

YAHOO! NEWS

American Humane Association Hosts Tenth Anniversary Tribute to the Hero Dogs of 9/11

PR Newswire
Public Interest Services

PR Newswire – Fri, Sep 9, 2011

To: NATIONAL EDITORS

Contact: Mark Stubis or Joyce Winslow, +1-202-380-8964 or +1-202-677-4221, marks@americanhumane.org, joycew@americanhumane.org

Four-Footed Heroes Honored For Loyalty, Bravery and Heart At the National Arts Club in New York City

NEW YORK, Sept. 9, 2011 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- With its National Spokesdog RIN TIN TIN looking on approvingly, American Humane Association paid tribute to the hero dogs of 9/11, and to all dogs who serve, protect and comfort us every day. The gala tribute underscored the importance of the bond between people and animals that has benefited both for generations.

(Logo: <http://photos.prnewswire.com/prnh/20101108/DC97343LOGO>)

The evening featured special presentations from Whoopi Goldberg; Animal Planet's Victoria Stilwell; William J. Abbott, President and CEO of Hallmark Channel, which will air a 90-minute broadcast on Veterans Day of American Humane Association's Hero Dog Awards(TM), presented by Cesar(R) Canine Cuisine in Los Angeles on October 1st; and two first-responders at Ground Zero on 9/11: Lt. David Lim whose bomb-detection dog, Sirius, died that day in the attack, and Rachel McPherson, CEO of the Good Dog Foundation, whose dog, Fidel, served as an Animal-Assisted Therapy dog to bereaved families. Kenn Bell, Founder of Dog Files, presented his short documentary of "9/11 Hero Dogs." Photographs by photo-essayist Charlotte Dumas, whose portfolio of heroic dogs recently appeared in The New York Times, graced the pre-dinner gathering. **Interviews with first-responders were incorporated into a special video presentation by MRB Productions.** The Honorable James P. Moran, Chair of the Federal Congress Animal Protection Caucus, congratulated American Humane Association for being a good friend to animals and asked for support of proposed legislation to discourage dogfighting. New York Police Department's Daniel Rodriguez, "America's beloved tenor," whose performance of God Bless America buoyed the country's spirits when most needed after 9/11, closed the evening with that song.

American Humane Association was a first-responder for animal welfare in the days following the 9/11 tragedy. Our Red Star(TM) Animal Emergency Services teams rushed our 82-foot mobile veterinary clinic and command center to NYC. Some Red Star(TM) teams delivered rescue harnesses for police K-9s working at Ground Zero and provided technical assistance for their use. Other R **YAHOO! PRESENTS LADY GAGA • USHER • THE EDGE & BONO AND MORE ENTER FOR A CHANCE TO WIN TICKETS TO THE CONCERT OF A** location. The rescue rig was subsequently stationed at the Staten Island Landfill where World Trade Center debris was taken. K-9 recovery teams there sniffed tons of sifted rubble to provide closure for grieving families.

The Red Star(TM) Rig was used as the K-9 operational compound where it was integrated with other agencies working at that site: NYPD, FBI, National Guard, Coast Guard, EPA, and the Veterinary Medical Assistance Team (VMAT), and provided the on-site clinic for examination and decontamination of the K-9 recovery teams.

"American Humane Association has been working for 134 years to protect children and animals--the most vulnerable among us -- from harm, abuse and neglect," said Robin R. Ganzert, President and CEO of the organization. "On 9/11 we were all vulnerable. Heroic dogs gave us their special skills and used their special senses in service to values that define

American Humane Association and bind us as Americans: a reverence for all life and compassion that can create a kinder world. We salute all first-responders, human and four-footed ones. Working together they brought attention to the timeless, vital bond between people and animals."

American Humane Association staff worked every shift that the dogs did and decontaminated them from toxic materials they encountered. While human first-responders wore masks, the dogs burrowing into debris and walking on smoking rubble did not.

"Animals have long been by our side during times of conflict and war," said Robin R. Ganzert. "Indeed, American Humane Association's Red Star(TM) program was born on the European World War I battlefield as 'the Red Cross for animals' at the request of the Secretary of War. Over a half million American horses shipped to Europe carried supplies to our troops, and our troops into battle. The horses were grievously wounded in battle and needed Red Star(TM) to heal. At the same time, the original RIN TIN TIN puppy was born on a World War I French battlefield and gave rise to the first search and rescue dogs in America. It's fitting, then, that RIN TIN TIN serves as American Humane Association's National Spokesdog."

Today, Red Star(TM) Animal Emergency Services teams rush to the aid of animals in natural disasters. Proceeds from the tribute to heroic dogs this evening will benefit that program, along with such other AHA programs as:

- Animal-Assisted Therapy--in hospitals, veteran's wards, nursing homes, and troubled youth programs.
- Second Chance(R) Fund--providing medical care for shelter animals to enable their adoption into loving homes.
- American Humane(R) Certified program -- that certifies scientifically-based humane treatment of farm animals.
- "No Animals Were Harmed"(R) -- certification program that monitors animal actors to keep them safe on set.

American Humane Association thanks its corporate sponsors for their generosity in helping make the tribute this evening possible: Hallmark Channel, Bank of Tokyo - Mitsubishi UFJ, Pfizer Animal Health, Response Marketing Group, Hartz Mountain Corporation, TMA Direct, and Animal Planet.

About American Humane Association

Since 1877, the historic American Humane Association has been at the forefront of virtually every major advance in protecting children, pets and farm animals from cruelty, abuse and neglect. Today we're also leading the way in understanding human-animal interaction and its role in society. As the nation's voice for the protection of children and animals, American Humane Association reaches millions of people every day through groundbreaking research, education, training and services that span a wide network of organizations, agencies and businesses. You can help make a difference, too. Visit American Humane Association at www.americanhumane.org today.

SOURCE American Humane Association

-0-