

Tails at ground zero

THE WIDELY FELT HUMAN suffering following September 11 has known little end. But not much attention has been paid to the attack's effects on New York's pets. Now, the documentary *Tales from Ground Zero*, produced by BNNtv.com in association with Animal Planet, tells the stories of animals and their owners coping with the attacks and the aftermath.

"These are the animals of ground zero that beat

where Hingson worked as a sales manager. Roselle not only helped her owner to safety, but also guided others out of the smoke-filled building. Even in spots where people were blinded by smoke and debris, "the dog seemed to be able to see just fine," Hingson said.

"Mike Hingson had always known the depth of Roselle's love and devotion," the narrator noted, "but on September 11 he came to appreciate how

heard such unrelenting bad news from ground zero," said Steve Kerr. "This gave everyone hope that something could survive."

Some of the most engrossing footage shows the thousands of dogs enlisted to find survivors. Canine units from all over the United States responded, and the documentary followed one such team, Pete Denadio and Appollo, while they combed the rubble. "You can't replace their noses, not with all the technology today," Denadio said. Veterinarians were called in to treat more than 700 dogs wounded—with cuts, lacerations, and irritated eyes—in the line of duty.

Dogs were also enlisted to "rescue people's emotions," said Frank Shane, a therapy dog handler at the scene. "I can't go to war, so I bring my dogs," he said. "With a dog, people can allow their emotions to be triggered." Pets were also given to people who had lost loved ones—not as replacements, but for companionship during their time of grief and recovery.

"The stories in *Tales from Ground Zero* are a testament that from this tragedy, remarkable stories have emerged," said Animal Planet executive producer Alexandra Bennett on cameraplanet.com. "September 11 is not only a day of loss, but also a day of miracles."

WHILE BNN'S DOCUMENTARY illustrates how animals helped humans, according to Armand Rabuttinio of Just Dogs Records, more can be done to help animals, especially dogs, cope with emotional stress. Rabuttinio and his partner Rich Parker have combined special touching techniques—based on Rabuttinio's work as a massage therapist—with scientifically engineered music. To help dogs tune in, so to speak, Just Dogs Records adds high-frequency sounds that only canines can hear.

Last May, the company developed its first CD, *Just Dogs Touching Tunes: 2001*, to help adopted pets adjust to new owners. "When the terrorist attacks happened," Rabuttinio told me, "people all over reacted, but few people realize how their emotions have affected their dogs."

While the musical touch-therapy routines are designed for dogs, people can benefit, too. "If owners take the time to do these touches with the special music, it also relieves their emotional strain," Rabuttinio said.

But the benefits to owners are secondary. "People are so concerned about their own feelings," Rabuttinio added, "that they forget about their dogs' investment. Their dogs have been left out of the healing process."

Bret Lortie



Julia Corrales cuddles Matty, a puppy given to her by her fallen boyfriend's fellow firefighters.

all odds," the narrator says as the film opens. "These are their stories."

Although hundreds of pets were orphaned by the attacks, the documentary focuses on the roles animals played during and after. When the first hijacked plane hit World Trade Center Tower One, Mike Hingson and his seeing-eye dog Roselle, a yellow Labrador, were caught on the 78th floor

good she is at what she does. For Roselle, it was just another day at the office."

Other pets were lost in the confusion, and many in lower Manhattan were left to fend for themselves when owners weren't allowed back to their apartments. Steve and D. J. Kerr's cat Precious, a Himalayan-Persian mix, was left for 18 days before a building manager found her on their roof. "You