

He cares for cats, dogs

Local man starts the Second Acts Foundation to fund animal rescues with his own money.

By Tania Chatila
News-Press and Leader

GLENDALE — Michael Brown's passion for animals spans the states.

Ask him why, and he'll say that everybody's got a story.

"When I was a small child, we got a dog, and I think the dog was with us for all of two hours and then it ran away," the 49-year-old Glendale resident said. "That impacted me. I have always had an emotional reaction to seeing stray dogs or cats in

the street, going so far as to watching films of animals that are lost or don't have a home. It's always difficult for me."

But Brown is doing something about it.

He started the Second Acts Foundation in June, a charitable organization that raises money to assist animal-rescue organizations nationwide.

"These rescue organizations are so wonderful because they take in animals and place them in homes," Brown said. "Without them, they would live on the streets, foraging for themselves, or they would end up in a shelter and be euthanized."

Brown, who runs the organization with Executive Director David Spiegel and Vice President Joadi Hulbert, has a donor-advised fund set up with the

Oppenheimer Legacy program — meaning Brown indicates to Oppenheimer where he wants the money to go, and once Oppenheimer has verified the organization is legitimate, it administers the funds.

Brown put in \$10,000 from his own pocket to open it, and has raised an additional \$1,500 through private donations. Some of the money has already gone to help six animal-rescue organizations in various states, including California, West Virginia, Washington and Florida, he said.

"The funds aren't necessarily for getting a dog or a cat from a shelter," he said. "Sometimes it is, but other times it's paying for medical attention or services."

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Brown, who runs the organization mostly from his home, solicits donations from friends, family and neighbors. He also goes out to local pet stores and will be attending local festivals in order to get the word out, he said.

"Everybody has a cause near and dear to their heart and Michael has a soft spot for ani-

mals," Hulbert said. "For as long as I've known Michael, he's always been very generous with animal-rescue groups in the Los Angeles area. I see Second Acts as a very natural extension of that philanthropic spirit."

Brown currently has two rescued pets of his own — Minnie, a 14-year-old shiatsu mix, and Sweetie, an 8-year-old cat.

"I've had the ones that are pure-bred from breeders, I've had the rescues. . . . I just believe that animals are the silent minority," he said. "They are often victims of abuse, neglect and cruelty and not of their own choice. And anybody who has a pet knows they provide unconditional love no matter the circumstance."

Through Second Acts, other families are given a chance to experience some of that unconditional love as well, Hulbert said.

"Pets add a lot of quality to our lives," she said. "We wanted to offer the favor back of rescuing

these pets and offer other families the chance to feel the love too."

And through the Oppenheimer Legacy program, the organization can grow and thrive well beyond its initial founder, Brown said.

"It's a self-perpetuating fund," he said. "It's part of a legacy, and it will go on long after I'm gone. Hopefully this foundation will continue to grow and grow and grow into a large entity, where many more people are involved."

But the goal of saving animals will always stay the same, he said.

"I have a place in my heart for our four-legged friends that provide us with companionship and love," he said. "I want all of them to have good homes."

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Michael Brown, sitting in his home with his dog Minnie, started the Second Acts Foundation, a charitable group to assist animal rescue organizations across the nation.

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