



# LSU School of Veterinary Medicine and Louisiana Veterinary Medical Association



In August and September 2005, Hurricanes Katrina and Rita ravaged the Gulf Coast. The impact of these two storms was tremendous, and the veterinary community responded immediately. Temporary animal shelters around the state were established two days after Hurricane Katrina and remained open through the aftermath of Hurricane Rita.

## Caring for the Hurricane Animal Victims



*Animals sheltered in the LSU AgCenter's John M. Parker Coliseum were cared for by veterinarians and volunteers from all across the country and Canada.*

√ The LSU School of Veterinary Medicine and the Louisiana Veterinary Medical Association, along with local and out-of-state veterinarians and veterinary technicians, provided veterinary care at animal shelters at the LSU AgCenter's John M. Parker Coliseum and the Lamar-Dixon Expo Center. The LSU shelter opened two days after Hurricane Katrina hit and took in more than 500 animals in the first 48 hours. Statewide, over 8,000 pets were cared for in temporary shelters during the largest pet rescue in the history of the U.S.

√ LSU Veterinary Teaching Hospital faculty and staff, with volunteer veterinarians and technicians from around the country, worked round-the-clock in its expanded Intensive Care Unit, which tripled its case load during this time period due to the immense influx of hurricane cases.

√ The LSU Equine Health Studies Program implemented a Horse Hurricane Helpline for horse owners with questions regarding rescue, shelter and veterinary care. The Hurricane Equine Rescue Operation teams of LSU equine veterinarians and staff, private equine veterinarians and numerous volunteers were deployed daily. A total of 490 horses and mules (plus 15 goats and 2 potbellied pigs) were sheltered at the Lamar-Dixon Expo Center.



*Members of the LSU Hurricane Equine Rescue Operation lead a horse to safety.*

√ Veterinary students were integral in the initial start-up of the shelters. The LSU School of Veterinary Medicine created an educational block in Shelter Medicine for Year IV students to earn credit for their work in the shelters.



*Fourth-year veterinary students treat Valentino's wounds in the LSU School of Veterinary Medicine Intensive Care Unit.*

√ People from across the country shipped thousands of pounds of pet food, medical and health supplies to support both the animals and the volunteers.

## The Storm After the Storms

As a result of the devastation of these hurricanes, the veterinary profession in southern Louisiana has been negatively affected. The LSU School of Veterinary Medicine faces a \$1.2 million budget rescission, while struggling to maintain excellent veterinary care for the animals, quality service to the community, and the finest education to our veterinary students. It is with the help of private donations from our friends and colleagues that the tradition of excellence in veterinary medicine in Louisiana will be maintained.

# LSU Veterinary Teaching Hospital Hurricane Survivor Spotlights



*Danielle Reado and her daughter Maighan Bridges visit with Kelsie, who survived five weeks in a flooded house in New Orleans East.*

Kelsie, an 11-year-old mixed breed dog, survived for five weeks in a flooded house with no food. Kelsie was treated for starvation and dehydration and is currently being fostered by one of the LSU veterinary medical residents until she can rejoin her family. Kelsie's owner, Danielle Reado said, "We left her with food and water in her room, but she was found in my bedroom on top of two mattresses and a box spring. The door was wedged shut, and Kelsie couldn't get out to get to her food. My mother and sister

rescued Kelsie and brought her to LSU. We are so happy to see her . . . It's a true blessing that she survived."



*Connie and Andrew Gaspard are reunited Hershey Kiss at the LSU School of Veterinary Medicine.*

Connie and Andrew Gaspard had been looking on-line for their chocolate Labrador retriever, Hershey Kiss. Hershey had been brought to the Veterinary Teaching Hospital from one of the state's animal shelters and was being treated for a skin condition possibly due to exposure to chemicals from the floodwaters in Chalmette, La. Hershey was in the hospital for a few weeks when the Gaspards received a call from a friend letting them know that their dog was at LSU. "We didn't evacuate until the Friday after the storm. We didn't want to leave the dogs. That's the main reason we didn't leave right away," said Andrew Gaspard. The Gaspards are still looking for their female Labrador retriever, but Hershey was released from the hospital and has joined them in their temporary home in Mandeville, La.

Two Doberman Pinschers, Valentino and Diva, were on their own for 16 days before their owner, Phillip Manuel, could get into New Orleans to rescue them. Diva was fine, but Valentino, who was only six months old at the time, was dehydrated and undernourished and had several pressure sores that required extreme care. According to Dr. Mark Acierno, assistant professor of companion animal medicine, Valentino is a "miracle dog" that survived because of the collaboration between the internal medicine, dermatology and surgery services at LSU. Valentino spent many weeks in the Veterinary Teaching Hospital before joining Diva back at home.



*New Orleans resident Phillip Manuel visits with his dog, Valentino, in the Small Animal Clinic.*

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