

The Road to Life

No year ever goes by without a disaster caused by either nature or man. This past year we had floods in the upper Midwest, fires in West and hurricanes in the Southern regions.

This year's Hurricane season has come to a close with only a good wallop in comparison to the damage caused by previous storms to our South and South Western friends and families. Hurricanes Gustav and Ike were formidable in causing loss of life and severe damage to the Gulf Coast area.

We as a club have learned a great deal in a short period of time when it comes to preparations for a hurricane disaster. Gustav and Ike were still a considerable distance from shore when the ARC DC was placed on alert. Several persons who had experienced the Katrina destruction were again contacted and on board with Committee Chairperson Lew Olson. The ARC Board was immediately involved with the pre hurricane preparations. Disaster funds were released from the main account and placed into a access account for use in paying for transportation and medical services for Rottweiler's in need due to these destructive storms.

The ARC DC set up a yahoo group for communications between ARC volunteers, ARC Board and Rottweiler Rescue groups. Several key volunteers had taken on the roles as liaisons communicating with shelters, others visiting overcrowded shelters and still other performing temperament tests on the dogs they found, some just moments from being euthanized. We had volunteers call each ARC member located within the hurricane's path of destruction to see if they needed assistance for their dogs and to just ask if they were okay. Many members were glad to hear from ARC and were given call back numbers should they need to move their dogs to temporary fosters.

We are now in the final stages, as you all know these types of disasters aren't over when the wind stops blowing. From the first days to the weeks after a hurricane, when families evacuate and then return home, animals are lost, abandoned or just left at the shelter. This is when we as a Parent Club make a difference. The ARC DC was ready, willing and able to weather the storm, beginning immediately to search shelters for survivors of the storms. Shelters were notified that ARC DC was available to transport Rottweiler's and relocate to temporary foster homes. Several times a day the shelters would be checked and many times Rottweiler's were found; some being taken right out of the euthanize room once it was learned the ARC DC was on site at the shelter.

Foster homes were made available by many dedicated persons, which made this rescue successful. Several dogs were in very poor shape either from the hurricane itself or prior health conditions and the storm circumstances compounded their conditions.

Prior to fostering, all Rottweiler's would be health checked, local laws required spaying and neutering as well prior to release to either owners or fostering homes. One severe case had one young female that was abandoned during the actual hurricane with a badly broken leg that was later found to be an old break that hadn't been fixed; the bones had grown overlapping each other. She is now on her way to recovery thanks to Southern States Rottweiler Club (SSRR) with the help of ARC DC and the membership of ARC.

Several dogs awaiting transportation to temporary fosters were reunited with their owners and the remainder were transported to their new foster homes. These long distance transports require at least a dozen volunteers to complete the trip. ARC members came through, they signed up for transportation legs, some donated supplies while other made monetary donations. In order to make all of these transports to foster care even possible it takes all manner of help and the members of the ARC and Rottweiler fanciers proved they are truly the Stewards of our Breed.

The last of these transports occurred October 25th from East Texas to the heart of Florida. The final tally of Rottweiler's relocated will be much lower than that of Katrina Disaster but had we not been there these members of our Rottweiler family would have been put down shortly after arrival at the shelters.

This my friends is a road to life, you come out of the storms, you are hurt, confused, tired, you are greeted by a friendly face and finally you are able to find a warm spot to lay down for a while with a promise of tomorrow.

Those tomorrows only happen because of each volunteer, each sponsor, each donor and the dedication we all have to be there for them, our breed the Rottweiler.

Ann Glynn

ARC DC Liaison