



MISSISSIPPI COMMISSION *for*
Volunteer Service



For Immediate Release

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**Wren Volunteer Fire Department, Monroe County Humane Society, Community Leaps to Animals' Aid
*National Service, Citizens, Relief Organizations Still Active in Ravaged Communities***

The phrase “Wren Community Leader” are not the words Charlotte Herring would use to describe herself, but her peers and neighbors have named her such. Herring, a volunteer fire fighter, has been a near-permanent fixture at the Wren V.F.D. since April 27th, when deadly weather ravaged Monroe County and much of the southeast. The Volunteer Fire Department established an emergency Volunteer Reception Center (VRC) to help storm-affected residents, but has also tended to the feathered, hooved and furry storm survivors.

“The devastation, loss of life and livelihood... so many family businesses, bake shops, gift shops—gathering places where we grew up—were destroyed.” Even though much of the county is in ruins, an extended community was born to help residents pick up the pieces. The Mississippi Commission for Volunteer Service helped Wren establish their VRC, ensuring the county’s volunteer hours could be tracked for state and federal reimbursement. The Mississippi Extension Service deployed their emergency operations team to help build enclosures and corral livestock. Individuals and animal rescue groups donated pet food. The Amory Humane Society leapt into action, sending its Board of Directors out with groups of youth from local churches for animal search and rescue operations, and their volunteers continue to feed skittish animals throughout the county. Nechama: Jewish Disaster Relief, working with AmeriCorps NCCC teams, moved in to support the small community with debris removal.

Herring, the proud owner of three pit bulls and two English bulldogs, was overwhelmed by the outpouring of aid from organizations and individuals. “Saturday was so emotional for me: to see all these people, especially the ones who don’t live here, come out and ask what can I bring, give, do?”

Kathie Statham, president of the Amory Humane Society’s Board of Directors, says generous donations of pet food from Tupelo’s Sunshine Dog Food, the Gilmore Foundation and the public will help Monroe County continue current recovery operations for at least three months. However, donations of hay are still needed. Please contact the Amory Humane Society at 662.256.7566 or the Wren Volunteer Fire Department at 601.750.0671.

The Mississippi Commission for Volunteer Service engages and supports Mississippians of all ages and backgrounds in service to their communities. As your state office of volunteerism, the Mississippi Commission for Volunteer Service administers AmeriCorps programs, supports a network of Volunteer Centers, and coordinates other initiatives fostering community engagement and building volunteer capacity throughout the state. Contact MCVS at 888.353.1793 or www.mcv.org.

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