



# Oh Behave Newsletter

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Reprint November 2005 Issue, "Gimme Shelter"

## Gimme Shelter: Reservations Not Required



Wristbands identify owners and their pets to the staff, as Ashley, Junior, and Albert Nickles prepare for a walk.

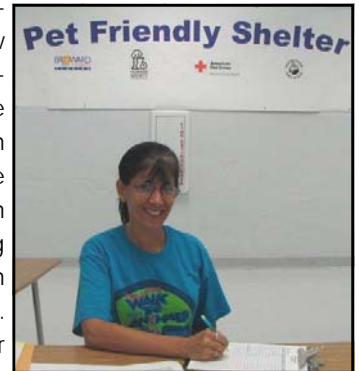
The pet friendly shelter in Tamarac was open for business once again this hurricane, but few took advantage of the fabulous amenities here. At the time of my visit, 6:00 pm on the eve of Wilma, there were approximately 30 dogs and 30 people. Although they recommend pre-registration at the Humane Society, it was NOT required. If you are not pre-registered, they will take individuals and their pets on a first come-

first served basis. You will be required to fill out some paperwork and have proof of current vaccinations. Pre-registered guests go through the first line paper free. You must be in an evacuation zone to use the shelter. The shelter takes most pets, but not reptiles, due to their special climate needs.

As I was taken around the shelter, it was clear that details of the needs of pets and owners were given much attention. The facility is run by the Humane Society of Broward County (HSBC), the Red Cross, and Broward County. The diverse staff works together to not only provide a clean organized space for evacuees, but kind, empathetic care to people and pets. Sharron Carmichael, of the HSBC was my guide and a wealth of information on the process and preparedness. The work that she and the HSBC have done here is incredible. The facility was immaculate and I was assured that when they left, the school would be cleaner than it was before the storm.

Upon arrival, photos are taken of each dog for identification outside each kennel. Petco provided kennels for this shelter so that evacuees would not be required to have a kennel for each pet. If you are pre-registered, you go to the next stop. If not, you must fill out paperwork about names of pets and family members, etc. Across the breezeway, on stop 2, each family member and pet is

given an ID band with a control number. That way, the staff can ensure that only family members are allowed to walk their dogs. "This is not a petting zoo", Sharron tells me, referring to the seriousness of the situation, reminding me that this is an emergency condition. I'm glad she reminded me, because everyone is so upbeat and comforting, they still cannot afford to be casual about anything due to the circumstances. As required for health reasons, the animals are kept in a separate building from the people. At stop 3, Linda Sanders provides walking and visiting times for each pet. As a behaviorist, I immediately saw the benefit of avoiding unfriendly dog meetings in the hallways. Each pet is given a kennel in the appropriate room. The gym has been converted into the dog area. Plastic sheeting is run underneath all kennels. Each owner is responsible for caring for and cleaning up after their pet. A last good-night is called at 10pm and



Linda Sanders schedules walking and visitation times for each pet guest.

### Pet Friendly Shelter Info At A Glance:

Located at: Millenium Middle School  
5803 NW 94th Ave  
Tamarac, FL 33321

You must be in a zone that has been required to evacuate.

Bring with you the following for your pet:

- Proof of rabies vaccination for each pet
- Proof of Broward County Tag ID for each pet
- Pet's food and medication
- Favorite toys and blankets
- Collar, tag, and leash (no retractables)

Pre-registration is accepted at The Humane Society of Broward County, 2070 Griffin Rd, Ft Lauderdale, FL 33312, (954) 989-3977.

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The cat area is located in a classroom. The class prepared the room.

then it's bedtime for the pets. The cat room also can be used to house ferrets and bunnies. This night there was a bird at the shelter. Back across the breezeway was the cafeteria where the Red Cross takes care of the human evacuees. There is a TV and meals. I also got a peek of the equipment room, housed in the girl's locker room. The Humane Society staff keeps their communication radio backup systems there so they can keep in touch across the breezeway during the storm.

Sharron introduced me to 3 members of the Nickles family. Albert and his daughter Ashley took me to see their Schnauzer named Junior. This was their second experi-

ence at the facility this season. Ashley was very distraught at the thought of evacuating without Junior. Albert found the shelter to be "such a relief" and had "no concerns" about their stay. They arrived at 1:30 in the afternoon after spending the morning preparing their mobile home in Davie for the storm, and attending church services.

Albert recommended bringing some necessities and some comfort items. They packed their van with dog food, water, legal papers, wedding photos, baby pictures, extra clothes, a TV/VCR and tapes, and a mattress. Ashley said the boredom was the hard part of the stay, so it is important to bring things to do.



The dog area is located in the school's gym.

I was so proud of this family for taking the initiative to have a plan and stick to it, despite the discomforts of leaving home. The important thing was that they were all together and safe.



Junior settles in; safely identified for his family.

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