

The cats are housed in individual or group boxes which have two levels ^{to} which allow them a certain amount of exercise, though this is not ideal. Unfortunately we can't take the cats out for walks. Some of the older animals or those that are especially stressed are housed inside the old facilities at ARK where they have a lot more freedom and space.

To care for all these animals we recruited six volunteers from the UK as well as Americans who have come for shorter stays to help with construction and animal care. All the UK people have had previous experience in animal sanctuaries and are therefore well trained to help out at ARK. Many Japanese volunteers have come and stayed too, some having graduated from animal husbandry or veterinary nursing courses. Most of them are unfamiliar with handling animals, few have experience except with their own pets, so they need special training. We find it takes them about a week to learn basic handling techniques. However it has been good for both the foreign and Japanese volunteers to learn from each other. They all have to work extremely hard from 8 in the morning till 8 in the evening with only one day off a week. Unfortunately foreigners can only come on tourist visas lasting three months, because Japan has no visa to allow ~~volunteers~~ ^{volunteer} ^{them} to stay longer.

The earthquake crisis has revealed a desperate need for a permanent clinic at ARK, with facilities for basic surgery if necessary, treatment for sick animals and isolation units. We are now planning to use part of the money donated, including that from JAHA to build an annex onto an existing building for this purpose. We hope that JAHA members will be willing to help with their time and expertise to treat needy sick animals at this clinic. It would also be a good training ground for young veterinarians as the range of animal diseases and cases we have is extensive.

I hope very much that ARK and JAHA can enjoy a fruitful and lasting relationship for the benefit of all the animals in Japan as well as the ones in our care.

With best wishes and gratitude from everyone at ARK, from the animals and myself.

Yours sincerely ,

Elizabeth Oliver
Director