

Brinkley, Canine partner of Bill and Deborah Hatherley

2003-2012

Brinkley was a “once in a lifetime” dog that graced our lives and we were so blessed to have been by his side all those years. While he died at a relatively young 9 years of age, he had accomplished much, especially while wearing his HOPE vest.

Those that saw him in action knew of his boundless energy and his immense positive effect on people affected by disaster. His mother was able to detect seizures in their family’s child and we believe Brinkley had a similar ability to identify and respond to people under stress.



Brinkley at Virginia Tech (2007)

As a HOPE dog, we learned to let him lead us as he identified people needing his comfort. His smile was infectious and he would mold his body around those he interacted with, enlisting interaction and smiles from the recipients. One of his first HOPE callouts was to Hurricane Katrina where he interacted with people that had been through major trauma. We spent a many days there over the 2005 Christmas holiday and he interacted with hundreds of people. Perhaps the most demanding events occurred when he was on a cruise ship, docked in New Orleans and used to house police and their families. At one point he was surrounded by 18 children yelling and screaming for his attention. He handled it well, but immediately afterward we gave him a break. We learned a valuable lesson about managing our clients and protecting our animals.

He worked many HOPE events and drills, helping to get the word out on the work our organization does. Brinkley was instrumental in helping to establish the Southeast Region of HOPE when it was being formed. He attended countless meetings and events with local groups including Happy Tails, Delta Pet Partners, CERT, Red Cross, the Alpharetta Public Service Department, VOAD, military, state, county and local events. He helped with open houses, screenings and workshops. There were callout opportunities when he worked his magic. He spent many days at VA Tech after the shooting and he also went to another student shooting at Mid-Atlantic Christian University in North Carolina. He responded after many tornados and wildfires in southeast GA. He has been featured in newspapers and magazine articles and he has been seen on TV from CNN and Telemundo, and other stations from Brazil, Korea, Great Britain, and Germany. An article was published in the American Red Cross Newsletter as a tribute to the work he has contributed to the Red Cross.

<http://www.redcross.org/news/article/Furry-Red-Cross-Volunteer-Brings-Comfort-during-Crisis>

Brinkley adapted well to having two handlers, so he had many opportunities and was a real champion for people. He never hesitated to make friends and leave his positive, gentle and heartwarming mark. He was a wonderful ambassador for HOPE and he will be remembered with great reverence. We love you Brinkley. Thank you for sharing your life with us.