Heroic Pet Efforts

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Wherever in the world you may be reading this, you have most certainly been touched emotionally by the horrific unfolding of news since Hurricane Harvey made landfall on the Texas coast. The enormity of it all continues to be more than overwhelming. So many stories and so much love, all at this critical time when we Americans have been questioning whether or not compassion still existed in our country. Austinites, who remained well out of harm’s way, have been granted a tremendous opportunity to give of themselves these past days

to make a difference. Austin’s Mayor Adler opened the door and heart of our city for incoming evacuees and they have been well received.

Today I want to spotlight the work of one amazing animal rescue organization that will get my donations until the end of my days. Austin Pets Alive! fully staged and staffed an impromptu tent shelter in a Katy, Texas parking lot, 30 minutes from downtown Houston, and began receiving animals early last week. Staff and volunteers from the Austin based program received hundreds of animals by the end of the first day and over the course of five more days rescued over 1700 animals. By Thursday, a call was put out for Austinites to shuttle these Houston area rescues to APA! headquarters downtown if medical care was needed or to a donated warehouse in north Austin where they would be screened and matched with foster homes.

The fact that this whole operation was orchestrated literally overnight and Facebook served as a their means of communicating specific needs was astounding. Shuttles continued into the weekend when I was fortunate enough to make a rescue run with my daughter Meghan.

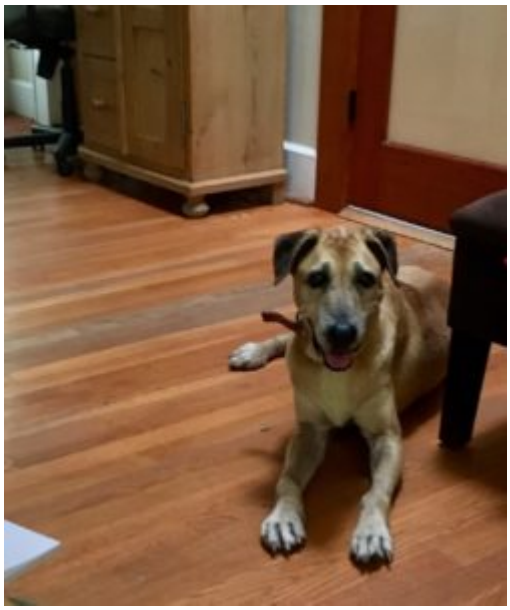
Not sure of how many or what exactly we’d be transporting back, we filled her SUV with supplies and animal crates and

had a bit fun with our imaginations on the two hour trip. Approaching Katy, it wasn't hard to miss APA!'s tent city and we soon found ourselves in line with a fleet of cars, trucks, and vans all up for whatever cargo needed a ride to safety. We inched our way forward over the next hour and watched kennel after kennel be dispersed by hardworking volunteers. As we pulled forward into position and confirmed our destination was Austin, we were told we'd be transporting just one dog. Yes, just one, but she was in distress and in desperate need of a/c and a peaceful ride to receive medical care. They brought her over in a crate and loaded up one very worried golden hound mix with the saddest eyes I've ever seen. Needless to say, over the next two hours she stole our hearts and by the time Austin's skyline was in view we knew she'd eventually be coming home with me.

When we approached the APA! headquarters, we joined in another long queue of cars being sorted according to needs by the young volunteers. We were directed to the building that was housing pets needing medical care. If I wasn't already impressed with APA!, what we observed next was astounding. After some communications between volunteers, a vet tech and assistant came right out to us. Due to the heat, overcrowding in the buildings, and condition of our sweet rescue, they agreed to do all they needed from the air conditioned comfort of Meghan's car. And so, for the next 45 minutes, they went through their tests and checks allowing, who we would soon

call Grace, to stay put and as relaxed as possible. Three things were determined: she was old, exhausted, and had infected ears. Other than that, all our gal needed was a bath, dinner, some peace and quiet, and love. That was exactly what Grace received, in addition to some Gemmotherapy and a Homeopathic remedy for trauma.

After 48 hours, I can safely say the only condition this ol' gal is suffering from is heartbreak and I can't even begin to imagine the story she could tell. However, this morning, for the first time since meeting Grace, the rescue hound from Houston greeted me with what I know now as her "happiness bay" and a wagging tail. For now, she's got a safe place to be until APA!'s reuniting efforts are in full force and maybe, just maybe we can find the someone on the other side of her heartache.



APA!'s work is still going strong as they shift support to include Beaumont, TX. This organization is doing an incredible job of helping pets find their way to safety and into foster homes with the aid of like minded rescue groups from across the country. If you'd like to help their work today, I know they would appreciate whatever amount you can give.

"I do not at all understand the mystery of grace – only that

it meets us where we are but does not leave us where it found us.”
— Anne Lamott