

## Pass It On®...

### **The Hero to our Four-legged Friends.**

*When the floodwaters poured in, Captain Dusty Mascaro waded in and saved more than 100 pets in Hillsborough County, Florida.*

In times of trouble, or even at the end of a long workday, many people turn to a familiar source of comfort: their animal companions. It's no different after a disaster — for good reason.

From the time the first wolf cub was domesticated beside the cave fire to our day — when different breeds of dogs lounge at our feet, playfully wake us in the morning, and warn us of danger — dogs and humans have created a special bond. Canines are the perfect pet: loyal, fun-loving, always happy to see us. On the farm, dogs were utilitarian. They herded sheep, stood guard against predators and kept the lonely shepherd company with conversations in yip and yowl, whine and growl.

Cats were equally useful in keeping mice out of the farmhouse and feed bins. Always on the prowl, they kept troublesome pests away while still making time to provide a little companionship on the porch in the afternoon sun. Our love for these domesticated animals is as ingrained in us as the characteristics of the animals of our affections are in them.

Pets began as a privilege of the aristocracy. Noblemen and women bred dogs for hunting and lapdogs for fashion. Egyptians viewed cats as sacred and magical, even worshipping them. Today, many of us have pets simply for the companionship. They soothe us on stressful afternoons, lowering our heart rates and brushing away loneliness as we brush their coats to grateful purrs. Some act as guide dogs or helpers for the deaf or disabled. Service dogs calm anxiety, and the family pet helps children express their emotions.

But these animals depend on us, and when hurricanes hit Hillsborough County in Florida and displaced thousands of people, many pets were stranded in the mayhem. Anxiety was high. The one thing that helps most in a crisis is knowing everyone is OK, including pets.

That's why Captain Dusty Mascaro went wading into debris-filled water to bring a little comfort to the

displaced. His mantra is to make sure "no one — human or animal — is left behind." Captain Mascaro carried dogs large and small through the muddy water. Altogether, his team rescued 104 pets.

After the rescue effort, a makeshift shelter in a bus was packed with furry friends. At the end of a long couple of days, there was a wonderful reunion. Many people had lost homes and keepsakes and were facing months or even years of rebuilding their lives. But thanks to Captain Dusty, they would not be alone. Having a loyal companion to start over makes the journey a little easier.

For Captain Dusty Mascaro and his team of white knights, it was all in a day's work. They are happy to serve their community. The payoff for them can be summed up in a photograph of Captain Mascaro and a grateful rescued dog: "This dog's eyes say it all."

### **Be Grateful...[PassItOn.com](https://passiton.com)**

By The Foundation for a Better Life®

*The Foundation for a Better Life® promotes positive values to live by and pass along to others.*

Copyright © 2024 | The Foundation for a Better Life®  
All rights reserved. | [www.passiton.com](https://www.passiton.com)

Available under a Creative Commons Attribution NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 License (international):  
<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>