

'Guardian Angels' Look Out for Soldiers' Dogs

Network of volunteers provides temporary foster care for dogs and cats.

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Carole Olmedo and Linda Spurlin-Dominik oversee a network of foster home caregivers dedicated to looking after the cats and dogs of soldiers who need a temporary home for their furry friends during deployment.

The nonprofit organization Guardian Angels for Soldiers' Pet formed in 2005 in Hot Springs, Ark., after the founders learned that military service members across the country were struggling to find people to look after their pets while they served abroad. The mission of GASP is to find volunteers who can provide suitable foster homes while soldiers are deployed, in training, or in rehabilitation.

Since the program was established, Spurlin-Dominik says Gasp has grown quickly

As of Dec. 31, 2008, there were 45 pets in the foster home program. Once soldier and pet are reunited after the foster term, the event is considered a mission accomplished.

Foster care terms average from six to 15 months. In most cases, the dog or cat owner covers related costs, such as food, grooming, and medical when needed.

By supporting the military, veterans, and their beloved pets, Spurlin-Dominik says, the organization does its part to help deployments go more smoothly.