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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Desert's Newest Veterinary Clinic Seeing Record Number of Clients**

**Thousand Palms, CA – May 17, 2010:** Animal Samaritans' new veterinary clinic has been open for just over one month now, and the staff has yet to take a rest. Since they opened on April 6, the clinic has served between 100 and 200 clients a day. Over its 32-year history, Animal Samaritans has built a reputation as a leader in low-cost and no-cost spay & neuter services. In time they added Humane Education services, a no-kill animal shelter, pet adoptions, pet foster care, Animal Assisted Therapy, and of course affordable vet care, making them the Desert's most-comprehensive animal welfare organization—and still they continue to grow.

Since opening their new facility in April, Animal Samaritans has been providing more veterinary services than ever before, everything from comprehensive blood analysis and pet dermatology to diagnostic x-rays and pet orthopedics.

"We still have plenty of pet owners coming to us for pet vaccinations and spay/neuter services," says Marie Brunner, the clinic's Director of Operations, "however, our Pet Wellness exams and pet dental services are in high demand."

Brunner, who has worked in hospital management for more than 20 years (both human and animal), says providing subsidized services to qualifying pet owners on a limited income remains a core objective for the organization. Last year alone, Animal Samaritans gave back an estimated \$130,000 dollars to the community in the form of free vet care to low-income seniors, and free spay and neuter services for feral cats.

Animal Samaritans' new clinic features an in-house pharmacy, lab station, pet dental suite, its own oxygen production system, a digital x-ray machine, and a wireless teleradiology system that allows their doctors to send images and medical records to specialists outside the Desert.

Along with new equipment, Animal Samaritans recently hired a third full-time veterinarian. Dr. Rolland Regnery, a graduate of UC Davis' School of Veterinary Medicine, joins Animal Samaritans after several years with VCA Animal Hospital in Rancho Mirage. Fluent in both English and Spanish, he learned his second language while living in Peru on the shores of Lake Titicaca, where he helped locals manage alpacas during a two year stint with the Peace Corps.

Prior to joining Animal Samaritans in 2009, Dr. James Sheltraw ran his own animal hospital for more than 40 years in Northern California. His most challenging patient? A 200 lb. sea lion he x-rayed for the U.S. Navy. Affectionately known at Animal Samaritans as the vet with the golden tongue, he sings in a local barber shop quartet, and for many years was tapped to sing the National Anthem during home games for the Oakland A's.

Since 2003, Dr. Robert Mills has been Animal Samaritans' chief veterinarian, specializing in spay & neuter procedures. Like Dr. Sheltraw, he graduated from Michigan State University's Veterinarian School. Dr. Mills previously worked at The Ramona Animal Shelter in Hemet and The Escondido Humane Society. He also ran his own equine medical practice, and worked many years in small animal veterinarian services. Combined, Dr. Mills, Dr. Sheltraw, and Dr. Regnery have more than 100 years of experience in animal medicine.

In addition to hiring a third, full-time vet, the organization has hired eight additional employees to work in their new state-of-the-art facility; this includes four vet technicians and four front desk staff who double as appointment schedulers as needed. "We're still receiving resumes," says Fred Saunders, Animal Samaritans' Executive Director. "With unemployment rates as high as they are these days, we take pride in putting Desert residents back to work."

Located on The Animal Campus next to Riverside County Animal Services, Animal Samaritans' new veterinary clinic is open Monday through Saturday. Appointments are scheduled between 7:30am and 5:00pm, while clients needing pet vaccinations, pet microchipping, and hygiene services like nail trimming and ear cleaning, may bring their dogs and cats to the clinic without an appointment between 9:30am and 4:30pm.

For directions to Animal Samaritans and the Animal Campus, or to make an appointment, pet owners may call 760-343-3477, or visit their website at [www.animalsamaritans.org](http://www.animalsamaritans.org)

Animal Samaritans SPCA, a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization founded in 1978, is committed to improving the lives of animals and people. As the Coachella Valley's most comprehensive animal welfare organization, they strive to one day eliminate the needless suffering and abuse of homeless and unwanted animals. Programs and services in place to save the lives of healthy and treatable animals include prevention through humane education, low-cost and no-cost spay and neuter, low-cost vaccinations, animal sheltering and pet adoptions. In addition, more than one hundred volunteers from their Animal Assisted Therapy programs visit disabled children in special needs classrooms, nursing homes, and hospitals, while their Animal Assisted Activities teams see residents at Juvenile Hall. More information is available by calling 760-343-4908 and by visiting [www.animalsamaritans.org](http://www.animalsamaritans.org)

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