

Humane Society University Offers Emergency Animal Care Training

National workshop makes stop in California to prepare volunteers, pet owners.

By Soraya Gutierrez

Posted: July 29, 2008 2 a.m. EDT

Workshops train volunteers to serve at emergency animal shelters in case of an emergency. After Hurricane Katrina, there were between 10,000 and 15,000 cats and dogs handled in temporary shelters throughout Mississippi and Louisiana, according to the Humane Society of the United States. The organization's training arm recently hosted a two-day workshop in Orange, Calif., to prepare volunteers to care for animals in crisis.

The emergency animal sheltering workshop covered topics that promoted self-sufficiency in communities and pet owner responsibilities in the event of a disaster, from hurricanes and wildfires to tornadoes and animal hoarding cases. Training sessions included introduction to disaster and emergency management, community planning, types of emergency shelters for animals and meeting the animals' needs.

Maryann Dell of the Orange County Register speaks at the Humane Society University emergency animal sheltering workshop in Orange, Calif. In addition to HSUS representatives, speakers included Terre Duensing, Orange County Health Care Agency division manager, and Joy Falk of Surf City Animal Response Team. Presentations featured images of animal rescues during disasters such as Hurricane Katrina.

Surveys of pet owners indicate that 44 percent chose not to evacuate for Katrina, unwilling to leave their pets behind. That, according to the HSUS, made it clear that planning for animals must be intertwined with planning for people in order to be effective. Examples of advanced preparations include: Purchasing equipment, such as generators, for community use
Making written agreements for use of equipment and supplies
Training volunteers

By the end of the workshop, volunteers are prepared to serve at emergency shelters for pets and animals evacuated or displaced in an emergency. The national training program is set to make additional stops in Florida, Arizona and Washington.

The American Humane Association also is offering animal emergency training sessions. For dates and locations, [click here](#).