



WINTER 2008

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# The MRC Lends a Hand to Man's Best Friend

More than 1,000 dogs living in deplorable conditions were rescued from a massive puppy mill in Virginia, and with the help of the MRC, now have a second chance at life with a loving family.

Following a 5-month investigation by the Humane Society of the United States and rescue by multiple agencies, the Southwest Virginia Medical Reserve Corps received a request from the Virginia Department of Emergency Management for licensed veterinarians who could assist with providing health assessments, giving vaccinations, and preparing the rescued animals for their journey to animal shelters across the east coast, where they would be placed up for adoption.

During the operation, Dr. Linda Taylor, a veterinarian and MRC member who left her private practice to volunteer, vaccinated approximately 550 animals in a 12-hour shift. According to Dr. Taylor, "[the MRC] arrived about 9 a.m. and left about 9 p.m. ...Medical Reserve Corps stayed until the job was done!"

There are approximately 1,033 MRC volunteers who are animal health professionals and five MRC units dedicated to veterinary preparedness. The mission of these volunteers and specialized MRC

units is to assist with animal care and treatment, evacuation, or vaccination following an emergency. Some volunteers are trained in animal disease recognition and reporting and can respond to animal disease outbreaks.

**“There are approximately 1,033 MRC volunteers who are animal health professionals and five MRC units dedicated to veterinary preparedness.”**

Animal health professionals can be a “vitaly important” asset during an emergency response. According to David Watts of the Northern California Veterinary MRC (NCVMRC), a response effort is slowed when injured

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Volunteers, including the Southwest Virginia MRC, assisted with a massive effort to rescue more than 500 animals from a puppy mill in Virginia.

*Photos reprinted with permission of the Montgomery County Humane Society, Inc.*



One of hundreds of dogs that have a brighter future following a massive rescue effort.



Make a Difference. Volunteer.

# National Notes

Dear MRC Leaders, Volunteers, and Colleagues,

Happy New Year! Like many people who make New Year's resolutions, I'm sure some of you have set a goal to lose weight and get in better shape this year. I applaud that effort, and encourage all of you make a commitment to personal fitness and health. By making this commitment yourself, you can become a role model for others. In fact, I'd like to go a step further and challenge all members of the Medical Reserve Corps to join the U.S. Surgeon General in the fight against obesity, especially the tragic epidemic of overweight and obesity in children.

Together, as a national network of more than 150,000 volunteers in over 700 MRC units, we can make a difference in this increasing and heartbreaking trend. The percentage of obese children is at the highest in history, and even more children are overweight and at risk of becoming obese. Recent reports have shown that being overweight during childhood and adolescence increases the risk of developing high cholesterol, hypertension, respiratory ailments, orthopedic problems, depression, diabetes and other preventable diseases as a young adult. I strongly encourage you to join or sponsor educational events for children and parents on good nutrition and eating habits, as well as physical activity and exercise. To decrease the number of overweight and obese children, we must work to give them better tools to make good decisions for their health. Over the coming months, we will be providing more information and resources to help you meet this challenge.

A new year is also an opportune time to review your past successes and assess the challenges you face to refine your missions and determine better ways to support your communities. By establishing the mechanisms for planning and evaluating your efforts, your MRC units can become more capable and prepared, and your communities will have an enhanced ability to meet public health threats of any type. Through these efforts, you will foster community resiliency.

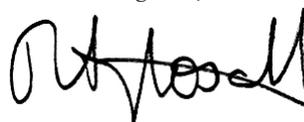
The concept of community resiliency is gaining momentum at all levels. At the highest level, for example, Homeland Security Presidential Directive 21 (HSPD-21) identifies community resilience as one of the "Critical Components of Public Health and Medical Preparedness." You will be glad to know that the MRC is represented on several of the work groups that are developing the implementation plans for HSPD-21.

I know some of you are wondering—what is community resiliency? The Community and Regional Resilience Initiative ([www.resilientus.com/index.html](http://www.resilientus.com/index.html)) provides a succinct definition: "the ability of a community to withstand disruption." I personally like the "Four R's" approach (proposed by Bruneau et al, 2003) which

suggests that there are four properties of resilient systems: Robustness (the ability to withstand the stress with minimal degradation or loss of function); Redundancy (the availability of substitutable elements to continue to provide the function or service); Resourcefulness (the capacity to identify problems and mobilize resources); and Rapidity (the ability to address priorities and accomplish goals in a timely manner so as to contain losses and prevent future disruption).

I'd like you to keep these Four R's in mind as you consider the ways that your MRC units can contribute to your community's resiliency. Be sure that your efforts are helping your community to strengthen its capabilities to withstand and bounce back from a major event with as few scars as possible. With integrated and coordinated plans in place, there will be less confusion and your locality is likely to recover more quickly. ★

Warmest regards,



CAPT Rob Tosatto  
Director  
Office of the Civilian Volunteer Medical Reserve Corps  
Office of the Surgeon General

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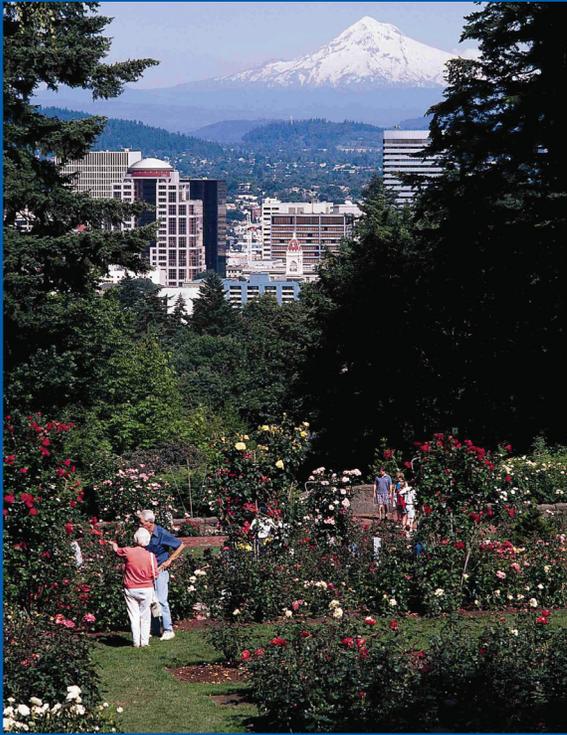
## The MRC Lends a Hand to Man's Best Friend

people won't leave their pets and injured animals become dangerous. Animal health professionals have specialized training to respond to both an animal's behavioral and medical conditions.

Watts recommends including animal health professionals in drills and exercises, as their expertise can complement the skills of other MRC members. He also recommends that all MRC volunteers receive pet first aid and CPR training. It also is important that MRC volunteers understand what animals are capable of and are trained to respond appropriately.

"We saw during Hurricane Katrina that the efforts of emergency responders were severely impeded when they couldn't address the animal component," said Watts. "Having the MRC assess the needs of pets and owners can make a difference." ★

# Experience the City of Roses: Register for the Sixth Medical Reserve Corps Conference Today!



Join your colleagues in Portland, Oregon, **April 8–11, 2008**, at the Sixth Medical Reserve Corps National Leadership and Training Conference. “Prepared Volunteers, Resilient Communities, Strong Nation” is the theme of this year’s most exciting MRC learning and networking opportunity. While in Portland, participants also will have the chance to experience “One of the World’s Top Travel Destinations for 2007,” according to Frommer’s Guidebooks. Register now and sign up for optional tours, including a river walk and sunset cruise along the Willamette River, a city tour that ends at the International Rose Test Garden, and a luxury motor coach tour to the Columbia Gorge. ★



**Don’t delay! Register today at:**

<http://www.medicalreservecorps.gov/Conference/2008>

While in Portland, visit the International Rose Test Garden—one of only 27 in the world.

*Photo courtesy of the Portland Oregon Visitors Association/Janis Miglavs.*

## MRC-TRAIN: A Unit’s Best Friend

Training and learning are vital to being prepared for emergencies. MRC-TRAIN, a member of the nation’s premier learning resource for public health professionals, provides opportunities for volunteers to participate in online and on-site trainings, many of which offer **FREE** or low-cost continuing education credits.

“[MRC-TRAIN] allows me, as the administrator, to list live training events, allow for pre-registration, verification, and placement of training on transcripts for volunteers involved in the training. This environment also allows volunteers to list and record all of their training in one place for ease of review and transcript printing,” said Stephanie Walker, Unit Coordinator of the Anderson County MRC (TX).

Stephanie is one of many leaders who use MRC-TRAIN regularly. With about 30 volunteers under her leadership, she posts tailored trainings and provides firsthand instruction to members of her unit using MRC-TRAIN.

Stephanie considers TRAIN an essential “free learning tool [that] should be utilized by all [MRC] volunteers and leaders to assist and support each other nationally through the development of training and actually conducting training.” ★

**Get to know MRC-TRAIN today!**

Visit [www.MRC.TRAIN.org](http://www.MRC.TRAIN.org),  
**a unit’s best friend!**

**MRC-TRAIN**  
**provides extensive**  
**online and on-site**  
**training opportunities,**  
**many of which offer *FREE***  
**or inexpensive continuing**  
**education credits.**  
**Available all day,**  
**every day.**

# Forging International Partnerships: Japanese Delegates Travel Around the Globe to Learn About the MRC

Delegates from the Japanese city of Myazaki traveled around the world to learn more about its sister city's disaster volunteer programs. This unique opportunity allowed the Virginia Beach MRC to highlight the successes of the MRC program. "[This meeting] opened their eyes to the expectations they can have of their volunteers," said Jolynn Matte, Virginia Beach unit leader." The delegates requested to meet with the MRC and other volunteer groups to gather more information with the hope of starting similar programs in their area. Their interest in disaster response stemmed from recent typhoons and the country's lack of an organized volunteer response system. ★

Vice Mayor of Myazaki, Japan met with representatives from the MRC and other disaster volunteer programs.

*City of Virginia Beach photograph by Craig McClure.*



## Good Public Health is Worth Sharing: NACCHO's Toolbox

NACCHO's Toolbox is an online collection of public health-related resources and tools developed by NACCHO or local health agencies. Within the toolbox, a "toolkit" has been developed specifically for local MRC leaders and volunteers to provide easy access to items such as fact sheets, templates, exercises, activities, and training modules that may be useful to them. A sample of the topics available in the MRC Toolkit includes:

- Emergency Risk Communication
- Creating Partnerships
- Public Health Mutual Aid
- Table Top Exercise Design
- And More!

Visit [www.naccho.org/toolbox](http://www.naccho.org/toolbox) today to access the MRC Toolkit. Check back often, as new tools will continue to be added! ★

# NACCHO

National Association of County & City Health Officials

National Connection for Local Public Health



# California MRC Units Provide Relief to Wildfire Evacuees

Mother Nature's fury was relentless in 2007: floods, blizzards, tornadoes, and in October, wildfires. Southern California was devastated when multiple fires fueled by warm Santa Ana winds ravaged more than 515,000 acres, destroyed 2,000 homes, and forced more than 1 million people to evacuate. The San Bernardino County Sheriff MRC was activated to render care to more than 1,000 evacuees. In one week, 50 MRC volunteers worked multiple shifts to provide around-the-clock coverage. Their work played an important role in reducing the number of evacuees requiring care in local emergency departments.

"This experience was phenomenal to me as a volunteer, and it easily justified the time I spent preparing as a volunteer," said Dr. Frank Randolph, MRC Executive Committee member. Volunteers cared for 10-20 evacuees per hour, both young and old. Evacuees were presented with a range of medical conditions including minor injuries, respiratory ailments caused by the smoke, and a pregnant evacuee in labor.

Although not activated to provide direct patient care, the Beach Cities Health District MRC was able to play a role in helping the wildfire relief efforts by assisting with a collection drive. Organized by the Beach Cities Health District in partnership with the American Red Cross and Goodwill Industries, more than 200 volunteers, including 10 MRC volunteers, collected enough household items in 5 days at 3 sites to fill 14 moving trucks. Additionally, \$20,000 was raised for the American Red Cross relief efforts. ★



MRC volunteers set up a field clinic to provide direct patient care to wildfire evacuees.



MRC Commander Rodney Borger, MD, discussed orders with a volunteer.

Beach Cities Health District MRC volunteers sorted donations collected for wildfire relief efforts.



# Staff Profile

Commander Narayan Nair, MD, serves as a Senior Program Officer in the Office of the Civilian Volunteer Medical Reserve Corps, where he oversees the development and implementation of policies and procedures related to the deployment of MRC volunteers outside their local jurisdiction during an emergency.

CDR Nair previously served as a Medical Team Leader with the Office of Counter-Terrorism and Emergency Coordination in the Food and Drug Administration.

His primary role was to assist with facilitating drug development for treating victims of weapons of mass destruction.

CDR Nair has been a Public Health Service officer since 1990. Following Hurricane Katrina, CDR Nair was deployed to Mississippi to provide medical care. He also provided medical support during President Reagan's funeral and President Bush's 2004 Inauguration Ball.

Board Certified in Internal Medicine, CDR Nair earned his Medical Degree from the Uniformed Services University of Health Sciences and a Bachelor's degree in Biology from Saint Louis University. ★

## MRC Spotlights

### Volunteer Spotlight

This quarter's volunteer spotlight commends a husband and wife who have dedicated their careers to medicine. Their passion continues in retirement as volunteers with the Chesapeake MRC (CMRC) (VA) since 2004. Milton Saunders, MD; and Susan Saunders, RN radiate a contagious willingness to re-energize the CMRC. They have opened their home for team meetings, and have participated in several drills and exercises. Not only do they encourage all CMRC members to complete their basic training requirements, but Dr. Saunders also has provided and facilitated the training of CMRC members.

### Unit Spotlight

Northern California Veterinary MRC Director David Watts recognized that there was no coordinated support for locally based veterinarians. This MRC unit supports the existing local veterinary infrastructure by empowering veterinarians to support themselves and their communities in the event of an emergency. The unit is housed in a veterinary clinic and actively participates in local exercises and community events. The unit's involvement in the community has gained recognition from the State Office of Emergency Services, which has led to the unit's inclusion in a drill involving livestock and other animals.

### Organization Spotlight

National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD) is the forum where organizations share knowledge and resources throughout the disaster cycle: preparation, response, and recovery. Today, the National VOAD is the primary forum used by 49 leading national voluntary organizations, emergency management and business partners to exchange and share information, network, and coordinate activities with one another before, during, and after disasters, which results in less duplication and gaps in services and better collaboration and cooperation. To learn more about VOAD, visit: [www.nvoad.org](http://www.nvoad.org). ★

## Show Volunteers Your Appreciation During National Volunteer Week

Motivate, inspire, and strengthen bonds by recognizing volunteers during National Volunteer Week, April 15-21, 2008—or any time of the year! It doesn't take an elaborate awards banquet to honor those who donate their time; a simple "thank you" can be just as meaningful. The following are ways MRC leaders can thank the volunteers who help make the MRC an invaluable community resource:

- A thank-you card or letter
- A certificate of appreciation
- A recognition breakfast, lunch, dinner, or picnic
- The presentation of an MRC pin
- A feature in a publication or on a Web site
- Become certified to give the President's Volunteer Service Award
- Nominate an outstanding volunteer for the "MRC Spotlight"

### Online Resources for Volunteer Managers:

[www.pointsoflight.org](http://www.pointsoflight.org)

[www.presidentialserviceawards.gov](http://www.presidentialserviceawards.gov)

[www.volunteerresource.org](http://www.volunteerresource.org)

[www.energizeinc.com](http://www.energizeinc.com)

[www.serviceleader.org](http://www.serviceleader.org)

[www.idealists.org](http://www.idealists.org)



# The Ultimate Gift: Life

Ever wonder how you could help save more than 50 lives? Be an organ and tissue donor! There are more than 90,000 people on the transplant waiting list, and 19 people die each day waiting for transplants. April is designated as National Donate Life Month, and these numbers serve as a reminder that there is still more work to be done.

Steps to become an organ and tissue donor can vary from state to state. To ensure your wish to be a donor is carried out, register with your state donor registry if it has one, check “yes” on your driver’s license, share your decision with your family, and carry an organ donor card.

For more information, to find the donor registry in your state, or to request free materials including organ donor cards, visit: [www.organdonor.gov](http://www.organdonor.gov). ★

## What can the MRC do to raise awareness for organ and tissue donation?

- Share donation information on a Web site or in a newsletter
- Pass out organ donor cards, pins, or green ribbons at a health fair
- Mention organ donation in a presentation
- Incorporate an organ and tissue donor designation on membership or identification badges



## ★★★ A Look Ahead ★★★

### March

- National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month
- 14–17 APha Annual Meeting and Expo  
<http://www.aphameeting.org/>
- 15–19 2008 National Disaster Medical System Conference  
<http://www.ndms.chepnic.org/>
- 25 American Diabetes Alert Day
- 25–29 EMS Today Conference and Expo 2008  
[http://www.jems.com/education\\_and\\_training/index.html](http://www.jems.com/education_and_training/index.html)

### April

- Cancer Control Month
- National Donate Life Month
- 7–13 National Public Health Week
- 8–11 The 2008 MRC National Leadership and Training Conference  
[www.medicalreservecorps.gov/Conference/2008](http://www.medicalreservecorps.gov/Conference/2008)
- 15–21 National Volunteer Week

### May

- American Stroke Month
- Lyme Disease Awareness Month
- Melanoma/Skin Cancer Detection and Prevention Month
- National High Blood Pressure Education Month
- 11–17 National Women’s Health Week
- 12 National Women’s Check-up Day
- 18–24 National Emergency Medical Services Week



### We Want to Hear From You!

We need your help to make this newsletter informative, interesting, and beneficial to MRC units nationwide. Share news, ideas, interesting stories, and best practices, or tell us about outstanding volunteers.

#### Submittal Guidelines:

- Please include contact information (e-mail and telephone number) for follow-up.
- If you include photos, please send as a high-resolution JPEG, TIF, or EPS attachment.
- Digital cameras should be set for a high-quality image using the maximum megapixel setting available.
- Photo submissions also should include a caption or description of the event.

E-mail us at: [MRCnewsletter@naccho.org](mailto:MRCnewsletter@naccho.org)



# MRC ★ In Focus

Volunteers Building Strong, Healthy, and Prepared Communities

[www.medicalreservecorps.gov](http://www.medicalreservecorps.gov)



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- And Much More...



## Your Input Matters...

Thank you to everyone who participated in the MRC★In Focus reader survey. Hundreds of you took a moment to tell us what you do and do not like about this newsletter. We will use the information you shared to shape the content and design of future editions to ensure the newsletter is both informative and enjoyable to read. So, keep sending us your stories, pictures, and ideas, and look for more articles from MRC units around the country about the topics that mean the most to you. ★

**NACCHO**  
National Association of County & City Health Officials  
1100 17th Street, NW, Second Floor, Washington, DC 20036

