past year we’ve seen a lizard, ferret and a rabbit.”

As judging took place, Gallup Police Department Sgt. Terrance Peyketewa and his K-9 partner, Jayco, demonstrated a few tricks, talked about the work Jayco does, and answered questions for the audience.

TWO BIRDS, ONE STONE

Artalejo stated that the purpose of the event is to also get Rio West Mall more involved with the community. She wants to bring the mall into the community and vice versa.

“We sat down. Had a series of events trying to figure out how to reach each customer, each shopper,” she said. “We know there’s a lot of pet lovers so what better way to bring all the pet lovers together.”

Once the idea sparked, the event routed. And since it was a pet costume contest, they always try to have events associated with nonprofit organizations.

“We met Babette so that’s how she came into the idea,” Artalejo said. “We thought we would collaborate on the two so the event can benefit somehow.”

Whether there’s a need for fundraising or any other events, Rio West Mall is here for the community, she said.

Visit: <https://www.facebook.com/fourcornerspetalliance>

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