

A Tribute to Dr. Karen Thomas

By Noah's Ark Volunteer, Shenan Griffin



This story is dedicated to Dr. Karen Thomas, better known to some as “Doc T.” This semi-retired veterinarian is a huge part of Noah’s Ark Animal Rehabilitation Center (www.noahs-ark.org), Praying For Paws Rescue Group (www.prayingforpaws.com), Three Counties Animal Hospital and several cat rescue groups in Henry, Clayton and Fayette counties.

Dr. Thomas is the owner and founder of Three Counties Animal Hospital in Riverdale, Georgia. A 1970 graduate of Michigan State University, Doc T worked for several other clinics before opening Three Counties in 1978. She enjoys raising and showing Burmese cats, volunteers with the Girl Scouts of Northwest Georgia as a leader trainer and Noah’s Ark Animal Rehabilitation Center in Locust Grove. Dr. Thomas was the first veterinarian to examine the famous zebra, Evidence of Noah’s Ark. She actually diagnosed his problem before he ever arrived at Auburn University in Alabama.



Along with her volunteer work, Dr. Thomas provides a great service to Praying For Paws of Henry County, along with many other local animal rescue groups. She dedicates two days each week to the rescue animals. Whether it be heartworm treatments, spay, neuter, shots or just an exam, this wonderful lady is always there when we need her.

As a volunteer of Noah’s Ark and Praying For Paws, I see the many contributions Dr. Thomas brings to both organizations. It’s not uncommon for Doc T to stop by the shelter or make a house call for the animals in need. Recently she expressed to me exactly how much she loves her work and that her passion lies with the animals. In animal rescue, we rely on such volunteers and professionals to provide us with their time, service and expertise to care for those we strive to save and rehabilitate. So many times acts of kindness go unseen and unheard. There’s always someone who goes above and beyond the call of duty to make a difference. I recently learned personally what that means to those who love our animal companions.

One of my beloved pets, Charles Henry was seriously injured after being hit by a car. Frantic, I rushed him to my family vet. Due to his head injury, it was determined he should stay overnight at the local animal emergency care center. The next morning he was re-examined by my vet and it was determined he would need to see a specialist and require special surgery. His jaw had been broken in a manner that required an extensive procedure this practice could not perform.

By the time his diagnosis was determined, it was end of the day on Thursday. The chances of me being seen by a specialist the next morning were slim, and then we had the weekend to wait. How could I allow my companion to wait several days without medical treatment? His jaw was

broken and his tongue nearly bitten off... I immediately called Doc T for advice on what to do and whom she recommended I contact for immediate treatment.

Without hesitation, she asked me to bring Charles Henry and his x-rays to her at Noah's Ark. She had been there all day performing surgeries on the rescue animals. After review of the films she was confident she could set the jaw for me but the procedure would have to be performed at Three Counties. With my dog in her lap, I drove to Riverdale where she spent over an hour working on Charles Henry. She set and wired his bottom jaw, stitched his tongue in two places and pulled a tooth that was knocked loose during the accident.

By the time I returned her to Noah's Ark, it was nearly 8:00 pm. This wonderful woman canceled dinner plans with her husband (who had just arrived home from being out of town) to help my dog and me. She did this without thinking twice about it. This is just one of her many acts of kindness that go unrecognized.



It's been several weeks since the surgery and Charles Henry is healing nicely. On behalf of Praying For Paws, Noah's Ark and all of the animal rescue groups you constantly help, I would like to say Thank You for all you continue to do. Your work and generosity are appreciated by all. I'll never forget what you did for Charles Henry. Your work is done from the heart and that makes you special.

Character is doing what's right when nobody's looking and can be judged by how you treat those who can do nothing for you.