



RESPONDER SPOTLIGHT

RED STAR ANIMAL EMERGENCY SERVICES™



EMANUEL MACIEL — PART OF AMERICAN HUMANE'S RED STAR FAMILY

Emanuel “Manny” Maciel has been working with animals since 1989, first for the Animal Rescue League of New Bedford, Mass., and now for the city of New Bedford. During his recent career, he prepared himself for animal response and rescue by undergoing training and getting certified. So when Hurricane Katrina hit and American Humane and the Humane Society of the United States called on him, Maciel was ready.

Since Katrina, Maciel has been an in-demand responder. In last year alone, he arrived at the flooding scenes in both Illinois and Iowa, and was on the scene following the onslaught of Hurricanes Gustav and Ike in Louisiana and Texas. As a team lead, Maciel has learned a lot with every response: “You never see the same thing twice. I’ve been doing this for years, and each call is different.”

Maciel’s favorite part of responding to disasters is the family feel of the Red Star team. “When you arrive, it’s like you’re reconnecting with your family. It’s a caring atmosphere, like a brotherhood or sisterhood,” he explains.

While Maciel says the most difficult part is being away from his own family during a response, he finds comfort in joining his responder family. There is an inherent risk in



the work, but he says it’s satisfying to know he’s with quality rescuers who know what they’re doing, and for whom safety is a priority.

“My goal and American Humane’s goal is to get to those animals and to report back in one piece,” he says. “We’re there for the same reason. We’re there to get it done.”

Maciel respects his fellow responders and the entire American Humane Red Star team for their dedication and compassion. “It takes an all-around good person to do the work we do,” he acknowledges.

Red Star Program Manager Tracy Reis knows Maciel is that all-around good person. “He is wonderful. We are privileged to have him on our team,” she says.

Because of the dedication and bravery of responders like Maciel, thousands of animals have been saved and reunited with their owners. And the reward for Maciel: “You come out feeling really good. After each response, it feels like you’ve been given a million dollars.”

Interested in becoming an American Humane Red Star Animal Emergency Services Responder? Get information and training dates at www.americanhumane.org. ■

FACTS ON MANNY

Occupation
Director of Animal Control

Hometown
New Bedford, Mass.

Years with Red Star
4

Number of responses
5

Most vivid responder memory
Saving pigs during the blizzards in Colorado. “Nothing prepares you for that,” Manny laughs.



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FACTS ON VALERIE

Occupation: Animal Control Officer

Hometown: Newport Beach, Calif.

Years with Red Star: 4

Number of responses: 5

Most vivid responder memory:

Chasing pigs on a levee during the 2008 Iowa floods. Recalls Valerie, “Pigs don’t usually go in the direction you want them to!”

VALERIE SCHOMBURG — PART OF AMERICAN HUMANE’S RED STAR FAMILY

Why would someone spend 15 idyllic years caring for draft horses and petting-zoo animals at Disneyland, then leave the Magic Kingdom for a job as animal control officer on the all-too-real streets of Newport Beach, Calif.? “The pixie dust wore off,” laughs Valerie Schomburg, one of American Humane’s most skilled Red Star responders.

Schomburg was bitten by the disaster-response bug during five days of search-and-rescue work following Hurricane Katrina. After driving back to California with 40 rescued dogs, she flew to Denver for American Humane’s Basic Animal Emergency Services training.

Schomburg has since deployed with Red Star five times. She assisted with the sheltering of seven horses in Texas that had been injured when a burning barn fell on them, and was part of a team trying to capture 54 pigs that had survived the 2008 Iowa floods but were stranded on a levee. After several days of feeding, watering and herding the uncooperative creatures, the pigs were finally lured into horse trailers with applesauce cookies. “They ended up at Farm Sanctuary in New York, living the good life. We felt like our hard work paid off,” says Schomburg.

The common thread that connects these experiences — and keeps Schomburg coming back for more — is

the sense of fulfillment she gets from every response. “Helping people and animals is so rewarding. I see people who have lost everything, but they’re so grateful that someone cares about them and that their animals are safe; it’s one less thing for them to worry about.”

Schomburg’s love for Red Star extends to the classroom, where she regularly teaches the Basic Animal Emergency Services training. “I am so proud to be part of the Red Star team, both as an instructor and a responder,” she says. “The people at American Humane are top notch — professional, full of integrity, and in it to do what’s best for people and their animals.”

Schomburg also has high praise for her fellow responders, and notes that her work with American Humane has enhanced her day job by providing opportunities to learn new techniques from other animal control officers who serve with Red Star.

Advises Schomburg, “You don’t have to respond to national disasters to be part of Red Star. If you simply want to help your local community in the event of a disaster, the Animal Emergency Services training is well worth it.” ■

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Barb Davis — “I’m Ready to Go!”

“Is there anything on the radar? I’m getting bored!” When Tracy Reis, program manager for American Humane’s Animal Emergency Services, receives that familiar text message, she knows immediately who sent it and why: Barb Davis, Red Star responder, is itching to be deployed.

Like many of her peers, Davis got her first taste of disaster response after Hurricane Katrina, when she traveled to New Orleans with a Nebraska rescue group. Upon returning home, she researched animal rescue organizations and determined that American Humane was at the top of the list. Since becoming a Red Star volunteer, she has responded to Hurricane Ike, the spring 2009 North Dakota floods and four animal rescue and sheltering missions.

For Davis, the most difficult aspect of animal rescue is sheltering. “In addition to being time consuming and physically demanding, sheltering is emotionally draining,” she says. “There’s always the danger of growing attached to an animal, even when you try not to. But you can’t get emotionally involved, because then you bring it all home with you.”

Fortunately, the challenges are far outweighed by the excitement, fulfillment and camaraderie that Davis experiences on every deployment. “What a great group of people!” says Davis of her fellow responders. “It’s like a family reunion every time we meet.”



Davis is equally effusive in her praise of Red Star’s leadership. “It’s very easy to respond with American Humane, because you know that things are going to be done right, with the best interests of the animals and responders in mind. My family appreciates that we’re very safety conscious; if they didn’t know what good hands we’re in, they would be much more apprehensive about what I’m doing.”

For those interested in becoming emergency responders, Davis offers this advice: “Take every training course that you can. Become certified in swift water rescue and wildland fire if possible. Sign up for American Humane’s new sheltering class. Keep learning so that when the time comes to put it into practice, you know what you’re doing.”

Looking back on the past few years, Davis says, “I never dreamed I’d be sleeping on the Rescue Rig and playing the role I’ve been asked to play, but it’s been an incredible experience. Each time out, you learn something new, and that makes the next deployment a little easier. But none of them are alike, and that’s what makes it exciting. I’m ready to go!”

Facts on Barb

Occupation: Part-Time Antique Dealer, Retired Computer Draftswoman

Hometown: Doniphan, Neb.

Years with Red Star: 2 ½

Number of responses: 6

Most vivid responder memory:

The sanctuary seizure in Wisconsin, where so many animals were found in horrible conditions. “Three poodles are especially etched in my mind. They were emaciated with no muscle mass and had very little hair left on their bodies — yet they let us handle them and welcomed our loving words and kind touch.”

Interested in becoming an American Humane Red Star Animal Emergency Services volunteer? Get information and training dates at www.americanhumane.org/redstar.