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RED CROSS VOLUNTEER SERVING LOUISIANA FLOOD VICTIMS

BY CREECH TAPIA
For The Oklahoman

An Oklahoma Red Cross volunteer currently serving Louisiana flood victims said she is motivated by advice once given to her by a relative.

Doris Baker, 69, of Oklahoma City, has been deployed to 30 major disaster sites in her 11 years as a volunteer, serving victims as a nurse and in other capacities.

"My aunt who helped raise me, always told me to give away the biggest piece, and I have always lived by that. Always when you are serving, give away the biggest piece," Baker said.

Working as a health services supervisor to help people with their medical prescriptions, Baker arrived in Hammond, La., on Aug. 19.

Baker said when she arrived the shelter was housing 300 people.

"Everybody is just lost," Baker said.

She is assigned to work from 3 to 11 p.m., but has been going in several hours early to help with the relief effort.

"We are real busy" she said.

Baker said she has missed only one Oklahoma disaster in her time with the Red Cross, and volunteers in areas other than medical.

"You have to humble yourself and serve whatever you are called," she said.

Other volunteers describe Baker as humble and compassionate, but said she runs a tight ship during any operation.

She coordinated other volunteers and distributed supplies at the Home Depot during the Moore tornado that hit on May 20, 2013.

"You always have about five people who are your front-line people and Doris is one of those," said Kenneth Bentley, volunteer coordinator for the Red Cross serving Arkansas and Oklahoma.

"I have seen her do everything that I can think of," Bentley said.

The Moore tornado destroyed her daughter's house, and Baker remembers digging through the rubble looking for her daughter.

"She was on the phone with my husband and she said 'Dad I think I am gone,'" Baker said.

"I remember coming through the rubble for 45 minutes and finally receiving the call from my daughter. I was relieved."



Red Cross volunteer Doris Baker. PHOTO BY CREECH TAPIA FOR THE OKLAHOMAN

Baker began her volunteer duties the next morning at the Home Depot.

She went home without sleeping, coordinating volunteers and donations from across the country.

"That is one of the many examples of how selfless she is," said Bentley, who has worked with Baker for many years. "She will answer the call when the community needs anything."

Recalling times when the two worked 12-hour shifts together, Bentley said Baker always has a humble heart and will even assist people if she is not volunteering, sometimes spending extra time during a disaster to help.

"I have seen her on two phones at the same time during an emergency, talking to two different people," Bentley said. "She embodies the spirit of what a Red Cross volunteer should be every day."

Red Cross volunteer Doris Baker walks with Kenneth Bentley, volunteer coordinator for the Red Cross.

Baker never records the hours she volunteers for the Red Cross. She said she focuses on the people who need help and not on accumulating hours, even spending money out of her own pocket during several disasters.

"God has instructed me to serve others. He gave me a giving heart," Baker said. "We are the only symbol in the world that know no language barriers — there is no language barrier to files cross."

She also volunteers most Thursday nights at a free health clinic in Moore and cooks for her church Wednesdays, making food for about 100 people.

"When we want tragedy to happen, we go straight to Doris," Bentley said.



CHARACTER AND Characters

Some people display good character; others fall short and may be described as a character. Each week we strive to bring you one of each.

Video of woman chasing cat on Houston-area tollway prompts warning

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

HOUSTON — Highway experts say a cat chase on a busy Houston-area tollway should serve as a warning about what not to do when animals get loose in traffic.

Tuesday's surveillance video from the Harris

County Tollway Authority shows an unidentified woman trying to trap a cat on a road full of cars and trucks. She appears unaware of the danger around her and the darting animal.

A toll road crew eventually arrived and helped the woman capture the kitty after traffic was stopped or

slowed for about 10 minutes.

Tollway official Calvin Harvey told KTRK-TV that stray animals are a common problem on major roadways. Harvey says it isn't safe for someone to get out of a vehicle in traffic — it's better to let the experts do their job.

Law officers to step up Labor Day weekend patrols

BY ROBERT MEDLEY
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Law enforcement officers statewide will take part in extra patrols for Labor Day weekend and also are involved in a nationwide campaign to take drinks off the road.

The state's extra patrol effort is for the 72-hour period from 5 p.m. Friday

through Sept. 5.

Katie Mueller, spokeswoman for the Oklahoma Highway Safety Office, said ENDUI is a statewide campaign this year.

Expect "high visibility enforcement" during the Labor Day weekend as well as advertising pushes, she said. Checkpoints will be set up in high traffic areas statewide.

Mueller said state efforts coincide with "Let's Sober or Get Pulled Over," a campaign that nationwide law enforcement officers started Aug. 17.

The efforts have made a difference in helping to reduce drunken driving in recent years, Mueller said.

Over the 2015 Labor Day weekend, nine people died in Oklahoma crashes. Alcohol was a cause in six of those crashes. In 2014, there were eight fatal wrecks during Labor Day weekend and four of those were alcohol-related, the Oklahoma Highway

Safety Office reports.

In 2013 there were 12 fatalities on the roadways during Labor Day weekend, with three of those alcohol-related, the office reports.

Labor Day weekend can be one of the deadliest holiday weekends as people head to lakes and resorts. Oklahoma lakes also will be patrolled.

Operating about while drinking is illegal.