

# Ironwood Pig Sanctuary

Post Office Box 35490

Tucson, AZ 85740

Dear Friend,

April 2023

When you work at an animal rescue facility like Ironwood, you will never utter the words, “My work is done.” Trust me, it’s never done. Just the basics, food and water, can be an all-day affair. We are providing individualized care to 650+ pigs. The caretakers go to a field to prepare meals for pigs that are fed individually in pens. Then they put grain in the troughs for the rest of the herd, take the peanut



Handing Out Meds

butter sandwiches that have medications tucked inside to hand out to the correct pigs, spread alfalfa hay for the pigs to graze on, let the “pen pigs”

out and gather and wash their bowls. Once all that is done, they gather their totes and move to the next field to repeat the process.

The watering team follows the feeders to rinse and refill water bowls in the feed pens and those



Watering

scattered around the fields. There are pools to clean and fill. During hot weather, there are mud wallows to fill so the piggies can keep cool. While the feeding and watering takes place, all staff members are simultaneously checking the pigs for health issues, tucking blankets inside shelters, hanging wet blankets after rainy nights and calling in repairs for the maintenance crew.

The maintenance team constantly gets calls over the walkie-talkie. “Ramsey busted the latch on his feed



Delivering a Shelter

pen again.” “A carpet door got torn off of Goober’s shelter.” “A trough in Spike’s Field needs repairing.” “The shade ramada where Winnie sleeps got blown down.” The maintenance staff also helps with moving pigs from pens to fields, building new housing then delivering them to fields, filling feed stations with grain and hay, transporting pigs to the vet clinic, going on rescues to help with catching and/or loading pigs, etc.



Unloading Pigs

There are many miscellaneous jobs...giving tours to visitors, doing medical rounds, watching new pigs introduced into existing herds, handing out evening meds, trimming hooves, giving IV fluids to a sick pig, helping volunteers, or sorting donations. All these things are necessary to keep the pigs healthy, safe and comfortable. It is your support that makes it possible. We cannot have staff to care for the pigs without your generosity. Thank you for making it all happen!

Sincerely,

Donna Thomason  
Sponsor Coordinator

# Birdie

**A** bad outbreak of an unidentified illness that affected many of our pigs began in mid-December 2022. The symptoms were lethargy, fever, loss of appetite and severe diarrhea and/or vomiting. For some it lasted a few days while others ended up at the vet clinic for a week or more. Numerous tests at different labs across the country never identified the illness. The vets at Adobe Veterinary Center did work out a combination of medications that helped alleviate the symptoms and the majority of the pigs that came down with it fully recovered.



On December 29th, Birdie would not eat breakfast and had diarrhea and a fever. The next day her condition was worse, so she was taken to the vet clinic. Over the next few days, she became extremely lethargic and exhibited behaviors indicative of neurological problems such as turning in circles and nystagmus. The vets were unsure what caused the additional problems but treated her with antibiotics, gastrointestinal medications and



IV fluids to hydrate her. Birdie's prognosis was very poor and we were afraid she wouldn't make it. Things very slowly began to improve. Her appetite came back gradually and by January 4th her behavior was normal. The remaining problem was a consistent fever. Birdie stayed at the clinic a total of 8 days. When she was finally fever free and able to return to the sanctuary, she went to a holding pen to continue her recovery. On January 12th, she happily went back to Kingman Field to join her family. By that time, Birdie had lost a lot of weight due to her illness and began getting extra rations. It was



an extremely rough, scary ordeal this young girl went through but unfortunately, it wasn't over yet.

When the IV catheter was removed from Birdie's ear, the tip had been folded inside the bandage resulting in a loss of circulation. The site where the IV had been was infected and the



dying tissue spread to encompass half of her ear. The dead portion was removed and the infected area thoroughly cleansed. Birdie was put on antibiotics and pain medication. Her ear eventually healed up well. Hopefully, that was the end of Birdie's trials and she can relax and enjoy her life with her family.

...Donna

*If you would like to contribute toward Birdie's medical costs, please dedicate your donation in her name. Her bill came to \$4,128.76. A little Birdie thanks you!!*

# Snow Day!

**T**o those of you up north this may seem silly, but for the pigs and humans at Ironwood Pig Sanctuary it was exciting. On the morning of March 2, 2023, we woke up to over 4 inches of snow. Having snow in our part of the desert is a rare occurrence and this was the second time this year. It was an absolutely beautiful sight! The saguaros were wearing caps of snow on each of their arms. The bushes and trees were weighted



Elvis

together managed to either bend the T-posts or pull them completely out of the wet ground. (It had rained often this winter



down with snow. The pigs' feed troughs had become snow cone dispensers. It was all so different and pretty.

After the initial oohing and aahing over seeing the desert landscape covered with snow, we got down to the business of assessing the damage to the sanctuary. There are lots of shade ramadas throughout each of the fields where the pigs live. These are built with shade cloth attached to T-posts. The weight of all that snow dragged the shades down with many of them ripping at the seams. Several of those that held

and the ground was already soft and soggy.) In a few spots where the shades had been weighted down, the cloth had caught on the hose bib handles and

accidentally turned on the water causing us to lose some of our precious water supply. A quick walk-through across the property got hoses turned off and shades pulled out or off areas that needed to be cleared for feeding the pigs. A more detailed and prioritized list



Gus

of repairs was made later in the day.

Another immediate task was to get all the snow dumped out of the feed troughs to clear the way for the grain. Some of the pigs enjoyed munching on the snow while others experimentally took tentative licks. Benjie gobbled down the line of snow inside a trough as fast as he could. Stitch nibbled on the snow coated creosote leaves while snow sprinkled down on his head and



Chewbacca & Bambi

back with each tug on the limbs. Gus seemed overwhelmed by the snowy mess left outside his house after the shade cloth finally busted. Others stood around looking bewildered. It was a totally new experience for most of the pigs.

The snow was fun, it was different, it was pretty...but it didn't last long. It had all melted away before noon with barely any time to enjoy it before it was gone. Nothing left behind except a muddy mess and a pile of torn shade cloth!

...Donna

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Published at the above address regularly.

NON PROFIT ORG.  
US POSTAGE  
PAID  
TUCSON, AZ  
PERMIT NO. 2216

**APRIL 2023**

**NEWSLETTER UPDATE**

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**Lucinda,  
Resident  
Since 2017**