

Tucson Citizen

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HUMAN-PET BLOOD DRIVE

Unusual event Saturday includes canines, felines

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A blood drive with a twist this weekend could help save lives: pets' and people's.

The Southern Arizona Chapter of the American Red Cross, the Humane Society of Southern Arizona and the Veterinary Specialty Center of Tucson are sponsoring the drive to bank blood for dogs, cats and people.

Marana resident Jennifer Spires knows what a pet transfusion can mean. Her 19-month-old Italian greyhound, Cannoli, was saved by one.

On Sunday, Cannoli had four healthy puppies delivered by C-section at the center, 4909 N. La Cañada Drive. By Monday night, she needed a transfusion of donated blood. There was no debate on the issue, Spires said.

"If we didn't do something, we would have lost her. I don't even want to imagine what that would have been like," said Spires, 34, who owns UnFauxGettable Finishes, a decorative home painting business.

At Saturday's drive, humans can donate blood. Pets will have small samples drawn for blood typing so they can donate later. The Humane Society will have pets available for adoption.

The effort recognizes the bond people have with their pets, said Jan Woods, hospital administrator at the vet clinic.

"Our theme for this project is 'generosity knows no breed.' By giving blood, you give life, human or animal," Woods said in a news release.

Some people might cringe at the thought of spending thousands of dollars - Cannoli's C-section and transfusion cost about \$3,000 - to keep a pet alive, but the choice was easy for Spires.

"I believe when you get a dog, you keep it for life no matter what the vet bills are," she said.

Her dogs, both weighing under 20 pounds, are too small to donate blood. But she urges southern Arizonans to help if they can.

"If they know how special their dogs are, then they should help out."