

Q & A with Cindy Goetz, President of Lost Dogs Arizona

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Losing an animal is a real and undeniable fear for so many pet owners. But beyond the pain of losing your pet, the daunting and seemingly-hopeless challenge of searching for your furry friend is an obstacle that even the most determined of owners are forced to face. Fortunately, there are organizations like Lost Dogs Arizona – which is a local chapter in a much bigger network that is based around the country, which works to return lost pets to their owners as easily and quickly, as possible.

We had the opportunity to talk candidly with Cindy Goetz, president of Lost Dogs Arizona, about her involvement, her pull toward working with the nonprofit and what the process of returning lost animals to owners really entails.

What exactly is your role with Lost Dogs Arizona? How long have you been working with the organization?

I am president of the organization and have been president since the beginning of 2015. I have been president for over four years, and I had been a volunteer for two years prior to that. We just incorporated and became a nonprofit when I took the role of president over in the beginning of 2015.

What attracted you to the sort of work that the organization was doing? And did you have experience working with other nonprofits?

It [the work] is a bit different. If you think about rescues – they take in dogs and they find a new home. What we're trying to do is get dogs back home. So, I had just retired and I was looking for a way to work with dogs in particular, and I was very bothered by all of the euthanasia that happens within our shelters. I had seen Lost Dogs Illinois, and we were patterned off of them, but we were already existing when I moved here. Which is kind of why I joined – it's different and it's a different way of helping animals, but we do directly impact euthanasia rates. For any dog in a shelter, the best place for that dog to go is back with their family. Of course, if that doesn't work, then you look at adoption or rescue organization options. So, I love that way we reduce euthanasia rates and that we help families, because pets are family. And there's such a need for this. When an owner loses their dog, it's very difficult and there's a need for help and support.

So, for our readers who might not necessarily know the kind of work that you're doing, can you talk a little bit about what the process is like and what precisely the work is that you guys are doing to return these lost dogs back to their homes?

Yeah, that's a great question because there are a lot of different groups out there doing a lot of different things. So, let me kind of give you an overview: we are one of 35 organizations involved in the same thing across the country. We are a part of a larger network [Lost Dogs] and our organization is called Lost Dogs Arizona – so, we are the Arizona piece of that network. All of the 35 different organizations have partnered with a company called "Helping Lost Pets" which is an organization that provides us with an online map and a database that both help us to keep information on all of the lost dogs within the state, as well as information about found dogs. All of that information is then on a map and is completely searchable. What we do is we ask the owner to submit an online form about their dog – that gets their animal's name, gets it in the database and gets it on the map. We also post a social media post for them, so we'll put it on our Facebook and our Twitter. More importantly than that, we have a checklist that essentially says, 'here's what you need to do' if you lost your dog because again, hopefully this only happens once to a family. When this happens families usually don't know what to do and they are emotional and distraught. But we have a checklist that says: 'here's where you go,' 'here's what you need to do,' and we also provide a flyer that's already made. We've got 30-plus volunteers who are talking directly to owners about what they need to do and if issues come up, we help them handle them. So, the organization is really great for the one-on-one support.

For more information on Lost Dogs Arizona, visit its official [website](#).