



## **Volunteer Handbook**

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## *Table of Contents*

Introduction	2
About HSHA	3
About the Volunteer Program	4
Volunteer Teams	5
Volunteer Policies & Procedures	6-9

## *Introduction*

Dear Volunteers:

Welcome to the Humane Society of Harrisburg Area's (HSHA) volunteer program! This manual contains all of the basic information that you will need to know as an HSHA volunteer, so please take the time to read it carefully. Because we are funded almost completely by private donations, many of the programs we offer would not be possible without the hard work and dedication of volunteers like you.

Our volunteer program is both diverse and flexible; no matter how busy your schedule is or how varied your interests are, there is a place for you at HSHA. It is our goal for volunteers to be actively involved in many areas of our organization—from providing direct care for the animals to contributing to the everyday functioning of our shelter and programs to increasing community awareness.

Thank you for choosing to give your time and energy to the homeless animals at HSHA. It is our hope that the time you spend here will be as rewarding for you as it is for the animals. We are excited to have you as a part of our team!

Sincerely,  
The HSHA Team

### *About HSHA*

The Humane Society of Harrisburg Area, Inc. (HSHA) is an open-admission shelter that serves Cumberland, Dauphin, Perry and northern York Counties and takes in approximately 6,000 animals yearly. HSHA does not euthanize any adoptable animals due to a lack of space or length of stay.

The mission of HSHA is to build a better community for pets and people through compassion, protection, education, and collaboration.

HSHA is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization that has been providing care for homeless animals, as well as education for the community, since 1911. The organization is not funded by the government or other animal welfare groups and must rely on private donations and fundraising activities to support its mission.

The organization employs approximately 40 employees and is located at 7790 Grayson Road, Harrisburg, PA 17111. HSHA also has a board of directors.

HSHA takes pride in its various programs and services. Our programs and services include community educational programs, low-cost rabies and microchip clinics, cat spay/neuter clinics, a community pet food bank, domestic violence support program, and cruelty investigation.

Our fundraising events include the Penguin Plunge on January 1; 5K Run/Walk for the Animals in May; Fur Ball Gala in November; adoption events in July and December; and various off-site events and public appearances.

We are open to the public during the following hours: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.; Saturday 11 a.m. - 4 p.m.; Wednesdays & Sundays adoptions by appointment only.

### *About the Volunteer Program*

The first step in joining the HSHA volunteer program is to submit an application and complete volunteer orientation. All volunteers are required to complete general orientation at minimum prior to volunteering. Those who wish to work hands-on with animals must complete dog and/or cat orientation, according to preference. Those who wish to assist with showing animals to potential adopters and have been a volunteer for at least six months must complete SAFER training.

HSHA's volunteer program is based on a team format. Each team has a specific task(s) (i.e. dog walkers, cat socializers, office assistants, etc.) and a team leader. Team leaders are responsible for keeping the team organized and informed and acting as a liaison between the team members and HSHA's volunteer coordinator. After a new volunteer completes orientation, their team leader will be in contact to get them started as a volunteer.

The teams that involve direct animal interaction (dog walkers, cat socializers, and exotic animal socializers, and dog trainers) require a minimum 2-hour weekly commitment.

HSHA's main forms of communication with volunteers will be via email and the volunteers-only website. The website is updated frequently and contains volunteer alerts, volunteer needs, etc. Please check the volunteer website often at:

<http://www.humanesocietyhbg.org/index.php?pr=VOLUNTEERSITE>

A link to this volunteers-only site is also available at the bottom of the "Volunteering" page on HSHA's website ([www.humanesocietyhbg.org](http://www.humanesocietyhbg.org)).

## *Volunteer Positions*

### **Dog Walker – 2 HOUR WEEKLY COMMITMENT**

- Walk, socialize dogs, etc.
  - Groom dogs when needed
- (Requires: basic & dog orientations)*

### **Dog Trainer – 2 HOUR WEEKLY COMMITMENT**

- Participate in shelter dog training classes
  - Train dogs in shelter
- (Requires: basic & dog orientations)*

### **Cat Socializer – 2 HOUR WEEKLY COMMITMENT**

- Socialize & pet cats
  - Groom cats when needed
- (Requires: basic & cat orientations)*

### **Exotic Animal Socializer – 2 HOUR WEEKLY COMMITMENT**

- Socialize and groom rabbits, hamsters, etc.
- (Requires: basic & exotic orientations)*

### **Clinic Assistant**

- Assist at HSHA's regular twice monthly clinics (registration, etc.)
- (Requires: basic orientation)*

### **Showcase Specialist**

- Assist visitors with "get acquainted" calls
  - Must be familiar with cats and dogs
  - Must be familiar with HSHA policies, etc.
- (Requires: basic, dog or cat, & SAFER orientations & 6 months of volunteering)*

### **Resident Advocate**

- Bring dogs to fundraising events and community outings scheduled by HSHA
- (Requires: basic & dog orientations & three months of dog walking)*

### **Laundry & Dishes**

*(Requires: basic orientation)*

### **Office Assistant/Receptionist**

- Answer phones at front desk
  - Greet customers at front door
  - Office administrative tasks (copies, etc.)
- (Requires: basic orientation)*

### **Public Relations Assistant**

- Assist at fundraising events (registration, etc.)
  - Assist with period distribution of event posters and flyers to area businesses
  - Stuff envelopes, etc.
  - Assist with other PR-related administrative tasks
  - Place donation jars at area businesses
- (Requires: basic orientation)*

### **Humane Educator**

- Visit schools for humane education programs scheduled by HSHA
  - Maintain a working knowledge of HSHA programs and services
  - Assist with school lockup & Pennies for Pooches campaigns and Pity Party
- (Requires: basic, dog & cat orientations and orientation with education director)*

### **SnapShots Volunteer**

- Photographing animals and uploading pictures to Petfinder
- (Requires: basic, dog and/or cat orientations)*

### **Groundskeeper**

- Mow grass, weed, etc.
- (Requires: basic orientation)*

## *Volunteer Policies & Procedures*

### **Basic Volunteer Procedure**

- Each time you come to the shelter to volunteer, please log your arrival and departure times in the log book in the volunteer room. For off-site functions, please log your hours via phone or email with the volunteer coordinator.
- Volunteers are expected to follow the additional procedures of the individual volunteer teams they belong to.

### **Dress Code**

- All volunteers should wear an HSHA volunteer shirt when volunteering. Volunteers will be notified when new shirts are being ordered (approximately every 3 months). Shirts are also available for purchase at the front desk.
- Volunteers should wear sturdy, closed-toe shoes when volunteering.

### **Professional Attitude**

- Volunteers are representatives of HSHA and should act accordingly at all times with customers, the public, staff, etc.
- Animals are always to be treated kindly, gently, and professionally.
- Volunteering is a serious commitment and must be treated as such.

### **Hours & Time Commitment**

- Volunteers may volunteer during the following hours: Monday: 11am-7pm; Tuesday: 11am-7pm; Wednesday: No Hours; Thursday: 11am-7pm; Friday: 11am-7pm; Saturday: 11am-4pm; Sunday: 11am-3pm
- If you wish to volunteer outside of these hours, please contact the volunteer coordinator.
- Volunteers on direct animal care teams (i.e. dog walkers, cat socializers) are asked to volunteer at least two hours each week.

### **Communication**

- Communication between HSHA and volunteers will largely be through email and the Volunteer-Only Website, which is found at:  
<http://www.humanesocietyhbg.org/index.php?pr=VOLUNTEERSITE>
- The volunteer coordinator acts as the liaison between HSHA and volunteers. Volunteers should direct all inquiries regarding any HSHA matter to the volunteer coordinator.

### **Media, Public Relations, & Community Outreach**

- Please do not discuss any HSHA issues with the media or approach the media regarding any HSHA issues.
- All campaigns, events, fundraisers, press releases, appeals, marketing materials, donation jars, Web sites, etc. are created, distributed and managed by HSHA administration. Volunteers should not distribute materials such as these on behalf of HSHA without authorization from the volunteer coordinator.
- Volunteers are not permitted to contact animal rescue organizations about Humane Society animals.

### **Age Requirement**

- Volunteers must be at least 18 years of age.
- Volunteers are not permitted to bring children under 18 with them when they volunteer.

### **Euthanasia**

- As an animal welfare organization that takes in all animals, even those that are unhealthy or unadoptable, HSHA must sometimes euthanize animals that are hopelessly ill or aggressive with a poor prognosis for rehabilitation. It is vital that volunteers understand that euthanasia is part of the environment at our shelter. Euthanasia decisions are not taken lightly by HSHA staff, however they are a reality of what we do.
- Any questions on euthanasia or euthanasia decisions should be directed to the volunteer coordinator.

### **Accidents & Injuries**

- Any accident or injury suffered by a volunteer must be reported immediately to a supervisor and should be recorded on an incident report form, which can be found in the volunteer room.

### **Telephone Calls**

- HSHA asks that you do not use shelter telephones to receive or make personal calls while volunteering, unless in the case of an emergency.
- For the safety of the animals, please refrain from using a cell phone while walking dogs, handling animals, etc. If you have the need to use a cell phone, please do so when you are not directly handling animals.

### **Storage of Personal Items**

- HSHA currently does not have dedicated space for volunteer items, however you make leave your items in the volunteer room while volunteering. HSHA is not responsible for lost or stolen items.

### **Drugs, Alcohol, & Weapons**

- Use or possession of drugs, alcohol, or weapons while volunteering is strictly forbidden.

### **Safety**

- Volunteers should take the time to learn the correct and safe methods of performing their tasks. If you are unsure, ask a supervisor.
- Please do not attempt work for which you are not authorized or qualified to do.
- Always use good lifting techniques or seek assistance when handling large and/or heavy items.
- Horseplay and fighting will not be tolerated.
- Report any unsafe conditions or equipment to a staff member immediately.

### **Direct Animal Care – Dogs**

- Dogs should be walked in the cemetery area behind the shelter or in the grassy areas to the side and front of the shelter.

- To avoid dog fights, do not take a dog to the canine courtyard if it is occupied.
- When returning a dog, put the kennel lock back the way you found it. If you are uncertain about how to put locks back on the kennels, please get staff assistance.
- When you have finished walking dogs, please return leashes/collars to the leash drawer outside the kennels or in the volunteer room. Due to a frequent short supply of leashes, volunteers are encouraged to bring their own leash.
- If a dog should escape from its run and is exhibiting aggressive behavior, please alert a staff member immediately.
- A volunteer must be an active dog walker for at least 3 months before being permitted to take a dog to an event.
- When taking a dog to an event, please sign the dog out in the book at the front desk and place a “special event” sign on their kennel
- When taking a dog to PetSmart, please log in to the book in the training ring area.

### **Direct Animal Care – Cats**

- When working with cats, please sanitize your hands between each cat.
- When returning a cat, please make sure the cage door is securely locked.
- Volunteers are not permitted to handle kittens.

### **Direct Animal Care - All**

- “Get acquainted” areas should be cleaned/tidied after each use.
- HSHA animals are fed on a regular schedule each day. Volunteers are not permitted to feed any animals but may refresh an animal’s water.
- If a volunteer finds a dirtied cage/kennel, they are encouraged to clean it up.
- Do not give treats to any shelter animals without prior permission. Permission should be obtained each day you wish to distribute treats.
- When grooming animals, please clean and disinfect tools (brushes, nail clippers, etc.) between each animal.
- Please return animals to the same kennel from which they came. Do not move animals and/or kennel cards to a different kennel.
- Please wear latex gloves whenever handling animal feces and urine or animals with unknown backgrounds; while using disinfectants or bleach; and while bathing or dipping animals. Always wash hands thoroughly after completing any of these tasks.
- Do not take an animal from its kennel or cage if the identification card is missing. Please report missing kennel cards to the front desk.
- If you are showing an animal to someone who wants to adopt it, put the animal back in its kennel and instruct the adopter to take the kennel card to the front desk.
- Do not handle animals that have a “hold” sign on their kennel or have not yet been temperament tested.
- Please do not take an animal into the multi-purpose room without permission.
- Volunteers are permitted to give toys to animals. If you are not leaving the toy with an animal, please clean and disinfect it before putting it away.
- Medical report forms and behavioral report forms are available in the volunteer room. If you notice a medical or behavioral issue with an animal that is not already under treatment, please complete a report form and place it in the appropriate box outside the medical screening room.

**Adoptions**

- HSHA values our volunteers' opinions. If you feel that a potential adopter may not be an appropriate adopter for any reason, please alert the front desk immediately.
- Volunteers who wish to assist with showing animals to potential adopters and have been a volunteer for at least six months must complete SAFER training.

**Termination**

- Failure to adhere to any of HSHA's policies or procedures could result in termination.
- HSHA reserves the right to terminate a volunteer at any time.