IRONWOOD IISSSSUUUEE NNOO 6644 MMAAYY 22001155 PRINCESS

IRONWOOD PIG SANCTUARY

14th Anniversary

May 2015

Princess

PIG SANCTUARY
May 2015

Dear Supporter,

Another year has come and gone and we are now celebrating our 14th year at Ironwood. A lifetime ago it seems and for many of our pig friends here it literally has been a lifetime. The average life span of our pigs at Ironwood is 15 to 18 years. Time takes its toll on our herd. During these 14 years an estimated 1,300 pigs have passed through our doors and today our count is 562. Some have been adopted but most have made Ironwood their lifetime home.

We can not turn the clock back in time. The hogs don’t run with their ears flopping in the breeze and Arnold does not meander over the property and ride on the wagon. Life has its seasons and so it has been true with our hundreds of pig companions. Each time Ben and I arrive to pick up a new pig, as we will do tomorrow, they are frightened about what life has in store for them. But Ben and I reassure them on the journey home because we know for their remaining years they will be loved and fed and watered and have shelter and medical care. Soon they learn that they are in a sanctuary, a place of refuge and no matter what their history has been they will now be safe. Their fear from the ride in the van soon disappears and their new life begins.

We watch and follow them from the time they run and frolic in the fields and make new friends until the time comes to retire to an assisted living area where life is slower but with more intensive care. And finally when the time comes to pass from this life at Ironwood to their next journey, they go in peace.

The cycle begins again with the next ride in the van or occasionally when their life has begun here at Ironwood as it did with our five boys; Si, Huratio, Riley, Ed and Jango. We celebrated their first birthday yesterday with a party and Si with his broken elbow was able to join the others for the celebration. We smile and know their journey has just begun and hope as their life passes through its seasons, they will enjoy a life of sanctuary as so many hundreds of other pig friends have done here at Ironwood.

For fourteen years your support has made this journey possible. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Mary Schanz
President & Co-Founder
About 17 or so years ago, Ben, Mary and I were all volunteering at a local pot bellied pig sanctuary called Pigs*A*Lot in Picture Rocks, AZ just outside of Tucson. We did all kinds of things from raking and cleaning the 2 acre area, building or repairing shelters, adding underground pipes with numerous hose bibs and automatic waterers, enclosing the huge carport to make a barn, frequently draining and cleaning the man made pond or just spending time getting to know and love all the pigs. A great deal of our time was spent on providing the pigs with fresh produce that was donated daily from a local grocery store. Things were going along happily with the 100 or so pigs living all together on the property when a total nightmare occurred. Someone dumped an adult boar into the herd during the night. He proceeded to impregnate over 20 females before the sanctuary owner discovered his presence. After a gestation period of 3 months, 3 weeks and 3 days, the pig population suddenly exploded with the births of all those litters. That disaster combined with the fact that Lynette was still receiving phone calls every week from people wanting to release their pigs to her, had Ben and Mary doing some serious thinking of how to handle the now overcrowded conditions at Pigs*A*Lot.

There was absolutely nowhere to expand at Lynette’s place. The only option was to open something new. A search began for property not only suitable for a sanctuary but one that adhered to zoning issues for pot bellied pigs. After looking at several different places, Ben and Mary chose our current location on Crystal Visions Road in Marana, AZ. The name Ironwood Pig Sanctuary was decided on due to the abundance of ironwood trees in the surrounding desert.

As soon as we had our holding pens up and running, Lynette began referring all phone calls for pig releases to Ironwood. Those began in a trickle that soon grew to a steady flow of intakes. Once our field had been fenced in to protect the pigs from desert predators and give them a safe environment, we took a total of 76 pigs from Pigs*A*Lot to relief the overcrowded conditions there. Our East Field became a home to 57 of those pigs while the remainder went to either the West or Special Needs Field, as they needed special care due to health issues.

We continued to help out at Pigs*A*Lot as long as we possibly could and even after our time constraints at Ironwood diminished our availability as volunteers, we kept up with the happenings there. In May of 2003 Ben and Mary found out that the property was going into foreclosure and would be sold at
auction. The previous owner was taking 20 or so of her favorite pigs to a nearby home but leaving the 85 remaining pigs behind. If the county got involved the pigs could have been sent to slaughter or simply euthanized on site because of the large number. We could not let that happen. These were pigs we had known and loved during our volunteer years there. We had less than three weeks to figure out what to do for these pigs. The final decision was to buy the property during the foreclosure sale and keep the pigs there. It was simply too many to move to Ironwood particularly in that short of a time frame. Thus, we now owned what we call our Annex. Over the years we have never added any new pigs to the Annex. Some have moved over to Ironwood as they became older and required more specialized care. Others have sadly passed away. There are now 23 pigs still at the Annex under the care of Andy, one of Ironwood’s employees that lives on site there. These pigs hold a special place in our hearts as they are the roots of the Ironwood Pig Sanctuary and the beginning of our love for pot bellied pigs.

---Donna
Back in the spring of 2001 we were working hard to enclose nearly six acres with six-foot chain link fencing with visions of pot bellied pigs dancing in our heads. When the pigs began coming in June of that year we had the piggies their breakfast. After calling a few names all of them would come trotting up from their hiding places anxious to be fed. All except Blossom! Countless times I would be in a panic when she was nowhere to be found. The vegetation was so thick I couldn’t see her and would go wandering through the field calling her name, shaking the cup of grain, peering in and around the bushes. Blossom would never be in the same spot twice, but I would eventually run across her just sitting there waiting for me to show up. That girl either couldn’t hear very well or had a warped sense of humor and enjoyed watching me worriedly crashing through the bushes.

As time went by more and more pigs came to Ironwood and our little herd began to grow. There came a time when we had a small group of pigs that were not able to thrive in such a big field. Tulley had epilepsy, Ellie Mae’s legs were deformed, Fido was extremely terrified of everything and Travis Magee was old and slow moving. We decided to subdivide our large field and make a smaller area for these pigs which we called our Special Needs Field. Later we took in a group of very thin pigs and fenced off the West Field for them so they could be fed extra rations easily without competition from other pigs. During the winter of that year we took a large group of 57 pigs from an overcrowded pig.

Main Field Today
had our individual pens ready in the holding area but had not yet completed the field where they would eventually live. Soon, though, we had a few shelters scattered around the area and hose bibs with automatic waterers. It was exciting when we moved our first group of pigs into the field and watched them wander off to explore the desert area. Back then the pigs had access to the entire six acres which was still thick with vegetation. The pigs would just disappear into the bushes.

Main Field 2002

Special Needs Field Today

Special Needs Field In 2002

www.ironwoodpigs.org
ironwoodpigs@yahoo.com
sanctuary and made another subdivision of the field just for them since they were already an established herd.

The herd in the original field which we began to refer to as the Main Field, just kept getting bigger and bigger. We suddenly had pigs streaming in from all over the state at a faster rate than we ever expected. Their backgrounds were varied from spoiled house pets, strays running loose in the desert, aggressive young boars, young, old, healthy, lame….you name it, we had it. Some of these pigs were much too shy to handle being part of a big herd and so we had yet another subdivision to create for them. Whenever new pigs are mixed in with an existing group, there is a lot of fighting as they establish their pecking order and find their places within the hierarchy of the herd. It’s a very trying experience for pigs and people. After dealing with the disruptions in their lives many times over, we decided to give the pigs in the Main Field a break. We then fenced off the northern section of their field to create a whole new field for any new healthy pigs coming in. That gave these guys a chance to relax and enjoy their lives at the sanctuary. In June of 2004 a pig sanctuary in Queen Creek, AZ shut down and asked us to take their pigs. Our Northwest Field came into existence to provide a home for those 46 pigs.

Over the years our Main Field took on a very different look and not just because of the hog panel subdivisions splitting it into several different sections. What began as virgin desert had become rather barren of vegetation. The pigs uprooted, ate or destroyed quite a bit of it. We had to put hog panel fencing up around the base of all our saguaros because the pigs used them as back scratchers and were wearing through the skin of the cactus. More shelters including large community houses were built. After much of the vegetation was destroyed the pigs needed shady areas, so we put up shade cloth and t-poles to create ramadas where the pigs could get out of the hot desert sun. As the pigs aged their needs changed and many now required special foods. The old method of one of us “standing guard” by a particular pig while it ate its food was no longer feasible with so many pigs needing our help to get through a meal. Individual pens were built where those pigs can eat their meals without being disturbed by other pigs while giving us the freedom to move on with the care of all the others. We even have a cemetery in the Main Field for the first few pigs that we lost years ago but we quickly realized at the rate we were growing that it wasn’t a good idea to have it there. Three larger cemeteries are in existence in back corners within the fencing of the sanctuary property.

These days we still have many of the original pigs that first came to live in our Main Field thirteen or fourteen years ago. Some are now living in the Assisted Living fields designed for the elderly, some are in Hospice, but 26 of them are still living out in the Main Field. We went for many years with no new additions to the field but
eventually the population had dwindled down and we needed to utilize the area for new arrivals. Now there is a mix of the old and the new generations. Otis, Danny Ray, Major, Angel, Precious and Bobbi are just a few of the older generation that I remember being the youngsters just a few months old upon their arrival. They are now living out their senior years in harmony with a new set of youngsters that includes piggies such as JoJo, Riley, Dharma, Ed and Meleah.

What began for us as a dream of 50-150 pigs living together in one large six acre field has morphed into 26 different field divisions spread over 15 acres containing over 520 pigs. We also have two satellite sanctuaries, one in Maricopa, AZ with 25 pigs and another in Picture Rocks, AZ with 23 pigs. Our current total population from all three sites is a whopping 562 pigs. We’ve had as many as 595 in recent years. I remember years ago when Ben and I were standing out in the Main Field trying to decide where to install a shade ramada, discussing whether the pigs would use it or not at that location. I told him, “Build it and they will come,” a line from the movie Field of Dreams. Well, they’ve not stopped coming yet and it doesn’t look like they ever will! We’ll just keep right on shifting, changing and building to accommodate those pot bellied cuties who need our help.

---Donna

PS: We and the pigs have done great damage to the original desert for the 15 acres of the Sanctuary. However, in our defense we have an additional 100 acres that will be preserved from development.

What Remains Of a Cresote Bush

Hoof & Tusk Trimming

Pig owners in the Tucson, Phoenix and surrounding areas can contact Donna Thomason for pot-bellied pig tusk and hoof trimming. Donna is an experienced trimmer living on site at Ironwood. Donna provides house calls for pig and goat trims. Please call 520-780-8832 or e-mail hoofandtusk@yahoo.com to set up an appointment.
I’ve lived at Ironwood for many years but lost my sponsor last year. Is anyone willing to help me by choosing me to be their special pig?

These pigs are just a few of those needing your help and support. A $30 monthly donation will help cover the basic needs for your pig. In return you will receive a letter with your pig’s background along with photos. Later in the year you’ll get an update with new pictures to keep you informed of your pig’s life. Please join our family of sponsors and become a “pig parent” today!

---Donna

Please, please, please someone pick me to sponsor! I tried in the fall but got no results. Don’t you think I’m cute? I’ll be a good boy, I promise!

My family moved away and didn’t want to take me or my friend Bruce with them. Now I’m hoping to find a sponsor family to love me.
Special Pig!

My doggy friend and I were found roaming the streets of Tucson together. A Good Samaritan came along and got both of us into good homes.

My friend Vicky and I were left behind when our parents ducked out on the rent and disappeared. A neighbor took care of us until the home owner called Ironwood to help.

I am another victim of divorce. When they split up neither of my parents wanted me, but now I have lots of people and pigs who love me.

My family moved away and didn’t want me or my friend Bruce with them. Now I’m hoping to find a sponsor family to love me.

I lived in a crate inside a house for 4 years hiding from the neighbors. Do you think I’m happy to be living in a big open field now? You better believe it!!

Please, please, please someone pick me to sponsor! I tried in the fall but got no results. Don’t you think I’m cute? I’ll be a good boy, I promise!
Growing Old in the Eyes of Lois

When I arrived at Ironwood I didn’t know what to think. There were a lot of pigs around that I have never seen before! You see, I was originally taken in by a kind family when I was wandering the streets back in 2004. I had tons of space; unfortunately too much space. There wasn’t a fence to keep me in our yard so I wandered a lot and enjoyed our neighbors’ yards and flowers. This didn’t go over so well with everyone so I had to find a new home. Ironwood decided that I could roam their property for a while till I was adopted. I lived with other pigs at my new home for 8 years until my mom fell ill and couldn’t keep her home. My new pig family and I moved back to Ironwood.

I started living in a field called Peoria. I was around 9 years old then. Getting around and hanging out with my pals was easy. As I started to age it became a bit rougher for me though. I started to have a hard time getting around. I was slowing down and had trouble walking very far. This is when I was moved to an area called the Cat Shelter. There aren’t any cats here though. I keep checking but haven’t seen any yet.

At first I wasn’t sure if I was here to stay or not so I kept to myself. I found a house to sleep in and was greeted in the morning for breakfast. After a few days I realized this was now where I would reside for good. I became very comfortable here. My neighbors are about the same age as me and I’m even faster than some of them. In fact, I’m doing so well that sometimes I like to get in other pigs’ spaces just to bother them. Someone’s gotta keep them on the tips of their hooves, right? I also have a feeding pen since I eat pretty fast then I like to help my friends finish their breakfast. At first I thought this wasn’t fair, but now I don’t mind since I get juice as soon as I’m done.

In the evenings someone brings us more juice and some fruit. This makes me feel special, especially when I get someone’s extras that they didn’t want. After this my friends and I hang out until we are tired. Someone then comes around to make sure that we are all comfortable. If we need an extra blanket they’ll have one ready for us. Or if we need a little help getting to bed they help with that too.

I’ve made new friends in the Cat Shelter. Some have passed on but I continue to mingle and have someone to share a bed with. I like hanging out with Hondie these days. He gives me my space but let’s me sleep next to him to keep warm.

In the summers when I was younger, I used to stay in the shade with my friends and go for dips in the wallows. I can still do that now but I also have a mister system that keeps me cool when I’m not in the wallow. How neat is that!? Someone also comes around a few times during the day in the summer to make sure that my friends and I aren’t hot and gives us a cool towel to wear on our shoulders if we are. Sometimes I think I’m at a spa, I mean we even have mud baths! We get this cream on our faces too that helps keep the flies away.

I’ve had a few homes growing up but I’m happy to be growing old at Ironwood. I’ve got everything I need and more. Some days are harder if my legs are hurting but knowing that I don’t have to compete with younger pigs is a relief. Plus I know that every day I’ll be taken care of and that I’ll be checked on. I like my new pig friends and my caretakers. I feel safe and spoiled. I’m still waiting to see a cat though.

---Lois
Front and Back Covers

In keeping with our fourteen year anniversary we are featuring some of our truly old timers.

Princess was one of our very first pigs. We took our first pigs here at Ironwood on June 10th 2001 and Princess arrived on July 6, 2001. She was three years old then so she is now 17 years old. Ben and I picked her up in Tucson. The lady said she had her own business and had no time for her, but I think the real reason was Princess had become aggressive as many single pigs do and she was becoming afraid of her.

Princess lived in our Main Field for many years. She and Miss Saigon became best friends and when they got older and more arthritic we moved them both into a smaller area together until we lost Miss Saigon. Now Princess has moved to one of our hospice areas where she has new friends and while older and slower, she still is doing well. She is one of several Princess pigs here at Ironwood, but she was the first.

Georgia and Bobbi are mother and daughter. We picked them up in March of 2002 along with 3 boars, Waylon, Kris, and Willie. All were named by Donna and you may see the connection to country singers since she is a fan of country music.

The man we picked them up from was less than friendly. He said his mom had taken in several pigs from people who did not want them. His mother passed away and he didn’t want them either. So we took all of them. Georgia and Bobbi have remained very close all of these years. They all lived in our Main Field their whole lives. Waylon, Georgia, and Bobbi are the three who have survived until now. Georgia is slowing down and having some health issues. The remaining three are all well into their teens, even cute little Bobbi. It is hard to think all these years have passed and Bobbi is now about 14 years old herself. She was a cute little youngster when she arrived. We are so delighted to have been able to keep mom and daughter together all these years.
Riding Off Into The Sunset

Many of our 26 different field areas have directional names like Northeast, West and even Far Northwest. A few of the fields are named in honor or memory of particular pigs like the Princess Field, Spike’s and Comanche’s. Our third largest field located on the west side of the property is named Sunset. I was confused by a question from a visitor as we walked through the Sunset Field. She wanted to know why so many young pigs lived there. In her mind, she was thinking the sunset went along with being elderly and reaching the end of their years. But no, the Sunset Field is named simply because of its westerly location and has a mix of young and old pigs. It is currently home to 44 pot bellied pigs.

In this article I’d like to take one particular field as an example, in this case the Sunset Field, and talk about how we decide who lives there, how that specific group of pigs is cared for and how we keep track of each individual pig.

When Ironwood outgrew its original six acre field, we extended the facilities for the pigs by putting up six-foot chain link fencing around another six acres on the west side of our property. Those six acres were subdivided into different fields. The Sunset Field was established for the younger, healthier pigs coming in; those that would need no specialized care. Some arrived in small groups of 2-5 while others came alone from individual homes. Herd members have changed over the years with some passing away and a couple moving to Hospice. Just recently at the end of February 2015 we added six new pigs from our holding pens to Sunset due to the declining population. We based the decision for this particular group on each individual pig’s personality and physical condition, thinking that all six would fit in with the existing herd.

Each of the 44 pigs living in Sunset has a name. When they arrived at Ironwood an identification card was made for them. It has their picture, name and notes on any distinctive marks or scars as well as mention of any personality details such as tame, skittish, or aggressive that would help with identifying them. We have several photo albums sectioned off by field names with all of that field’s pigs’ identification cards in them. This helps us with pigs that look similar to one another but is also helpful with new staff members who have not yet learned who everyone is (and with 562 pigs to learn, it takes a while!)

We try to keep track of where each pig sleeps out in the field. We like to know who their friends are and where they hang out. For the most part, the pigs will establish one section of the field as their territory and use the shelters within that “home base” perimeter. Many pigs use the same house for years and years while others drift back and forth, maybe spending some time alone in a small shelter then going back to a group of buddies in a larger home. Some that came to Ironwood together like Tori, Slater and Screech have always shared a large house. Others have made new friends after arriving like Vaughn and Corgi or Bo and Penelope. It is helpful to know who is sleeping where in case something happens. Say, for example, Patches doesn’t show up for breakfast. If we know which house is hers that would be the first place to check and make sure she is okay. Maybe we don’t
know exactly which house, but we do know she hangs out on the south end of the field and can begin our search there. An unpleasant discovery like a shelter with blankets covered with vomit is another time it’s good to know who normally sleeps there. That would be the pig that needs to come in to a holding pen for observation and medication.

Because of our large population at the sanctuary and the vast amount of time and manpower needed to feed, medicate and water all the pigs, we only feed once a day. The same routine and order of feeding is important. The pigs know when their turn is coming and will begin to gather at the front gate of their field. If, for some reason, we chose to feed another field or two in a different order those pigs will begin to get frustrated at the delay then start taking it out on one another. If we keep the feeding in the same routine and at a quick pace, everyone can get fed before the arguments break out. Sunset is the fourth field to be fed every morning. The piggies know when the feed team walks past to deal with the first three fields, that their turn is coming soon. Those who eat in the upper section of the field begin to meander closer and closer to the gate while the group that eats in the south end gather near their feed troughs.

Quite a few of the pigs eat in individual pens for various reasons and will stand by their own pens to wait for someone to let them in. Seven of these have special mashes prepared for them ahead of time. Cheesecake had most of her teeth pulled and needs soft food. Allison drinks a ton of water along with each meal and having a mash rather than dry pellets helps her from losing so much food in the bottom of her water bowl. Porky ingests a lot of dirt while grazing on hay and needs to take psyllium granules to aid his digestion. He is overweight and doesn’t need the extra calories from a peanut butter sandwich which is how the meds are administered to the pigs, so he gets his meds added to a mash instead. Others are fed regular dry grain but still eat in an individual pen for different reasons. Charlotte is on a diet, Francis is older and can’t compete in the troughs any longer, Zelda is nearly blind and does better eating alone, Vaughn needs extra rations to keep his weight up, Johnny is food crazed and can’t control himself. The list goes on with quite a few pigs eating in pens in the Sunset Field.

The remainder of the herd eats from feed troughs that are scattered throughout the field. Once all the “pen pigs” are inside their pens with their breakfast, the two staff members feeding the field communicate their readiness over the two-way radios and begin filling the troughs at their respective ends of the field at the same time. This keeps the pigs from the south end from eating all their grain first then running over to the main section of the field to devour those pigs’ food. While the “trough pigs” are eating, the feeders spend some time passing out the sandwiches with the meds inside and tucking in blankets into houses while observing the pigs, on the lookout for anything out of
the ordinary. Are the newest additions to the field getting into the routine and getting their fair share of food? Is anyone limping that normally doesn’t and why are they lame? Do you hear a pig coughing and which one is it? Has someone been in a fight and perhaps have an injury that needs medical attention? Is Rene having problems with her eyes again? With 44 pigs in a field you have to remain alert and be observant at all times. Once the troughs are empty, the pen pigs are let out, feed bowls are collected and cleaned then hay is distributed in small piles throughout both ends of the field.

I briefly mentioned handing out medications in the previous paragraph. That is a chore in itself. There are 22 of the 44 pigs in Sunset who get meds every morning. Each of those 22 pigs has a Ziploc bag with their name on it that has their peanut butter sandwich with their meds inside. Some of these pigs eat in the pens and their sandwich is simply dropped in their bowl to be consumed with their breakfast. Others are trough pigs and have to be found then have their sandwich handed directly to them. Sixteen of the pigs on meds are taking anti-inflammatory medication for arthritis or elbow dysplasia. Five of them take HoofRite and a Vitamin B-Complex due to cracked or weak hooves. Six of the boys take Citric Acid and/or Ammonil tablets because of their tendency for urinary tract issues. Four pigs have dry flaky skin and take Vitamin E and Flaxseed Oil. Spidey is a dirt eater and needs psyllium to help his digestion. Chicklet has Irritable Bowel Syndrome and gets a daily dose of probiotics as well as occasional rounds of a stronger medication when she is having diarrhea (another thing to be on the lookout for). A few pigs have acid reducers added to their sandwiches if their medication tends to upset their stomachs. Am I forgetting anything…probably! And this is just for one field of 44 pigs out of 26 different fields!

I didn’t even mention that we built a large pen in the middle of the field that is home to Luke and Cheesecake. They both have arthritis and needed a smaller area to limit their walking but neither was physically ready for one of the Assisted Living areas or Hospice. They are fed and medicated along with the other pigs in Sunset.

Shortly after the pigs in the Sunset Field have been fed, let out of their feed pens and all are grazing on hay, one or two staff members from the watering team come through the field. They have to scrub and refill the water bowls in each of the feed pens to be prepared for the next day’s feeding. The wading pools must be cleaned and filled as well as large water bowls scattered around the feed troughs. There are also water dishes that refill automatically by a float system. These have to be cleaned out every day too as they end up full of hay and dirt when the pigs stick their snouts in to get a drink. Some piggies like to stick their whole faces in the water and blow bubbles!
MISSION STATEMENT

The Ironwood Pig Sanctuary is dedicated to eliminating the suffering of pot-bellied pigs by promoting spaying and neutering, assisting owners and other sanctuaries, and providing a permanent home in a safe, nurturing environment for those that are abandoned, abused, neglected, or unwanted.

* Ironwood Pig Sanctuary is accredited by the American Sanctuary Association.
* The Ironwood Pig Sanctuary is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and your donations are tax deductible.

There is a lot that goes into taking care of the pigs in each of our fields. It's a pretty amazing process to observe a herd being fed and the choreographed approach to getting all the pigs where they need to be and the communication and balance of chores amongst the staff doing the feeding and the watering. Each and every pig is important and thought of as an individual personality with a name. It's time consuming, hard work but they deserve nothing less.

---Donna

Deeanna Doctoring Moody's Ear While He is in His Feeding Pen
Bobbi & Her Mother, Georgia