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# **The Best Friends Brigade:**

## **Creating a Volunteer Team to Help Animals in Your Community**



**Best Friends**  
ANIMAL SOCIETY

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## About Best Friends Animal Society

Best Friends is working with you – and with humane groups all across the country – to bring about a time when there are No More Homeless Pets.

The sanctuary at Angel Canyon, in the Golden Circle of southern Utah, is home, on any given day, to about 1,500 dogs, cats, and other animals from all over the country. Many of them need just a few weeks of special care before they're ready to go to good new homes. Others, who are older and sicker, or who have suffered extra trauma, find a home and a haven here, and are given loving care for the rest of their lives.

Best Friends manages a model No More Homeless Pets campaign, with shelters and humane groups statewide, to ensure that every healthy companion animal that's ever born can be guaranteed a loving, caring home.

And Best Friends reaches across the nation, helping humane groups, individual people, and entire communities to set up spay/neuter, shelter, foster, and adoption programs in their own neighborhoods, cities, and states.

The work of Best Friends is supported entirely through the donations of our members. Through the generous hearts and hands of people like you, we can ensure that animals who come into the care of Best Friends will never again be alone, hungry, sick, afraid, or in pain.

Thank you for being part of this work of love.

Best Friends Animal Society  
5001 Angel Canyon Road  
Kanab, UT 84741

Brigade manager: (435) 644-2001, ext. 254  
E-mail: [brigades@bestfriends.org](mailto:brigades@bestfriends.org)  
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# No More Homeless Pets Where You Live

The solutions to the problem of homeless dogs and cats are right there in your own community, and you can be a part of making it all happen!

Maybe you'd like to help, but you are not sure which group to join or you don't want to commit to just one. Maybe you're ready to take on a serious project. You may even have contemplated starting your own humane group.

If you have been thinking about getting involved or wondering what you can do to help the animals, launching a Best Friends Brigade may be just the thing for you.

Animals have many friends in any community, and while many people want to help, they need an easy way to get involved, something that fits into already busy schedules. By starting a Best Friends Brigade in your community, you can create opportunities for many more people to get involved in helping, too.

Brigade projects are satisfying because the team members complete a significant project, from beginning to end, one that really makes a difference. And there is nothing quite like the feeling of knowing you've helped to make the world a better place!



## About Best Friends Brigades

### What is a Best Friends Brigade?

A Best Friends Brigade is a team of people working to help animals in their own community on a project-by-project basis.

The brigade volunteers get together in teams and tackle specific projects. Over time, they typically help different groups and shelters with a variety of projects, depending upon the interests, talents, and availability of the team members.

The projects can range from construction work, to cleanup days, to creating promotional materials and programs for pet adoptions, to getting needed things donated, to organizing an event.

The duration of the projects varies, too. Some may be one-day projects, while others may take a few weeks to complete.

### What is the history of the Best Friends Brigades?

Understanding the challenges most shelters and rescue groups face is what led Francis and Silva Battista to launch the first Best Friends Brigade in Los Angeles back in 1997.

They assembled teams of animal-loving volunteers in the Los Angeles area and offered their services to local rescue programs and shelters for whatever might be needed.

The first brigade project was to help out at an old and respected rescue group. They were facing the El Niño winter with a roof badly in need of repair. So, brigade members fixed the roof to keep the elements out during the wet winter ahead.

The next project was to lend a hand when a local shelter was facing eviction, putting 50 dogs at risk. The Best Friends Pet Adoption Festival was just coming up, so brigade members went out to bathe and groom as many of the dogs as possible and bring them to the adoption festival. All the pooches were placed in good homes.

Then the brigade team learned that a local pug rescue group had only a bramble-covered patch of ground where the pugs could go for a walk. So, they scheduled a six-hour stint of clearing and turning the ground in preparation for laying down a lawn. The brigade team was on hand for the grand opening of Pug Park!

Since then, Dennis Stearns, one of the founders of No More Homeless Pets of the Triad in North Carolina, launched a Best Friends Brigade in his community. They've helped out with some of the same kinds of tasks that the L.A. Brigade has tackled, but brigade members there have also helped get a low-cost spay/neuter clinic off the ground and, recently, they helped open a new pet adoption center.

## Is brigade help needed?

Just keeping up with the daily work involved in animal rescue and sheltering is a constant challenge for shelter managers and staff. In the already packed schedule of shelter staffers, organizing special events or doing a major cleanup often needs to take a back seat to pressing daily tasks. Also, money is generally tight and has to be earmarked for vet bills and food rather than for remodeling or putting together a promotional campaign.

The many larger projects, whether it's painting the shelter or organizing a campaign to promote pet adoptions, are not what most volunteers have in mind when they decide to volunteer at their local rescue group or shelter one afternoon a week.

A team of volunteers who can come in, manage themselves, and complete a sizable project for the shelter can be a huge asset. It also works well for many volunteers who cannot make a routine weekly commitment. And the scope and type of project can be tailored for your community and team.

## Is starting or joining a brigade right for you?

To help determine the right level of involvement for you, we've provided a few simple questions for you to answer:

- Are you a natural organizer or leader?
- Do you have energy and drive?
- Do you enjoy working with people?
- Would you enjoy the satisfaction of taking on and completing a series of different projects?
- Are you interested in filling an important niche in the humane community by offering support to existing shelters and programs?
- Can you make a commitment of time – a minimum of six hours a week for at least six months (preferably longer) – to coordinate projects?

If you can answer an unqualified “yes!” to each of these questions, then starting a Best Friends Brigade in your community may be right for you. Even if you answered “no” to any of these questions, you still might want to participate by joining a local

Best Friends Brigade. Consider these questions:

- Do you have some time to give, but you cannot make a regular weekly commitment?
- Do you have a special skill or interest that you'd like to put to work helping the animals? It could be that you love carpentry or organizing things, have a special skill related to animals (such as grooming or training), have a hobby that could help the animals (such as sewing, gardening, or creative talents), or have office skills, legal expertise, or computer skills to contribute.

If you answered “yes” to these two questions, joining a brigade might be just the ticket for you.

To find out if a brigade already exists in your community, contact the brigade manager at Best Friends at (435) 644-2001, ext. 254, or e-mail [brigades@bestfriends.org](mailto:brigades@bestfriends.org). You can also visit the Best Friends website at [www.bestfriends.org/nomorehomelesspets/brigades](http://www.bestfriends.org/nomorehomelesspets/brigades).



# Starting a Brigade Step by Step

## Step 1: Contact Best Friends about your desire to launch a brigade.

Before you proceed, contact the Best Friends Brigade manager to see what is already going on where you live. There may already be a brigade under way that you can join, either by volunteering a few hours a month, or an occasional day here or there, or by becoming a team leader for a brigade project. If there is no local brigade, you may be able to launch a new one for your community.

You can reach the Best Friends Brigade manager at (435) 644-2001, ext. 254, or [brigades@bestfriends.org](mailto:brigades@bestfriends.org).

If you've received the go-ahead to launch a new brigade, the next step is making a plan to get a brigade off the ground where you live.

## Step 2: Register your brigade.

Complete the Brigade Registration Form (page 17) and send it to us by regular mail or by fax, (435) 644-2078.

### Why is it important to register your brigade?

The name "Best Friends Brigade" is a registered trademark of Best Friends Animal Society, so we must grant permission for you to use the name for your projects.

Once your brigade is registered:

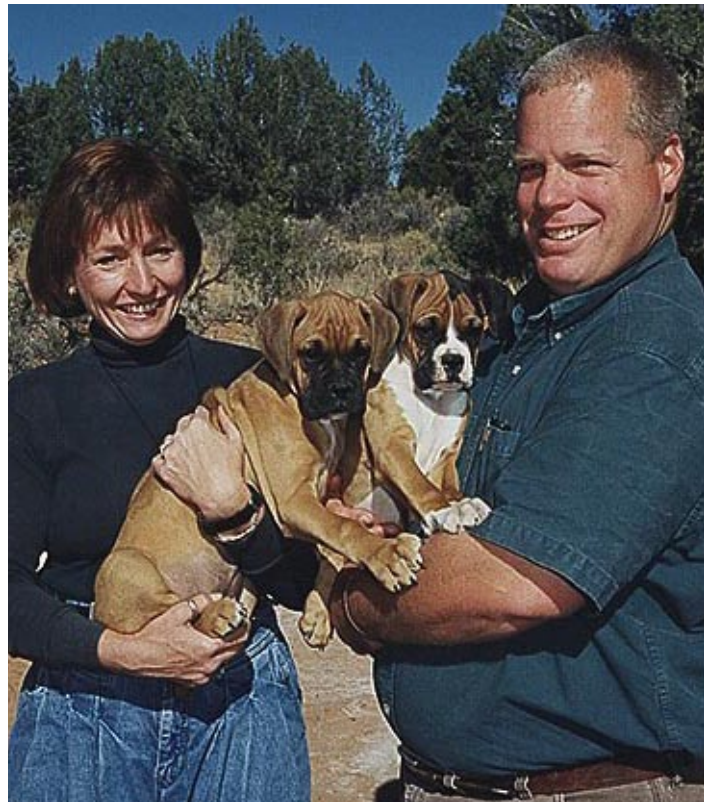
- It will be listed on our map on our website.
- We'll notify local Best Friends Network members and encourage them to get involved.
- We'll publicize your successful projects on our website.
- We'll send you a free Best Friends Brigade Starter Kit that includes:
  - Two brigade t-shirts
  - Five brigade pins
  - A brigade baseball cap
  - Ten bumper stickers
  - Brigade stickers
  - A Best Friends video
  - An order form so you can purchase additional items at cost

### What do you need to agree to do?

As the brigade coordinator, you'll need to commit to e-mailing or sending in the following information to the brigade manager on a regular (at least monthly) basis:

- Project assessments for each of the projects completed (including photos, whenever feasible, for possible inclusion on the website and in Best Friends publications)
- The names, mailing addresses, and e-mail addresses of new brigade volunteers
- Names and addresses for any organizations you have helped
- Copies of any news coverage about your brigade

You'll also need to submit the name of an assistant brigade coordinator – someone who can fill in during your absence. If you have this information now, you can include it on the registration form.



## Step 3: Find volunteers.

It's usually best to start small and grow the brigade over time. The Best Friends Brigade in Los Angeles now involves over 200 volunteers, but it started quite small. Even if you only start with a handful of helpers, your brigade can make a difference. And when people hear about what you are doing, more people will get involved. Begin by talking with a few of your friends about helping out.

We can help you find your initial volunteer team by sending a notice out to Best Friends Network members in your area. (The brigade manager at Best Friends will help arrange this with you.) We'll talk more later about other ways to recruit volunteers, but initially it works best to start modestly, do a couple of projects, and grow from there.

There are a few ways you could get things going initially, but the best way is usually to plan a get-together.

## Step 4: Plan your first get-together.

Local libraries and community centers often offer free meeting space, so you could plan an evening get-together with some refreshments and invite your friends and local Best Friends Network members to attend. (If there are people who are interested in getting involved, but cannot make it to this initial meeting, make sure you stay in touch with them, so you can include them in future plans.)

At this first meeting, you'll want to:

- Talk about the focus of the brigade: helping local humane groups to help animals by providing needed services and assistance through planned projects.
- Ask volunteers to complete the questionnaire about their interests and sign the Agreement and Liability Release form. (See the appendix for both of these forms.)
- Get acquainted with the volunteers. Observe people and keep your eye out for potential team leaders. These are people who are good with others, are organized, and have some leadership qualities.
- Talk about next steps and possible future projects. Invite feedback and suggestions. You'll want to have someone take notes at the meeting so you can refer back to them.

If you need advice and help with planning this first meeting, contact the brigade manager at Best Friends.

**Create an e-group.** We also highly recommend setting up an e-group to keep in touch with brigade members and to help them communicate with each other. You can create a moderated e-group for free through Yahoo Groups at [www.yahogroups.com](http://www.yahogroups.com). Contact the brigade manager if you need further advice or assistance with setting up the e-group.



## Step 5: Plan your first brigade project.

(Note: Parts of Steps 5, 6 and 7 may overlap.)

You'll want to select your initial projects based on two things:

1. The interests, talents, and available time of the people on your team. Review their applications, and get to know them at your first meeting or with a phone call.
2. The needs of the humane groups in your community.

In the next section, we've provided some suggestions for projects based on what many local humane organizations and animal control officers typically need, but it's essential to start by checking with your local rescue groups or shelters to see what kind of help they really want. Some groups may be desperately in need of specific things, such as pet food or bedding. Another group may benefit more by getting help with publicity. Checking with the director first ensures that your donation or service will genuinely be of help to the organization.

**“Nothing succeeds like success.”** Start with an inspiring, but achievable project, and expand on that success. It's really important for the morale of the volunteers, for the confidence of the shelters you want to help, and for the public credibility of your brigade that you have a successful first project.

Select a project that you and the team are enthusiastic about, but that you are confident will be a success. If the first project is boring or too easy, volunteers will lose interest. On the other hand, if it is so challenging that it is no fun or falls apart, that will be discouraging for people as well. If you need advice on selecting projects, call or e-mail the brigade manager at Best Friends.

Also, you don't want to try to do too many projects at once. Select one, or at most two, projects to start with. Once the team has had success with a couple of projects, then you can consider developing more teams to take on multiple projects at the same time.

## Step 6: Make contact with local humane groups.

Start by contacting the brigade manager for the names of Best Friends Network member organizations in your community. The humane groups that are members of the Best Friends Network will likely welcome involvement from the Best Friends Brigade, so they are usually the best place to start, but you won't want to limit your help to Network member organizations.

To find other local shelters and humane groups, visit some of the websites that list shelters and humane organizations, such as:

Pets 911: [www.pets911.com](http://www.pets911.com)

World Animal Net: [www.worldanimal.net](http://www.worldanimal.net)

Petfinder: [www.petfinder.com](http://www.petfinder.com)

You'll want to focus your efforts on groups that are working with homeless companion animals in your community. These groups may include local animal control, humane societies, purebred dog rescue groups, feral cat TNR organizations, no-kill shelters and rescues, spay/neuter programs and low-cost clinics.

**Make direct contact.** It usually works best if you give each group a call and talk with the director. Explain what you are setting out to do and ask them to fill out a questionnaire. You can offer to fill out the questionnaire over the phone or send it to them in the mail. (See the sample Shelter Cover Letter and Shelter Questionnaire in the appendix.) If you mail it, include a stamped, self-addressed envelope and a deadline date for returning the questionnaire.

**“Getting to know you.”** After you receive the questionnaires back, you or one of your team leaders will want to call the groups that responded and arrange a time to meet and visit with them to discuss potential projects. You'll need to meet the key people and see the shelter before the project starts.

Try to be as informed as possible about your “clients” and their hopes and expectations before you schedule volunteers to work with them. Site visits are especially helpful for assessing and prioritizing the need for shelter maintenance services.



## Step 7: Assemble the teams.

At the same time that you are deciding on an initial project, you'll want to be working on setting up brigade teams.

**Review the volunteer questionnaires.** If you did not get to meet some of the volunteers or you have questions after looking over their questionnaires, you may want to give them a call to learn more about their personalities, individual skills, experience, and interests. Of course, you'll learn more about the volunteers over time, in the course of brigade activities.

**Get help with the set-up tasks.** You'll need some help getting things pulled together for the first projects, so you may want to enlist the help of some of the volunteers right away. For example, a volunteer with computer skills might be willing to assemble and maintain the brigade's mailing list or set up an e-group. Volunteers who enjoy communicating with people could call or e-mail other volunteers to pass along brigade project plans and news.

**Recruit your teams.** What's the right number of people for a brigade team? A brigade team usually consists of four to ten volunteers. Some volunteers will not be available or may not be interested in a given project, so each project team will probably include a different mix of volunteers.

**Organize your teams and assign projects.** If your brigade covers a large geographic area, you'll want to consider volunteers' location (where they live), as well as their interests and talents, when planning projects. Some people will be willing to travel further than others, but choosing locations that are convenient for volunteers improves attendance. Online maps, such as MapQuest ([www.mapquest.com](http://www.mapquest.com)), or a local zip code map (found in many phone books), can help you determine where volunteers are located.

Besides geographic considerations, try to find sensible matches in terms of projects, and individual talents and interests. Of course, you can always invite volunteers to join in on a team project – just put the word out there and see who responds. But if you do not get enough volunteers that way, don't give up – many people respond best when asked directly and individually if they would help out with a specific project.

**Choose team leaders.** Initially, you may need to do much of the work yourself, but you'll want to be on the lookout for detail-oriented volunteers with good people skills who could be team leaders for the various projects.

Team leaders need to be willing and able to gather additional information, make a project plan, obtain supplies or materials, coordinate volunteers, and organize orientation or kick-off meetings as needed for a project.

It's best to assign one person to be the team leader for each project. Volunteers can take turns in this role, but the team leader role will not be for everyone, since it requires some organizational ability and people skills. There are no rules here, so do what you feel is best for your team or teams.

**Have an orientation or kick-off meeting.** If the project is a longer-term one, you may want to host a kick-off gathering:

- Establish the location and date for the meeting.
- Decide if you will include food or refreshments. One way to keep expenses down is to have a potluck, where everyone brings food or beverages.
- Plan a meeting agenda, with start and end times for each item. Determine in advance specifically what needs to be accomplished during the meeting. Decide who will give the presentation.
- Ask those invited to RSVP by a specific date, so you know how many people to expect.
- Plan the logistics and arrange for any materials you will need. Do you need audiovisual equipment? Are there handouts or other materials that need to be supplied?

On the meeting day, be sure to arrive earlier than the volunteers so you'll have plenty of time to set up and so you won't feel rushed. Assign one volunteer to help sign people in and pass out nametags.

After the meeting, follow up with an e-mail to each of the team members to thank them and to provide details on the next steps: What and when is the next step in the project? What do they need to bring or wear? What do they need to do in advance? It's also a good idea to recap the agenda and next steps so volunteers will know what is coming up and can plan their schedules accordingly. (There is a sample follow-up note in the appendix.)

If you'll be doing a smaller, one-day project, you may not need to do an orientation meeting. You may be able to make the arrangements with a few other people over the phone, and just send instructions to the team on what to bring. You could then hold a brief orientation at the beginning of the project day.



## Step 8: Do the final prep work.

Once the team is assembled, it's time to work out the final details of the project with the client organization and the team leader. The degree to which you, the brigade coordinator, are involved will depend upon your particular brigade. Initially, you may need to help out quite a bit, or even organize the whole thing yourself. Over time, you'll hopefully have a few dedicated and competent team leaders who will coordinate projects with less involvement on your part. The team leaders should meet with the shelter director to pin down all the details – date, times, key contact person, etc.

The degree of planning needed and who should be involved will vary from one project and team to the next. Some projects will be a one-day event, such as a shelter cleanup; other projects may span a few weeks. If you need advice and help with planning your project, contact the brigade manager at Best Friends.

**Talk with the director and contact person.** For tasks to be completed in the shelter, you'll want to do a walk-through of the facility with the director and key contact person to specifically define the tasks to be completed. If it's not a cleanup or building project, you'll still need to review the project goals with the director and key contact person to be sure that you are clear on any guidelines or special needs.

You'll also want to be sure to ask the director for any special instructions, policies, or other things the volunteers need to know with regard to working in their facility and relating to the animals there.

**Assemble the paperwork.** The team leader for the project will need the following forms:

- Brigade Project Worksheet
- Brigade Project Assessment
- Agreement and Liability Release

After the project is completed, the team leader should fill out the Brigade Project Assessment. He or she will then give the Brigade Project Assessment form and any signed Agreement and Liability Release forms (for new volunteers) to the brigade coordinator.

**Fill out the Brigade Project Worksheet.** All of the details should be documented on the worksheet. Having a written plan and briefing the entire team on it helps to ensure that everyone is on the same page and understands their role and commitment to the project. The worksheet includes the project goal (exactly what is to be accomplished), the plan (steps you'll take to achieve the goal), target dates, and other important details.

Before the project commences, the team leader should give a copy of the completed Brigade Project Worksheet to the brigade coordinator and the shelter director.

**Gather necessary materials and equipment.** For a shelter project, in addition to listing all the work and repairs to be completed on the Brigade Project Worksheet, you'll want to list all the materials (tools, fencing, paint, buckets, etc.) required to do the work. Decide if you will obtain the needed equipment and sup-

plies or if the shelter will provide them. You may be able to offer to help the shelter by getting the items donated.

Whatever the arrangement, be very clear about it with the shelter director and key contact person. It's always best to have the arrangement in writing, as a follow-up to any conversations. This is especially important if the brigade members are obtaining some of the supplies and equipment, while other things are to be acquired by the shelter. It's easy to get confused and if you each thought the other party was bringing some critical item, the project can be thrown off-track.

If any of the materials need to be ordered, you may want to wait until they arrive before setting a firm date for the project.

## Step 9: Do a final check-in with the team.

By way of a friendly reminder, contact your team members again about three days before your project date. You'll want to provide again the name of the shelter or location of the meeting, the address and phone number, along with driving directions. They will also need to know what time the team will meet and when the day will end.

If your project involves working at the shelter itself, it's helpful to let the team members know in advance that they may need to be flexible. Sometimes things just come up in animal rescue work, and so it may be necessary to change plans and help with another project that has just cropped up that day.

For any project that involves a full day or physical work, you'll also want to remind them to bring lunch or a snack and beverages for the day, and to wear comfortable clothing that they don't mind getting dirty or torn.

Ask volunteers if they have a digital camera and would be willing to bring it and get some photos of the team at work. We would love to include them on the Best Friends website and possibly in other Best Friends publications. Also, sharing photos can be a nice way to say thank-you to both the volunteers and the shelter staff.

A few days in advance, you should also check in with each person who is to provide things for the project to confirm that the needed supplies have all arrived. If you have volunteers making the calls, it's best to provide a list of things for them to mention when they call, so they don't forget to convey any information.



## Step 10: Follow up after the project.

**Do your paperwork.** After the project, the team leader should fill out the Brigade Project Assessment and then give the following to the brigade coordinator:

- A completed Brigade Project Assessment
- A copy of the Brigade Project Worksheet
- Copies of any photos taken

If any new volunteers showed up for the project, the team leader also needs to turn in their signed Agreement and Liability Release forms.

**Say thank-you.** Don't forget to thank the brigade team members and team leader with a little note, an e-mail message or a phone call. Thanking the volunteers for being part of the project and seeking their feedback about how it went helps to make people feel valued and encourages them to come out to help the next time you ask.

**Be sure to let us know at Best Friends about your efforts.** We would like to congratulate you, and we would also like to share your success with others.

Congratulations! You've completed your first brigade project!

# Sample Brigade Projects



You will, of course, want to find a project that will meet the needs of your local humane groups, and that captures the interest of your brigade members. But, sometimes groups have a hard time knowing what to ask for, so it might help if you can make some suggestions.

Here are a number of brigade projects you might want to consider. Some are one-day activities; others are longer-term projects. Some are “get your hands dirty” projects, while others will be done sitting at a desk. You may want to plan a variety of types of projects to make use of all the talents within your team.

## Projects at the Shelter

**Fix-it days.** If team members have building or construction skills, offer to make repairs around the shelter. Projects could range from actual construction (replacing flooring or remodeling adoption rooms) to light maintenance, repair, or painting.

To get supplies for your fix-it projects, your team may be able to help out by requesting donations on behalf of the shelter from local building supply and home stores or from local contractors. Often such businesses can donate leftover or slightly damaged building supplies to a shelter and receive a tax deduction for the value of the goods. (Of course, you’ll want to get the approval of the humane organization before seeking donations, since the group will need to document the tax-deductible donation.)

**Day of beauty.** Brigade members might offer to groom all the dogs and cats at the local shelter to get them ready for an adoption event or open house. When the animals look good, they stand the best chance of finding a new home.

**Green thumb.** Is there anyone on your team with gardening skills? If so, ask if you can help beautify the landscaping around the shelter. You might be able to get a local garden center to donate plants in return for a tax deduction for the value of the plants and a sign crediting the garden center’s donation. If a

full-fledged makeover is not in the cards, a cleanup of the shelter grounds may be welcome.

**Cleanup blitz.** Maybe you can plan a major cleanup day at the local shelter. It might be a thorough scrubbing of the shelter interior, or applying a fresh coat of paint to the inside or outside of the shelter, or a cleanup of the shelter grounds.

## Getting the Word Out

**Publicity campaign.** Maybe some of the members of your team would be interested in creating a publicity campaign to help local shelters find homes for the animals in their shelter, or to help find volunteers to provide foster care, or to feed feral cats. The campaign could include designing, printing and distributing flyers and posters, or arranging for the local newspaper to run a “pet of the week” photo or do a story about the organization.

**High-tech help for animals.** Perhaps some of your team members would like to use their computer skills to help the animals. This might involve creating or helping to manage a website, or setting up a mailing list database for a local group. Some shelters could use help listing their animals on an adoption website. (Contact Best Friends for a list of adoption sites.) If some brigade members have graphic design and desktop publishing skills, they may want to help create brochures, newsletters, or posters.

**The power of the pen.** If you have any writers or editors on the team, they may want to offer to put together a newsletter, brochure, or an article for the local newspaper. Another project might be writing up a “pet of the week” column in conjunction with the local newspaper.

**“A picture is worth a thousand words.”** Appealing photographs of shelter animals can help them get adopted more quickly. If one of your team members is an amateur photographer, he or she could offer to photograph shelter animals for use on adoption websites, newspaper ads or posters. A team member with artistic talent could offer to design a new logo, or do illustrations for the organization’s publications.

**Networking.** Start a community e-group. An e-group can help unite like-minded people, spread the word about animals in need of homes, promote local events, alert people when they need to call or write local politicians about animal issues, and advertise volunteer opportunities. An excellent model is the Austin Pets Alive No-Kill Handbill. You can get more information at [www.austinpetsalive.org](http://www.austinpetsalive.org).

**Helping people find help.** Your team could create a directory of local animal services and humane groups to help people find places to adopt pets, get them fixed, get help with behavior problems, or help injured wildlife. An online directory will be cost-effective and allow you to easily keep the information current. You’ll want to alert local social service agencies and vet clinics

about the new directory, and you may want to provide print copies in some cases. Information on one such guide, created for Dallas, Texas, can be found at [www.ahimsatx.org/guide.htm](http://www.ahimsatx.org/guide.htm).

## Special Events

Special events are a major project to undertake, but they can help to create public awareness and raise needed funds for programs. Besides, they can be a lot of fun. If your brigade team has some good organizers on board, a solid group of volunteers, and is ready for a big project, a special event may be just the thing!

The first step will be deciding what type of event to host. The Best Friends website has helpful information on planning some types of events. (Check out the resources section of the website at [www.bestfriends.org/nomorehomelesspets/resourcelibrary](http://www.bestfriends.org/nomorehomelesspets/resourcelibrary).) Also, the brigade manager may be able to offer advice and provide additional information to help you make a decision and plan your event.

Events work best when you set an inspiring, but achievable goal. To make sure your goal is achievable, it needs to be specific and measurable. For example, you could plan a fundraising event with the goal of raising enough money to spay/neuter a set number of dogs and cats (could be 20 or 200). Equally important is telling the participants and the public about the goal, so people will want to support the project. Another key to successful events is to make them fun, so put your team's creativity to work.

Here are a few types of events to consider:

- **Fundraising event.** This could be as simple as holding a yard sale or bake sale and donating the proceeds to local shelters or spay/neuter programs, or as involved as planning a benefit auction or walk-a-thon, or setting up a donation-can program.
- **Adoption event.** You could plan an adoption day at a local mall, or a full-fledged Super Adoption event.
- **Spay/neuter event.** The brigade could coordinate a one-day spay-a-thon, or create an ongoing feral cat spay/neuter campaign.
- **Local observance of a national event day.** You could plan a local observance of National Homeless Animals' Day ([www.isaronline.org](http://www.isaronline.org)), National Feral Cat Day ([www.alleycat.org](http://www.alleycat.org)), or Spay Day USA ([www.ddaf.org](http://www.ddaf.org)).
- **Week for the animals.** Our manual called *How to Organize Your Own Week for the Animals* can help you create a designated week in your town, city or state.

## Other Ways to Help

**Pet-food/supply drive.** Host a drive for basic items that local shelters need. First, ask local shelters for their "wish list." Many shelters maintain a list of items and services that they need. The list might include:

- Bedding: towels, sheets, blankets, cat or dog beds, carpet squares
- Cleaning supplies

- Cat and dog food, cat litter, toys, collars, leashes
- Scratching posts, metal bowls, dog crates, grooming supplies
- Used doghouses (Some animal control agencies or feral cat groups can use refurbished doghouses.)
- Office supplies and equipment (Local businesses may be upgrading equipment, computers, or furniture. Ask about donating the old stuff to the local shelter.)
- Medical supplies (Many spay/neuter clinics and some shelters can use medical supplies.)

There are several ways you can go about running such a drive. One strategy is for brigade members to circulate the "wish list" from the shelter around their workplace and other local businesses, and gather the items on a set day. Another strategy is to publicize the "wish list" in local media outlets (newspapers, radio, etc.) and set up drop-off locations or containers where the public can bring the needed items.

**Home crafts for pets.** If some of the brigade members have a talent for sewing, knitting, or crocheting, your group could offer to make pet beds or catnip mice. Visit the Hugs for Homeless Animals website ([www.h4ha.org/snuggles](http://www.h4ha.org/snuggles)) for information on their Snuggles Project and instructions on making pet "security blankets" for shelter animals.

**Putting professionals on the job.** Legal advice, accounting, public relations, dog training, grooming, catering, and printing are but a few of the professional services around which your brigade might be able to shape a project for one or more of the local humane groups.

**Providing transportation.** Brigade members may be able to help by:

- Picking up donated pet food and supplies from local businesses.
- Setting up a volunteer team to drive animals to and from the vet clinic or adoption events.
- Providing transportation for people who need to get their pets fixed but cannot drive.

**Paperwork and phone calls.** Shelters can sometimes use help with routine office work – particularly if they're behind on some of these tasks. Brigade members may be able to help catch up by writing thank-you notes, returning phone calls, filing or completing paperwork/records, and doing data entry.

**Habitats for cats.** Here's another project for those who like to get out their hammer and nails: making feral cat houses and feeding stations for local groups that have trap/neuter/return programs. Visit the Alley Cat Allies website ([www.alleycat.org](http://www.alleycat.org)) for sample building plans. Again, you could ask local building supply stores or contractors to donate slightly damaged or left-over building supplies. If the nonprofit group that is being helped acknowledges the donation, it can be a tax write-off for the business, which can help motivate some to donate.

**Emergency relief.** It's not the type of thing you can plan in advance, but keep in mind that your brigade members are a perfect force to mobilize in the event of an emergency.

# Growing and Maintaining the Brigade

## Rules for Good Relations

**Stay friendly with the shelters.** When brigade members are at a shelter, remember to follow all of their policies. For example, don't open cages or gates to animal quarters without the express permission of the people in charge.

**Don't criticize or complain about the way the operation is run.** Ask volunteers to let the brigade coordinator know if they have concerns about the conditions at the shelter or the health of the animals. The brigade coordinator can then discuss these concerns with the shelter director. Blowing a fuse won't help the animals you might be concerned about; it will only insure that you are not invited back.

Finally, leave the location a better, cleaner, and happier place than when you arrived.

## Troubleshooting

### What if a volunteer doesn't show up?

If a volunteer does not show up as promised, the team leader or brigade coordinator should call him or her the day after the project to inquire about the reason for the no-show. The call also provides an opportunity to stress the importance of honoring the commitment to volunteer on future projects.

One way to minimize no-shows is to emphasize the commitment each time the volunteer is contacted for a project. Volunteers should understand that the team leader and the other team members are depending on them. After two or three no-shows within a year, you might think about parting ways with that volunteer.

### What if the weather doesn't permit you to do the work?

Historically, neither rain, nor sleet, nor snow has deterred brigade teams from working. Typically, if the weather is bad, the team simply changes plans for the day's activities and does other tasks.

### What if a volunteer is injured or becomes ill during the event or project?

Injuries or illness should be reported immediately to the team leader. The team leader should assign another team member as leader for the remainder of the project and then accompany the volunteer to an emergency room, if appropriate, or drive the volunteer home. The brigade coordinator and shelter director should also be notified of the incident.



### What if the shelter changes its mind about the scope of the work?

The scope of work for any given day will almost always vary. If scheduled repairs can't be accomplished for some reason, the team leader should be ready to shift gears and help in other ways.

### What if needed materials and/or tools aren't available?

If repairs have been scheduled, the team leader should confirm that all tools and materials are at the site before the day of the project. If tools and materials still aren't available on the day of the project, the team leader should, once again, try to shift gears and help in other ways.

### What if the team causes damage to shelter property in the course of its work?

It's a good practice to have the client organization sign an Agreement and Liability Release form before the outing to relieve the brigade team of any liability for any damage to the shelter property resulting from the team's activities.

# Growing the Brigade Membership

After you have completed a few successful projects, it's time to grow the brigade membership.

**Remember: Most people volunteer because they were asked.**

Many people care about animals and will want to help, but you'll need to reach out to them. If your group is doing good things to help the animals, and most of all, if it's fun, people will want to get and stay involved.

So, exactly how do you recruit new volunteers? Well, it boils down to telling people what needs to be accomplished and asking them to lend a hand. You can put together a successful volunteer recruitment drive by using three or four of the strategies listed below to reach potential participants:

- **Use word-of-mouth.** Ask your personal friends and business associates to dedicate some of their time for the animals, and ask current brigade members to do the same.
- **Bring a friend.** Invite current brigade members to bring a friend to a special get-together or to the next planned activity.
- **Distribute posters and flyers.** A simple poster campaign is an inexpensive, but highly effective way to find new volunteers. Flyers should explain clearly and in an appealing manner exactly what brigade volunteers do. Offering a variety of opportunities, involving different skills and levels of commitment, allows more people to get involved.
- **Host open meetings.** Host public meetings in each of the local communities where interested people can meet and talk with current members. You'll want to do a presentation about the brigade and, if possible, show slides or photos of some of your past activities.

To draw new members, you'll need to publicize the meetings with flyers, in the local papers, and on local cable-access TV. Be sure to get the names, street addresses and e-mail addresses of everyone who attends, even if you hand out questionnaires at the meeting. (If you get their addresses, you'll be able to follow up with them if they do not return the questionnaires on a timely basis.)

- **Advertise in local newspapers.** Take advantage of the free volunteer listings offered by some papers and ask to have your brigade schedule included in any Calendar of Events section in local papers. You could also ask local newspapers to do an article on your brigade or you could run a classified ad to solicit volunteers. Be sure to include a local telephone number.

- **Advertise on the radio and local cable-access TV.** See if your local radio stations will broadcast a 30-second public service announcement seeking volunteers. You may be able to get on a talk show as a guest to talk about how people can help homeless animals. Most local TV stations have community bulletin boards and community-oriented shows that may highlight your brigade.
- **Contact community organizations and clubs.** Offer to speak to their group or ask to distribute literature to their members.
- **Find organizations that recruit volunteers.** Most communities have at least one organization that directs volunteers to nonprofits that might interest them.
- **Plan recruitment days.** Set up an information table at local pet supply stores or community events.
- **Use the Best Friends Network.** We can notify Network members if you are undertaking a special project and need more help, or if you are hosting a get-acquainted meeting and would like to invite Network members to join you.
- **Use company newsletters and corporate volunteer programs.** Many companies have newsletters (electronic or printed) for employees where volunteer opportunities can be advertised. Others have employee volunteer programs. Ask current brigade members to help get the word out where they work.

As interested people respond to your campaign, be sure to follow up with them in a friendly and timely manner. As soon as possible, e-mail or send them information about the Best Friends Brigades. (We will send along informational brochures as part of the kit you receive after registering your brigade, and you can order more as needed.)



Once an individual expresses interest, you'll also want to give the new volunteer the following:

- Brigade Volunteer Letter
- Brigade Volunteer Questionnaire
- Release Request Letter
- Agreement and Liability Release Form

Samples of these are included in the appendix. The Brigade Volunteer Questionnaire will help you to learn more about him or her to find the right match of projects. These forms can be e-mailed, sent via regular mail, or handed out in person in a meeting. Ask the new volunteers to complete and return the questionnaire and release form to you by a set deadline. If you do not hear from them, give them a call or send along a friendly e-mail reminder.

Schedule phone interviews with your new volunteers or, better yet, meet in person. Periodic volunteer orientations are a great way for new brigade members to meet veteran members.

## Maintaining the Brigade

**Keep records.** You'll want to maintain a paper trail and/or computerized records of all the brigade activities and members. To help you get started, this kit includes several sample forms and letters, including:

- Brigade Volunteer Questionnaire
- Shelter Questionnaire
- Agreement and Liability Release Form
- Brigade Project Worksheet
- Brigade Project Assessment Form

You should maintain hard-copy (paper) files of the questionnaires, release forms, worksheets and assessment forms. The project worksheets and assessment forms are often helpful for future project planning. They can be particularly useful as reference materials when undertaking a second project for an organization, or when launching a similar project for another organization. New team leaders especially benefit by learning about past experiences.

You'll also want to maintain a mailing list of all the brigade volunteers. Ideally, it will be a computerized database, so you can sort and print lists by alphabetical order or zip code, print mailing labels, or get ready access to e-mail addresses.

**Keep Best Friends in the loop.** Your brigade can serve as an inspiration to others – helping still more animals in other communities. We'd like to promote your activities through our website and nationwide No More Homeless Pets campaign, so we really hope you'll keep us posted on your activities!

**Keep volunteers interested and active.** Keep in touch with the volunteers regularly, and share news on upcoming plans or recent projects. You'll want to stay in touch at least once a month, and better yet, every two weeks. The easiest, least expensive way to do this is with an e-group – it makes e-mailing everyone

### What to send to Best Friends and when to send it:

At least once a month, you'll need to send in via mail or e-mail:

- The contact information for the new brigade members (names, mailing addresses, e-mail addresses, and phone numbers)
- Copies of the completed Brigade Project Assessment forms for each of the projects
- Copies of photos (e-mailed JPEGs, if at all possible)
- Copies of any news coverage or news releases, and any literature you produce about the brigade
- Names and mailing addresses of any organizations you are working with

fast and easy. (Yahoo offers easy-to-set-up, free e-groups at [www.yahogroups.com](http://www.yahogroups.com).) If some of the volunteers do not have e-mail accounts, enlist the help of one or two other volunteers to relay information to them via the phone.

How often should you schedule your volunteers for projects? You'll want to aim for a balance between burning out the volunteers and under-utilizing them. It's stressful for volunteers to feel that too much is expected of them but, on the other hand, there's nothing more frustrating than offering to help and never being contacted to do anything!

Be sure to say thank-you to volunteers each and every time they help out or participate in a project. You can thank them via e-mail, over the phone, or with a note or card in the mail. Periodically (every six months works well for many groups), you can plan a potluck brigade party to get people together. At the gathering, you can take the opportunity to thank everyone collectively and highlight their successes. It's even better if you can do this with a slide show or photo display that shows off what the group has accomplished.

## Thank YOU!

Thanks so much for your interest in starting a brigade in your community! It's a terrific way to leverage your talents to bring even more people together to make a difference.

If you have any questions, please contact the brigade manager here at Best Friends. You can call (435) 644-2001, ext. 254, or e-mail [brigades@bestfriends.org](mailto:brigades@bestfriends.org).

We look forward to working with you!

# **Appendix: Forms and Samples**

# Best Friends Brigade Registration Form

Your name (brigade coordinator) \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone numbers, including area code: Daytime phone \_\_\_\_\_

Evening phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address (required) \_\_\_\_\_

May we give out the following information to local people who are interested in joining the brigade?

Your daytime phone:  Yes  No    Your evening phone:  Yes  No

Your cell phone:  Yes  No    Your e-mail address:  Yes  No

Age:  Over 18  Under 18

## About Your Brigade

What is the geographic area that your brigade will serve? \_\_\_\_\_

What would you call your brigade? Best Friends Brigade \_\_\_\_\_ (Insert the name of the neighborhood, city, town or county. For example: Best Friends Brigade Forsythe County, or Best Friends Brigade Freetown.)

## About You

Please describe any previous relevant experience you have had (such as organizing teams or brigades, managing people, etc.). If you need additional space, you may write on the back or attach an additional sheet.

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Do you have at least 6 hours a week to dedicate to running the local brigade?  Yes  No

References: Please provide three references, people who have experience with your ability to organize events and/or manage people and are willing to talk with us about it.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Please describe your relationship. \_\_\_\_\_

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Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Please describe your relationship. \_\_\_\_\_

---

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Please describe your relationship. \_\_\_\_\_

---

Briefly state your reasons for wishing to start a Best Friends Brigade in your community. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Approval of Your Application

We'll get back to you within three weeks of receiving your application to use the Best Friends Brigade name. Once we approve your brigade request:

- The brigade will be listed on our website.
- We'll notify local Best Friends Network members of your efforts and invite them to contact you to join the brigade.
- We'll send you a free Best Friends Brigade Starter Kit, which includes two t-shirts, pins, a baseball cap, two bumper stickers, Best Friends Brigade stickers and brochures, a Best Friends video and an order form for additional items at cost.

Please indicate preferred t-shirt sizes (Indicate quantity – total of two) : \_\_\_ Small \_\_\_ Medium \_\_\_ Large \_\_\_ Extra large  
Please indicate video preference:  DVD  VHS

## Your Commitment

As the brigade coordinator, you commit to e-mailing or sending in the following information:

1. Once the brigade is up and running, you must submit the name of an assistant brigade coordinator – someone who can fill in if you are unavailable for a period of time. (*If you have this information now, you can fill it in below.*)
2. On a monthly basis, you agree to send in the following information to the brigade manager:
  - Completed Brigade Project Assessment forms on each project, including photos, whenever possible, for use on the Best Friends website, to help promote brigades.
  - The names, mailing addresses, and e-mail addresses of each new brigade volunteer.
  - Copies of any news coverage about the brigade and any literature you produce about the brigade.
  - Names and mailing addresses of the organizations the brigade is working with.

Your signature: \_\_\_\_\_

## Assistant Brigade Coordinator

*If you do not know who your assistant brigade coordinator will be when you complete this form, you may send the info in later.*

Name of assistant brigade coordinator \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone numbers, including area code: Daytime phone \_\_\_\_\_

Evening phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address (required) \_\_\_\_\_

Please send a copy of this form to: Best Friends Brigades, Best Friends Animal Society, Kanab, UT 84741.

If you have any questions, contact the brigade manager at (435) 644-2001, ext. 254, e-mail [brigades@bestfriends.org](mailto:brigades@bestfriends.org) or fax (435) 644-2078. Please allow three weeks for us to process your application.

# Brigade Volunteer Letter



## Best Friends Brigade

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Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

Thank you for your interest in joining the Best Friends Brigade.

The brigade's mission is to help animals, but we hope it will also provide an opportunity for like-minded individuals to get acquainted and have a good time while making a difference for the animals of our community.

The brigade will consist of volunteer teams that undertake projects to help local humane groups. The projects range from one-day fix-it or cleanup projects for a local shelter to putting together special events.

Some brigade projects may include hands-on care to animals in shelters – walking, grooming or providing transportation for them – while others may instead focus on using other skills of the brigade members.

Please familiarize us with your interests and skills by taking a moment to complete the short questionnaire enclosed.

Please return the questionnaire to: [name and address]. A stamped, self-addressed envelope is enclosed.

If you have any questions, please call me at [phone number] or drop me an e-mail message at [e-mail address].

We look forward to working alongside you!

Kind regards,

Coordinator, Best Friends Brigade \_\_\_\_\_[location]

# Brigade Volunteer Questionnaire

Thanks so much for your interest in joining the Best Friends Brigade! We look forward to working with you. Please take a moment to acquaint us with your interests and skills.

Your name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone numbers, including area codes, and best times to call:

Daytime phone \_\_\_\_\_ Best time to call \_\_\_\_\_

Evening phone \_\_\_\_\_ Best time to call \_\_\_\_\_

Cell phone \_\_\_\_\_ Best time to call \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have any special skills that you'd be willing to share through the brigade? Some examples are computer skills; legal expertise; construction, electrical, catering, event planning or dog grooming experience; writing, photography, artistic or sewing talent.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Do you have any areas of special interest or preference with regard to the type of projects you'd like to be involved with?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Would you be willing to make phone calls or send e-mail messages to other brigade members?  Yes  No

If yes:  By phone  By e-mail

If you have any physical limitations, please describe them here: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What days and times are you most often available to participate in a project?

Weekdays: Days and times available \_\_\_\_\_

Evenings: Days and times available \_\_\_\_\_

Weekends: Days and times available \_\_\_\_\_

How often do you anticipate being available?

Days per month:  1  2  3  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Evenings per month:  1  2  3  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Are there certain months when you would not be available? \_\_\_\_\_ If so, please state which months you wouldn't be available:

\_\_\_\_\_

# Brigade Release Request Letter



## Best Friends Brigade

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Dear Volunteer,

Thank you for volunteering to serve as a member of the Best Friends Brigade  
\_\_\_\_\_ [location].

Since all volunteer work involves at least some degree of risk, we have been advised to obtain your signature on the enclosed Agreement and Liability Release Form in order for you to participate in the brigade.

We're sorry that this is such a formal document, but in order to fully protect the organizations we help and to satisfy our legal advisors, we must obtain your signature on the agreement. The release states that you are volunteering and will not be compensated for your participation in the brigade activities (except through our appreciation and your own personal satisfaction). When you sign the release, you are also releasing your rights to file any claims or lawsuits against the brigade and any hosting organizations based on any injury or damage resulting from your activities and services.

Please read the entire release carefully before signing to make sure that you fully understand it. We appreciate your understanding of our need to obtain the release.

Thank you again for volunteering. We look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

Coordinator, Best Friends Brigade \_\_\_\_\_ [location]

# Agreement and Liability Release Form

**1. Voluntary Participation.** I acknowledge that I have voluntarily applied to serve as a member of the Brigade, which is a group that provides assistance to local humane organizations and participants in other efforts to help animals locally. Volunteers loosely affiliate the Brigade with Best Friends Animal Society, but run locally.

**2. Scope and Location of Activities.** As a member of the Brigade, I will be participating in a variety of general support activities and/or providing services organized and arranged by the local Brigade coordinator. The support activities and services may take place at various animal shelters, animal-rescue organization facilities, at local businesses, or other locations. I understand that during the course of these activities and while providing these services, I may come into contact with and interact with animals.

**3. No Compensation.** I understand that the activities are charitable in nature and that I will not be compensated for participating in the activities or for providing the services. I agree to participate in the activities and provide my services without compensation.

**4. Responsibility for My Own Acts and Omissions.** I hereby agree to be legally and financially responsible for my own acts and omissions relating to the activities and services.

**5. Assumption of Risk.** I am aware that there are various risks and dangers involved in participating in the activities and the services. I am voluntarily participating in the activities with full knowledge of the risks and dangers involved and hereby agree to accept any and all risks of injury, death, or damage to myself and/or my personal property.

**6. Release.** As consideration for being permitted to participate in the activities and provide services, I hereby agree that I, my assignees, heir, distributees, guardians, and legal representatives will not make a claim against, sue, or attach the property of the nonprofit organizations we are helping for injury or damage resulting from any act, omission, negligence or other acts, howsoever caused by any employee, agent contractor, or representative of the organizations as a result of my participation in the activities and performance of the services. I hereby release the Brigade and the other nonprofit organizations involved from all actions, claims, or demands that I, my assignees, heirs, distributees, guardians, and legal representatives now have or may hereafter have for injury or damage resulting from my participation in the activities and performance of the services. It is expressly understood and agreed that I am hereby waiving and surrendering my rights pursuant to any state regulations which provides as follows: A general release does not extend to claims which a creditor does not know or suspect to exist in his favor at the time of executing the release, which if known by him must have materially affected his settlement with the debtor.

**7. Knowing and Voluntary Execution of This Agreement.** I hereby represent that I have read this agreement and fully understand it to be a release of all claims, known or unknown, present or future, that I have or may have against the parties released, arising out of the matters described. I further represent that I am of legal age and legally competent to execute this agreement and that I do so of my own free will and accord without reliance on any representation of any kind or character not expressly set forth herein.

**8. Arbitration.** Any controversy or claim arising out of or relating to this Agreement or the breach of this Agreement will be settled by arbitration in accordance with the rules of the American Arbitration Association. Judgment on the award rendered by the arbitrators may be entered in any court having jurisdiction over the award.

**9. Governing Law.** This Agreement will be governed by, and construed in accordance with the laws of my state.

Executed in \_\_\_\_\_ [city], \_\_\_\_\_ [your state], on \_\_\_\_\_ [date].

Volunteer's signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Please print your name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

# Follow-Up Letter to Volunteers



## Best Friends Brigade

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Dear Friends,

The Best Friends Brigade Orientation Meeting on [date] was a real success. About [insert number] members were able to attend. Volunteers got acquainted, exchanged ideas and made new friends. We missed those of you who couldn't be with us and wanted to fill you in on the activities and discussion.

Brigade Activities – Volunteer teams will:

[list activities planned]

If you are interested in getting involved in any of these activities and have not signed up at the meeting for them, please let me know. Also, if you have any other suggestions for future activities, please share them with me as well.

Commitment: The brigade will be committing to complete projects by a specific date for the local groups, so it's important that you are prepared to honor your commitment to any project that you choose to get involved in.

We plan to launch the project(s) soon, and I look forward to working with each of you.

If you have any questions, please call me at [phone number] or drop me an e-mail message at [e-mail address].

Kind regards,

Coordinator, Best Friends Brigade \_\_\_\_\_[location]

# Shelter Cover Letter



## Best Friends Brigade

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[Date]

[Name and address of local shelter]

Dear [shelter director's name],

As you may know, we have recently formed the Best Friends Brigade \_\_\_\_\_  
[location]. The brigade is a team of volunteers (members of Best Friends Animal  
Society) who want to help local humane groups on a project basis.

Knowing how time-consuming animal care and programs are, we formed the  
brigade to support area shelters and rescue groups by helping with some of the  
special projects you may want to get under way. Volunteers may be willing to help  
with projects ranging from routine repairs and maintenance to organizing an adop-  
tion event to putting computer skills to work for your group.

If you have a special project, or a cleanup and repair need that you have been put-  
ting off, perhaps we can help.

In order to match the skills of our brigade volunteers to your needs, please take a  
moment to think about what tasks a team of volunteers could help with. Just fill in  
the short questionnaire enclosed and send it back to us in the return envelope. Or,  
if it's more convenient, just give me a call and we can fill it out over the phone.

Thank you for your interest in using the services of the brigade. We look forward  
to working with you!

If you have any questions, please call me [phone number] or drop me an e-mail  
[e-mail address].

Kind regards,

Coordinator, Best Friends Brigade \_\_\_\_\_[location]

# Shelter Questionnaire

The Best Friends Brigade looks forward to working with your group. Please take a moment to acquaint us with your program and current needs.

Name of organization \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Contact person \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_ Website \_\_\_\_\_

If you have a "wish list" and any literature (or a website) that describes your programs, please enclose them with this questionnaire.

Would you be interested in brigade volunteer help (on a one-time project basis) for any of these projects? (Check all that apply.)

- Deep-cleaning day for the facility
- Grounds cleanup day
- Maintenance or construction day (such as doing general repairs, remodeling a room, or building feral cat houses)
- Preparing literature or creating a public awareness campaign project
- Website development/assistance project
- Help developing a promotional campaign for adoption or spay/neuter programs
- Office projects (such as catch-up help with phone calls, thank-you notes, or data entry)
- Obtaining supplies, food, or bedding for the animals (an in-kind donation drive project)
- Transportation of animals
- Organizing a special event or special program

Tell us about any of your current needs. You can either elaborate on things indicated above or feel free to add additional things that come to mind:

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Do you have any other projects that you could use volunteer help implementing? \_\_\_\_\_

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If any of your projects would require work at the shelter, please indicate if it would be possible for the brigade to come on:

Weekdays:  Yes  No What days would be best? \_\_\_\_\_

Evenings:  Yes  No What evenings would be best? \_\_\_\_\_

Saturdays:  Yes  No

Sundays:  Yes  No

Thanks so much for taking time to complete this questionnaire. We'll be back in touch soon.



# Brigade Project Assessment Form

Project name \_\_\_\_\_ Date of project \_\_\_\_\_

Name of shelter \_\_\_\_\_

Brigade team leader \_\_\_\_\_ Number of brigade team members participating \_\_\_\_\_

Photos:  Enclosed  Sent via e-mail

## Team's Assessment

To the team leader: You and your team's input will help us plan future brigade efforts. To help make these projects enjoyable for all, please confer with your team at the end of the project and answer the following questions.

What did we achieve? What tasks were completed? \_\_\_\_\_

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What else does this rescue group or shelter need help with? \_\_\_\_\_

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Do you have any suggestions for improvement in the future? \_\_\_\_\_

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## The Humane Group's Assessment

Following the project, the brigade coordinator will contact the shelter director to get feedback on the project and will report that information below (or attach a separate sheet).

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# Brigade Contact List

## **Brigade manager at Best Friends headquarters:**

Name: Amy Hogg

Phone: (435) 644-2001, ext. 254

E-mail: brigades@bestfriends.org

## **Brigade coordinator in the local community:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Brigade assistant coordinator:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Team leaders:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Brigade members:**

It's preferable to keep the brigade members' contact information in a computerized mailing list database program so you can easily generate current lists.