

Roxanne Lechner & Elwood, HOPE Team, PSW

Roxanne Lechner, certified HOPE AACR member, who served with her canine partner Elwood, crossed over the Rainbow Bridge November 11, 2005. She died as she had lived, with great concern about the well-being of those around her, after losing a courageous battle of several months with a rare abdominal cancer. Roxanne's passion was to serve "all God's creatures, great and small," by volunteering.

In September 2002, Roxanne and Elwood successfully completed training and certification for HOPE Animal-Assisted Crisis Response in Portland, Oregon. They remained active together until Roxanne's illness prevented her from participating. Elwood loved Roxanne very much and remained by her side until the very end.

Elwood, beloved canine partner of Roxanne Lechner, went home to be with Roxanne on August 27, 2006. Roxanne and Elwood are together again, as God planned. Elwood was laid to rest under their favorite tree. Angels only stay until their job is done.

Special Memories from Taryn Hefler, HOPE AACR Pacific Southwest Regional Director during the 2003 fires and Certified Team member with Darby: "In October of 2003 California experienced massive wildfires across Southern California. At the time of these fires HOPE AACR had only 9 certified teams in California. We were called in by the Red Cross to help with the 2000 plus evacuees in the Red Cross shelters popping up all around the cities as the fire area grew."

"The Pacific Southwest region was quickly becoming overwhelmed and I, as the regional director, sent out an SOS to our other regions asking for help. Three members responded, Roxanne and Elwood, and Richard and Marcy Lowy, our President and Treasurer at the time, and their canine partner Otis."

"Roxanne and Elwood did such a wonderful job. They helped so many people and touched so many lives. At the time, I don't think she understood the impact she and Elwood would have as a result of this simple act of kindness. She was very worried before she came to California that she was not "good enough". Fortunately for all of us, she was persuaded otherwise. If you could have seen the ease that she and Elwood worked with the people affected by this disaster! It was a blessing that Roxanne and Elwood traveled (at their expense) down to Southern California to help, because not only did they help the victims of this fire, but they helped leave an unbelievably positive image of HOPE AACR in the eyes of a lot of important people.

Those same people later were instrumental in writing a Memorandum of Understand between the American Red Cross and HOPE AACR - Pacific Southwest Region."

"Roxanne and Elwood made a difference in the lives of many here in CA. I am very lucky to have met her and Elwood, and will always think of them with the big, warm beautiful smile she had as she helped the many people who were so severely affected by this disaster."

"We will always be grateful to Roxanne not only for what her help did for us, but the ease and grace that she did it." From Lois Abrams, Ph.D., member of HOPE AACR Founding Board and Certified Team member with Duke & Romeo. "It was indeed special to know Roxanne and have the honor of having her and Elwood stay with us during these horrific fire times. In and Out Burger became our place for fun times together as we traveled from Huntington Beach to San Bernardino. We stopped at a couple of different In and Out's. Children eating there were thrilled with the dogs. Roxanne was a bright star in the life of HOPE AACR and for each of us personally who were blessed to know her."