Volunteers

Philanthropy Journal of North Carolina

Helping hands

Eighty-two percent of nonprofits responding to a survey by The Nonprofit Times reported using volunteers.

JULY 1995

Lending a hand

Pet care helps battered women

hey unfortunately

think that we are focusing

on the animals rather

than the women, which is

not at all the case. What

we are trying to do is help

the woman get through a

really difficult situation.

LISA FINLAY

Animal Rights

director, Feminists for

In an effort to end abuse of animals and women, an animal rights group is helping battered women by providing foster care for their pets.

By Ealena Callender

For Lisa Finlay, the woman's story is a familiar one.

The woman, who has suffered from abuse at the hands of her husband has finally decided to leave. Although she had considered leaving before, she stayed because she was worried about what would happen to her four cats if she left them behind.

"She hadn't left because she was afraid he would do something to the

cats," says Finlay, director **Feminists** for Animal Rights.

In response to situations like this, Triangle Chapter Feminists for Animal Rights has started a program to provide care for pets belonging to battered women.
Through CARE the Companion
Animal Rescue Effort - volunteers provide homes for the animals.

Feminists for Animal Rights started CARE as

part of its mission to end abuse of women and animals. The organiza-

SOCIAL SERVICES

tion conducts letter-writing campaigns, holds demonstrations and conducts workshops to educate people about issues concerning the rights of women and animals.

"We're trying to make people more aware of the connections between different kinds of violence,"

Often, Finlay says, a relationship with a pet becomes significant to women who have been isolated from family and friends by an abusive

"Recognizing the importance of the relationship, the batterer will use

that as a way to harm the woman, recognizing that if he hurts the animal, the woman is going to be hurt," says Finlay. "It's also a way of saying, 'You're next."

When they decide to leave, women in this situation must consider what will happen to their pets.
"They know that

if they leave, the animal will be severely abused or neglected," says Elizabeth Randol, a CARE volunteer and graduate stu-

dent at N.C. State University studying the connections between different forms of oppres-



Lisa Finlay, seen here with her pets, Rosie (on right) and Time (on left) is the director of Feminists For Animal Rights, a volunteer organization that works to end the oppression of women and animals.

Photo Courtesy of Lisa Finlay

sion. "They need to find a place that can take care of the companion ani-

Activists say that many battered women have little money and few choices when they leave, so finding a safe home for their pets can be diffi-

CARE works to make it easier for women to take that step.

Women are often referred to CARE through organizations such as the Orange/Durham Coalition for Battered Women. CARE accepts any type of domestic animal, including dogs, cats and birds. Since last year when the program started, about 10 animals have been placed in foster

About 20 volunteers have signed up to care for animals. Once an animal is placed, the foster care volun-teer provides food and CARE pays for veterinary care.

Program leaders say they have received a great deal of support from the community. But they say people often don't understand the connection between the abuse of women and the abuse of animals.

"They unfortunately think that we're focusing on the animals rather than the women, which is not at all the case," says Finlay. "What we're trying to do is help the woman get through a really difficult situation. We're trying to help animals but we're trying to help women too."

By helping the animals, volunteers say, CARE helps battered

"Ultimately, by giving an avenue to the animal, you're giving an avenue to the woman," says Leslie Mann, a CARE volunteer who helps place animals, in appropriate foster

Still a young program, one of the major challenges CARE faces is simply letting people know about its ser-

"I've heard from women who say, 'If I only knew you were there, I would have used you," says Mann. "I think we're moving in the right direction but, like any new program, we need more volunteer support.

Volunteers say they need help from more veterinarians and battered women's shelters to let women know that the foster care service is available. Veterinarians, for example, can look for signs that animals are reacting to domestic violence and provide information about the program to the owner.

For information about Feminists for Animal Rights or CARE, call Lisa Finlay at (919) 286-7333.

Red Cross takes on mental health relief

For decades, Red Cross volunteers have sped to disaster scenes to tend to the physical needs of victims. Now, they're also tending to emotional and psychological needs.

By Susan Gray

Joyce LiBethe sounds ebullient. She has the excited-yet-exhausted tone in her voice of a person who has spent the day helping victims of a disaster. And she has.

teer is speaking from New Orleans, where thousands of people have been left homeless following torrential downpours and flooding.

But LiBethe, a Charlotte resident, is not a nurse or doctor. She doesn't know how to suture a wound or perform CPR. She's a psychologist.

And she's one of the American Red Cross's new line of mental health volunteers - licensed mental health workers who trail medical workers to disaster scenes to relieve victims' emotional and psychological suffering.

SOCIAL SERVICES

[mental health relief] is important," says LiBethe, who has studied criti-cal incident stress. "People in disasters experience a great deal of

Following the widespread destruction in 1989 by Hurricane Hugo, which hit populations from Puerto Rico to North Carolina, the American Red Cross agreed to create a mental health volunteer arm for its services throughout the U.S. Health Services in 1990.

'For a very long time, it appeared to those of us who were at disasters, there were needs that went beyond the basic physical needs - shelter. place to eat, place to sleep," says Beverly Clayton, preparedness associate for the national office of the American Red Cross in Washington,

The mental health service functions like that of the Red Cross medical health service. Professional mental health workers - licensed social workers, psychologists, psychiatrists "Finally, people are realizing that | It established the Disaster Mental | and family counselors - sign up as

volunteers. They receive special disaster relief training from the Red Cross. And then they go on-call for disasters.

LiBethe, who has a private psychology practice, began volunteering a year ago. Her first duty was helping out at the scene of last year's USAir plane crash in Charlotte. She worked at the crash site while bodies were removed, then camped out at a hotel where USAir put up victims' family members.
"I did debriefings [therapeutic

talk sessions] in the hotel," LiBethe

Look for HUGO, page 9

BRIEFLY

Volunteers to help the homeless

To recognize Homeless Month in North Carolina, the Homestock Festival will be held in Raleigh July 8 and 9 at the parking lot across from the Legislative Office Building on North Salisbury Street, Volunteers are asked to bring blankets or cardboard and dinner or breakfast. Call, (919) 552-2636.

United Way boosts 1996 Olympics

United Ways will help to plan celebrations and ceremonies for the arrival of the Olympic Flame for the 1996 summer games. "The involvement of local United Way organizations throughout America is a wonderful opportunity to make this a true grassroots effort," says United Way of America President Elaine Chao.

Change of address for volunteer lines

Hopeline, a United Way agency in Wake County, has changed phone numbers. The new numbers for its volunteer phone lines are as follows: HopeLine's Crisis Line, (919) 231-4525; Teen TalkLine (919) 231-3626; and PhoneFriend, (919) 231-3939.

American Red Cross responds

In response to last month's tropical storm Allison, the American Red Cross has opened 50 shelters across northern Florida and Alabama. To help victims of the storms or other disasters, call (800) HELP-NOW or (800) 257-7575 (Spanish language).

Volunteer attorneys are nominees

Durham attorney Judith Siegel has been nominated for the North Carolina Bar Association's 1995 Oustanding Legal Services Attorney Award for her work as a full-time volunteer lawyer with the North Central Legal Assistance Program. Raleigh attorney John "Jay" Butler and Durham attorney Craig B.

Brown are nominees for the association's Pro Bono Service Award. The awards were scheduled to be presented at the association's annual meeting June 15.