



# HOPE ANIMAL-ASSISTED CRISIS RESPONSE

## *Outside the Box:*

Ancillary Services that can Maximize Support to Those Impacted by Crises and Disaster

Highlight on  
*Animal-Assisted Crisis Response*

*“Comfort in times of crisis”*



## Mission of HOPE AACR

To provide comfort and encouragement through animal-assisted support to individuals affected by crises and disasters.

# Primary Goals of HOPE AACR

- Train and certify a nationwide network of animal-assisted crisis response teams.
- Form strategic alliances with responders and relief agencies who will call upon us when disasters strike.
- Continually seek ways to improve the delivery of our services, training program, and professionalism.

## Beginnings of HOPE AACR

Following the 1998 shooting at Thurston High School in Springfield, OR, two Delta Pet Partner animal-assisted therapy teams were asked by the Red Cross to offer comfort to students, parents, and the staff.

The work was very well received, and Cindy Ehlers, founder of HOPE, recognized this kind of response would be quite different from traditional animal-assisted therapy visits.



## Beginnings of HOPE AACR

In 2001, following their deployment to Ground Zero, Cindy Ehlers and the teams that responded realized that future crisis response teams would need training that included:

- Emotional first aid
- CISM
- Increased awareness of the canine partners' stress signs
- Training for caring for the dogs during crisis response.





## A Climate of Growth in AACR

- We are celebrating our 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary this year!
- Our standard processes incorporate the experiences and learning opportunities gained from each deployment.
- In the past 4 years, we have increased our membership by 250% and are now represented in 26 states.
- Increased participation with FEMA and VOADs.
- Research in AACR is growing to document its efficacy, and we are part of that movement.

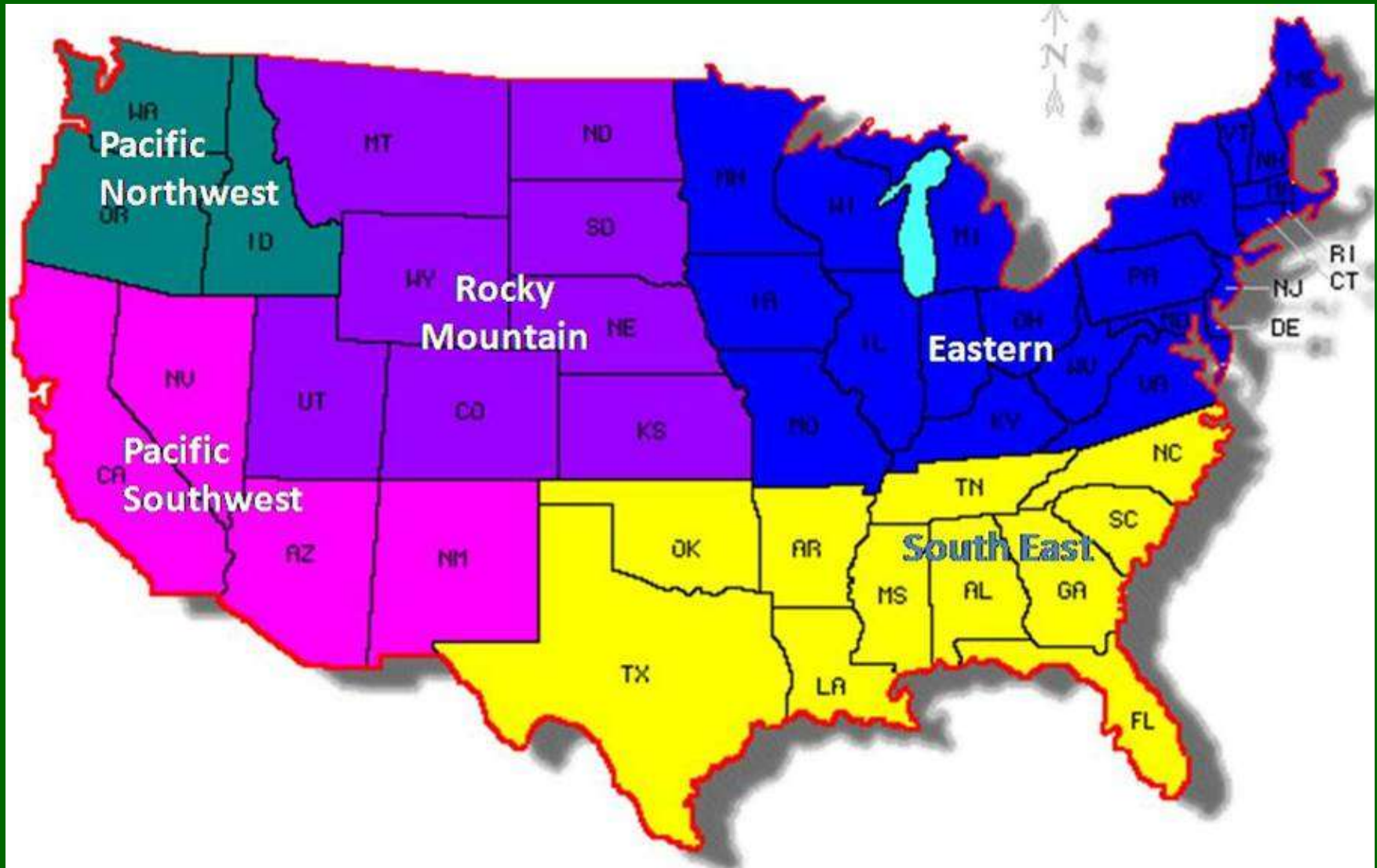


## About HOPE AACR

- HOPE AACR is a national, all-volunteer, 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation.
- Nationwide, we have 260+ certified crisis response teams in 26 states.
- HOPE AACR is organized into five regions.
- Each region follows national guidelines for delivering AACR services through independent regional management.



# HOPE ANIMAL-ASSISTED CRISIS RESPONSE







## Our Goals

- Continue to train and certify a growing nationwide network of crisis response teams.
- Assist first responders and relief agencies by providing comfort to those affected by crises and disasters.
- Continually seek ways to improve our training, service delivery, professionalism, and collegial teamwork.



# HOPE ANIMAL-ASSISTED CRISIS RESPONSE

## Foundation of AACR

- Animal-assisted crisis response is based on animal-assisted activities/therapy (AAA/T).
- Through AACR, people suffering traumatic events experience the same healing benefits proven in AAA/T.
- AAA/T teams can be trained for AACR.





# HOPE ANIMAL-ASSISTED CRISIS RESPONSE

## Differences: AAA/T & AACR

AAA/T (Pet Therapy)	AACR (Crisis Response)
1. Visits are typically scheduled in advance.	<b>1. Call-outs usually come without much warning.</b>
2. Travel is by familiar means, such as the family car.	<b>2. Travel may be by car, bus, plane, boat, or emergency vehicle.</b>
3. Most visits are routine and predictable, and occur in facilities our dogs grow accustomed to.	<b>3. Call-outs are unpredictable and may be chaotic. Situations may include loud sounds or bad odors; they may be visually difficult.</b>
4. Visits are usually low-key. In a few exceptions, such as ERs, teams <i>may</i> encounter people expressing stress, grief or other strong emotions.	<b>4. Crisis scenes tend to be intense. Teams are <i>likely</i> to encounter people expressing high stress, grief or other strong emotions.</b>



# HOPE ANIMAL-ASSISTED CRISIS RESPONSE

## Differences: AAA/T & AACR

AAA/T (Pet Therapy)	AACR (Crisis Response)
5. Help is usually available from facility staff, if needed. Places visited are typically quite safe.	<b>5. Crisis response teams must be self-sufficient so as to not burden responders, or worse, become victims themselves.</b>
6. Half hour to two hour visits are typical for most AAT visits. Stress not typically a problem, but handler should be aware of it.	<b>6. Call-outs may last from an hour to several days. Teams must take frequent breaks and be careful to look for signs of stress in their dogs and themselves.</b>
7. Visits can be made alone without much concern for safety. Teams should be aware of potential hygiene issues.	<b>7. Teams usually respond to call-outs with other teams for safety. The welfare of our canine partners and fellow teams is critical.</b>



## Differences: AAA/T & AACR

AAA/T (Pet Therapy)	AACR (Crisis Response)
8. Visits are usually not very physically demanding for handler or dog, and are usually indoors.	<b>8. Call-outs may be physically demanding, requiring teams to walk long distances, remain on their feet for long periods, and work outside.</b>
9. Costs incurred by a pet therapy volunteer are typically under \$200 per year.	<b>9. Costs incurred by an AACR team may total over \$200 per year. Some travel costs can be reimbursed by HOPE AACR.</b>
10. AAA/T may be appropriate for many kinds of animals, such as dogs, cats, rabbits, birds, or other domestic animals.	<b>10. Only dogs are suitable for crisis response work, largely because they are generally accepted in society as "helpers."</b>



## Qualifications for Training

- Handlers and team leaders must be at least 18 years old; dogs must be at least 18 months old.
- Canine teams must be registered *and active* with a formal animal-assisted therapy group for one year prior to the screening.
- Canine Teams must have made at least 12 AAA/T visits over the year before the screening date.
- Dogs must be in good health and have annual vet checks (documentation is required). Humans must also be able to handle the physical demands of crisis work.



## Certification Process

- Attend an open house (in person or online).
- Submit application, necessary documentation.
- Successfully complete a screening evaluation.
- Successfully complete the 3-day regional certification training workshop.
- Complete all other requirements of HOPE AACR membership.

*Please note: From Open House to Certification takes 6 months to a year to complete.*



## Characteristics

- Dogs should not be easily stressed and should be able to recover quickly from exposure to stressors.
- Dogs cannot exhibit any form of aggression; behavior around other dogs should be fairly neutral.
- Team Leaders (members without dogs) are not required to have experience in AAA/T; leadership and/or crisis response experience is helpful.





# HOPE ANIMAL-ASSISTED CRISIS RESPONSE

## Screening Process

Our screening process takes approximately 3 hours.

Screening includes:

1. Introduction & Greeting
2. Interview
3. Interactions & Grooming
4. Supervised Separation
5. Break Time Interactions
6. Baseline Obedience
7. Role Play Scenarios
8. Crate Test
9. Review & Results





# HOPE ANIMAL-ASSISTED CRISIS RESPONSE

## Screening Process

Successful screening = an invitation to attend the next certification training workshop, typically held within 4 months of the screening.

For 2016:

Eastern US, Grand Rapids MI – June 17-19

Southeastern US, Houston TX – June 17-19

Pacific Northwest, Spokane WA – July 15-17

Rocky Mtn, Colorado Springs – July 22-24

Pacific Southwest, Orange CA – Sept 23-25





# HOPE ANIMAL-ASSISTED CRISIS RESPONSE

## Certification Workshop

- Workshops are conducted in a positive, supportive manner.
- Hopefuls will be trained in all critical aspects of AACR work.
- Hopefuls will be evaluated for their ability to successfully work in stressful situations.
- Hopefuls must successfully complete the workshop to join HOPE AACR.





## Workshop topics include:

- Canine Body Language and Behavior
- Concepts and Phases of Disaster
- Listening and Communication Skills
- Providing Emotional Support
- Working with Other Agencies
- Role of Team Leaders



## Workshop topics include:

- Team Welfare Guidelines
- Traveling with Your Dog
- Identifying and Managing Your Stress
- Guidelines for Responding
- Services and Operations
- Crisis role-play training and practice



# HOPE ANIMAL-ASSISTED CRISIS RESPONSE

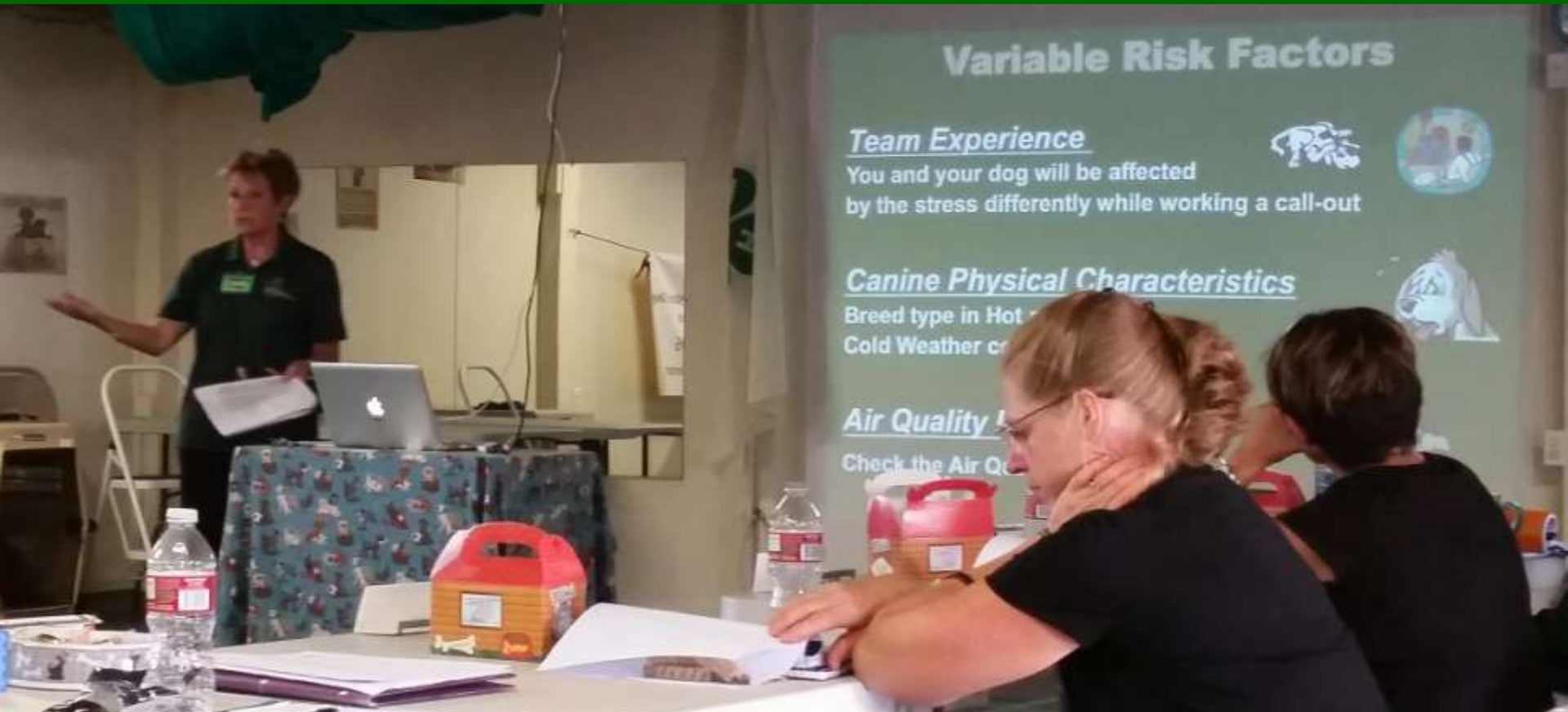
## Field training includes:

- Exposure to emergency response vehicles
- Crisis-response drill
- Transportation training
  - bus, subway, trains
  - airport protocols
- Interaction with public
- Debriefing





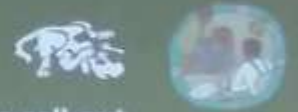
# HOPE ANIMAL-ASSISTED CRISIS RESPONSE



## Variable Risk Factors

### Team Experience

You and your dog will be affected by the stress differently while working a call-out



### Canine Physical Characteristics

Breed type in Hot  
Cold Weather c



### Air Quality

Check the Air Q

## Team Welfare Education



# HOPE ANIMAL-ASSISTED CRISIS RESPONSE



## Airport Field Trip



## Bus Training





# HOPE ANIMAL-ASSISTED CRISIS RESPONSE



**Emergency  
Equipment  
Desensitization**

**Team  
Role-Play  
Session**





# HOPE ANIMAL-ASSISTED CRISIS RESPONSE

## Train Exposure





# HOPE ANIMAL-ASSISTED CRISIS RESPONSE



**Exposure to Watercraft**



# HOPE ANIMAL-ASSISTED CRISIS RESPONSE



## Protective Bootie Training



# HOPE ANIMAL-ASSISTED CRISIS RESPONSE



**2015 Pacific Southwest Region Workshop**



# HOPE ANIMAL-ASSISTED CRISIS RESPONSE

## Maintaining Membership

- Maintain active registration with a formal AAA/T organization; make 12+ visits per year
- Pay annual membership dues
- Submit annual canine health forms
- Complete courses during first full year of membership: Human First Aid & CPR, Pet First Aid & CPR, Psychological First Aid, and on-line FEMA 100 course





# HOPE ANIMAL-ASSISTED CRISIS RESPONSE

## Continuing Education

Required EACH year for renewal of membership.

### Topics may include:

- Crisis intervention
- Psychological First Aid
- Community outreach
- Agency networking
- Disaster drills
- Canine handling/skills
- Involvement with other crisis response groups, such as CERT or Red Cross, is encouraged





# HOPE ANIMAL-ASSISTED CRISIS RESPONSE

## Comfort Dogs at Work







# HOPE ANIMAL-ASSISTED CRISIS RESPONSE

## Comfort Dogs at Work





# HOPE ANIMAL-ASSISTED CRISIS RESPONSE

## Events in Our Service History

The event that  
got things  
started...

**May 1998**

**Thurston High  
School Shooting**

**Springfield,  
Oregon**





# HOPE ANIMAL-ASSISTED CRISIS RESPONSE

## September 2001 - World Trade Center





# HOPE ANIMAL-ASSISTED CRISIS RESPONSE

## Line of Duty Death Memorials Virginia & Oregon - 2003





# HOPE ANIMAL-ASSISTED CRISIS RESPONSE

## Rocori High School Minnesota - September 2003





# HOPE ANIMAL-ASSISTED CRISIS RESPONSE

## Southern California Fires October 2003

Base Camp



San Diego





# HOPE ANIMAL-ASSISTED CRISIS RESPONSE



**Metrolink Collision  
California - 2008**

**Metrolink Derailment  
California - 2005**





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## Hurricane Katrina August 2005

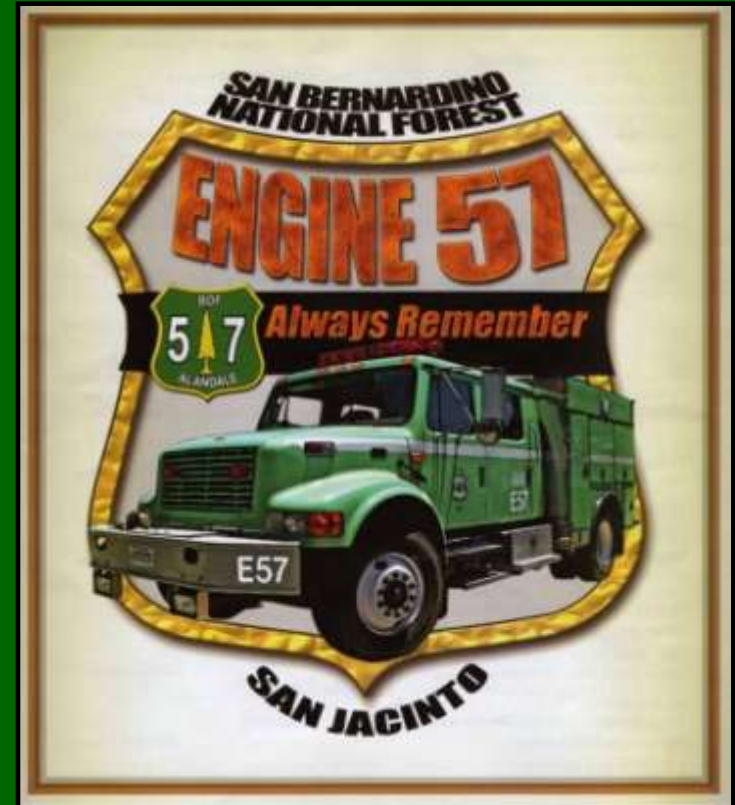






# HOPE ANIMAL-ASSISTED CRISIS RESPONSE

## Esperanza Fire California October 2006



## Memorial Service California November 2006



# HOPE ANIMAL-ASSISTED CRISIS RESPONSE

Virginia Tech  
April 2007





# HOPE ANIMAL-ASSISTED CRISIS RESPONSE



**South Georgia Fires  
2007**

**Atlanta Floods  
2009**





# HOPE ANIMAL-ASSISTED CRISIS RESPONSE



**Bozeman MT Explosion  
2009**

**Butte MT  
Plane Crash 2009**





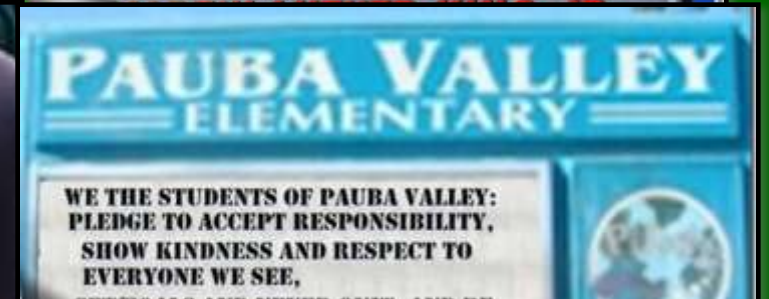
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# HOPE ANIMAL-ASSISTED CRISIS RESPONSE



**Superstorm Sandy  
New Jersey 2012**



# HOPE ANIMAL-ASSISTED CRISIS RESPONSE

## Colorado Fires and Flooding 2013





# **HOPE ANIMAL-ASSISTED CRISIS RESPONSE**

## **Other Events:**

**Indiana and Alabama Tornadoes**

**Gas Explosion – Indianapolis**

**TAPS/Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors**

**Operation Purple Camps for Military Children**

**Memorials for Arizona Hotshot Firefighters**

**Santa Monica College Shootings**

**2013 Airport Drills – Dulles & Reagan National**





# HOPE ANIMAL-ASSISTED CRISIS RESPONSE

Washington, DC

**Navy Yard Shooting**  
September/October 2013



© 2013 Navy Photo by Patricia Gordon





# HOPE ANIMAL-ASSISTED CRISIS RESPONSE



Washington, DC  
Move to NAVSEA West  
October/November 2013





# HOPE ANIMAL-ASSISTED CRISIS RESPONSE

## Oso, Washington Mudslides





# HOPE ANIMAL-ASSISTED CRISIS RESPONSE

## Church Shootings in Charleston, SC



## Flooding in South Carolina



# HOPE ANIMAL-ASSISTED CRISIS RESPONSE

## Shooting at Planned Parenthood in Colorado Springs





# HOPE ANIMAL-ASSISTED CRISIS RESPONSE

## When To Use HOPE Dogs



- Interactions among people waiting in lines for services
- Visitations with sheltered persons, particularly children
- Respite for agency volunteers and first responders
- Other mutually-agreed-upon services per agency request
  - ✓ Aid in allowing workers to perform designated tasks
  - ✓ Assist in approaching and interacting with clients



# HOPE ANIMAL-ASSISTED CRISIS RESPONSE

## Contact Info

Emergency Contact Number

**877-HOPE-K9s**

**877-467-3597**

General Email: [info@hopeaacr.org](mailto:info@hopeaacr.org)

Website: [www.hopeaacr.org](http://www.hopeaacr.org)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/hopeaacr](http://www.facebook.com/hopeaacr)



# HOPE ANIMAL-ASSISTED CRISIS RESPONSE

**Thank you  
for allowing us  
to share our  
work with you!**

