

## 11 Alive Community Service Award Nomination – 2010

Dr. Karen “Doc T” Thomas first came to Noah’s Ark in 1990-91. She came for a visit and handed the staff a business card and said, “If you ever need me, call me.” She’s been a volunteer ever since!

One of her first duties for Noah’s Ark was to neuter a notorious goat named Snowball. Snowball made national news when he killed his owner, who had regularly abused him. When authorities announced they were going to euthanize this ‘killer goat,’ there was a public outcry. The authorities then decided to take the goat to Noah’s Ark. He was neutered upon his arrival. Doc T proceeded with the operation on the kitchen table, producing a much more docile Snowball, who lived the rest of his life tranquilly at Noah’s Ark.

(<http://www.snopes.com/horrors/animals/snowball.asp>).

Since that time, she has mended a tortoise’s shell with “Bondo,” put a pin in the leg of a Canada goose, and performed countless other veterinary services to the menagerie of animals who call Noah’s Ark “home.” Doc T has such a love for animals that she shows the same compassion and care to a sparrow who needs rehabbing as she does to an expensive dog or horse. And she treats each animal at Noah’s Ark on a complete volunteer basis.

Although Doc T was trained as a veterinarian of domestic animals, her long-held dream of doctoring exotic animals has come true at Noah’s Ark. Using common sense, books, phone calls to experts and Google, she has given a blood transfusion to a cougar, spayed a tiger, and was the first to treat and diagnose Evidence the zebra’s many injuries after he was found beside Interstate 75. She stabilized the injured baby zebra until he could be taken to Auburn University’s School of Veterinary Medicine (see related story)

([http://www.associatedcontent.com/article/708253/fallen\\_zebra\\_finds\\_home\\_at\\_noahs\\_ark.html?cat=17](http://www.associatedcontent.com/article/708253/fallen_zebra_finds_home_at_noahs_ark.html?cat=17))

Doc T has a clinic on the grounds of Noah’s Ark. It started out as a mobile vet trailer in 2007, where she began to do spays and neuters for local rescue groups at a nominal fee so the animals could be adopted out. She now volunteers two or three days a week, performing 20-30 spay/neuters in a clinic in the Ark’s Animal Rehabilitation Center building. She estimates that she has performed a total of between 7,000-8,000 spay/neuters since she began this program. Doc T currently performs these services to about ten rescue groups. In addition to performing this service to these agencies for a very reduced fee, she donates any proceeds from the clinic to Noah’s Ark for the care of its 1,200 animals.

When Doc T began to pull blood for testing from Noah’s Ark’s horse herd, she discovered she is allergic to horses. She just chalked this up with her other unlikely allergies – to cats and dogs. This remarkable Doctor of Veterinary Medicine takes daily medication so she can interact with and care for the animals she so deeply loves.