

Dear Members,

All of us here at ARK , staff, volunteers, supporters and the animals wish to thank you all for your support and generosity. The funds you have donated have enabled us to continue caring for the many animal victims of the Great Hanshin Earthquake.

ARK has changed enormously in the months since the quake. From a small sanctuary for stray abused animals, we have had to almost triple our capacity both in terms of animal numbers and in staff and volunteers needed to care for them. We hope that we have been able to offer a lifeline to people who otherwise would have been forced to either euthanize, abandon or take their pets to the hokensho. As we operate on a shoe-string budget without any public funding and are boarding the earthquake animals free of charge, we depend entirely on donations. The situation is long-term since it will take time for people to rebuild their homes and lives.

Pets as we know need stability and a routine in their lives. They get used to familiar surroundings , people they trust and a daily pattern of food, walks and love. When something as traumatic as an earthquake happens, their tiny secure world is shattered. Animals coming to ARK are in a state of shock, not only from the earthquake but also because it is probably the first time they have ever been separated from the family and home. Stress causes depression , depression can lead to illness. Stress and fear can turn a nervous dog into one that bites. These animals need gentle handling and understanding. The experience ARK has gained over the years in dealing with animals which are confused, fearful or aggressive because they have been throw away or abused, has been invaluable in teaching us how to handle these earthquake animals.

The facilities we built to cope with the earthquake animals consists of two vinyl houses with kennels and cat houses inside. Kennels vary from a 2-mat size (one tsubo) for large dogs or two small dogs, to a 1- mat for the others. Each has a raised platform for sleeping on and a small sand run. No dog is ever chained which is ARK's policy since we believe that chaining leads to stress. (if we think how we would feel being chained for a day we can imagine how a dog feels being chained day in day out.) All the dogs in the vinyl house are walked twice a day for about twenty minutes and we have two exercise grounds where groups are put out to play.