

I t was five years ago this coming August that Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast with devastating force. Our emergency response teams, including hundreds of volunteers, deployed to the stricken areas in Louisiana and Mississippi and threw themselves into the almost impossible task of rescuing countless thousands of animals trapped in homes or abandoned on the streets. With the city of New Orleans cordoned off and residents unable to return to care for their pets, it was a race against the clock to reach as many animals as possible before food and water and hope ran out.

While that rescue phase was the most urgent part of our response, the most important long-lasting component was building capacity to address the region's chronic animal welfare problems: inordinately high rates of euthanasia, rampant pet overpopulation, and only a rickety infrastructure to provide ongoing care for animals in distress. I publicly pledged that we'd fortify the infrastructure there—making it stronger than before. And for these past few years, we've been making good on that promise. Most recently, we saw the completion of a new shelter in St. Bernard Parish, which was hit as hard as any part of the Gulf Coast. The new facility—with double the capacity of the old one—replaces a ramshackle shelter that had never served that small coastal parish well. In Jackson, La., the Dixon Correctional Institute is about to open an HSUS-funded animal clinic and emergency shelter. And The HSUS is also behind a broader spaying and neutering initiative to help end pet homelessness in the Gulf Coast region.

Katrina taught me that any large-scale disaster is both a sprint and marathon, and that was on my mind as we responded to the humanitarian crisis in Haiti following the Jan. 12 earthquake. We sent teams down to help animals in need. But as with the Gulf Coast, we saw an opportunity to build something anew. In Haiti, there is no humane movement—not a single humane society, nor a veterinary college, and no spay/neuter clinics or animal welfare charities. The animals of Haiti have no in-country safety net. That must change. And we are committed to helping build a movement in a nation wracked by poverty and historically ill-equipped to focus on the needs of its animals.

When I think of the plight of Haiti, I think of how blessed we are in the United States to have so many people and resources marshaled to help animals. The challenges here are great, but we are rising to meet them. We at The HSUS are at the forefront of a growing and powerful social movement to improve the lives of animals in so many settings.

In this issue of *All Animals*, you'll read about the new ballot initiative we've launched in Ohio to combat the inhumane treatment of tens of millions of animals confined on factory farms in that state.

And you'll read about our innovative counterattack against poaching in America. In terms of crimes against animals, poaching claims more victims—perhaps more than 100 million—than dogfighting, cockfighting, and all other illegal forms of animal killing combined. On the pages that follow, you'll learn about how one of the anti-poaching programs we support is providing a double benefit to animals—rescuing shelter dogs slated for euthanasia and training them to work with state game wardens to help them nab wildlife criminals.

Wherever animals are in distress or under threat, your HSUS is responding. There's no other group like it in the world, with our depth or breadth of programs. We could not exist but for your generosity, and we hope you'll dig deep to allow us to push our programs forward in the months and years ahead.



PAUL TURNER/THE HSUS

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