DEALING WITH NATURAL DISASTERS

In the wake of the 2005 Gulf Coast Hurricanes, many clubs stepped up to the plate by holding fundraisers and making donations to support the canine and human victims. Whether disaster strikes close to home or 300 miles away, it is important for your club to spread the word in its community about the need for preparedness and how to contribute to relief efforts.

What You Can Do:

Before Disaster Strikes- Preparedness is the key to helping your community deal with the threat of a natural disaster. You can educate pet owners in your community in the following ways:

- Write a pitch letter to your local media about the importance of including the family pet in disaster planning and having an evacuation kit just for your pet.

- Offer a club spokesperson and press kits to the media. Press kits should include: AKC fact sheets, your club’s history, AKC/CAR, event press releases, disaster planning check list and your spokesperson’s biography. If there is ever a disaster, they will know you are one source that they can go to.

In Response to a Disaster-

- Hold a fundraiser and donate the proceeds to disaster relief efforts such as the AKC/CAR Canine Support and Relief Fund, AVMA, or Red Cross. Don’t forget to write a media alert, inviting media to cover your event. Think of ways to create photo opportunities at your event.

- Incorporate your relief efforts with your club’s next scheduled event. For example, set up a booth at your local dog show to collect supplies and monetary donations.

- Write a press release publicizing donations made to the AKC/CAR Canine Support and Relief Fund and other donations made by your club in the name of disaster relief. You can create a photo opportunity for press by staging the presentation of your donation to a representative of the selected charity.

Templates for press releases, media alerts, letters and evacuation checklists are available for club use at http://www.akc.org/clubs/samples