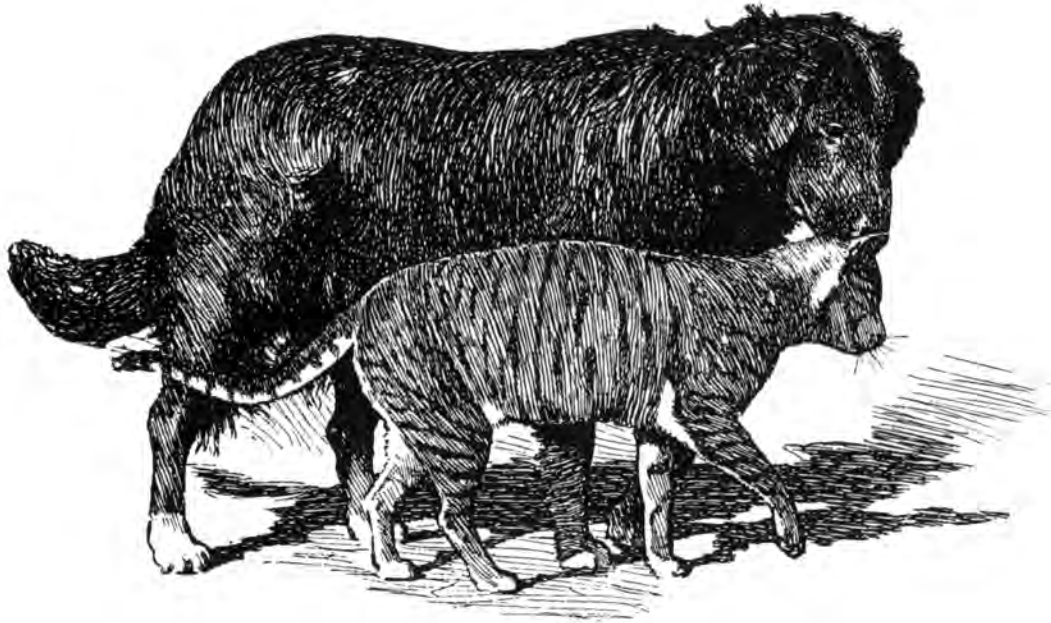


*“The influence of a beautiful, helpful, hopeful character  
is contagious, and may revolutionize a whole town.”*

—Eleanor H. Porter



# **VOLUNTEERS**

## **Getting Ready for Them, Finding Them, Keeping Them**

*by  
Bonney Brown*



*The National Feral Cat Resource*



*The National Feral Cat Resource*

**Alley Cat Allies (ACA)** The national information clearinghouse and advocacy organization working to establish effective nonlethal programs, including Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR), as the standard method of reducing feral cat populations. ACA functions through print, video, and web-based information; workshops and conferences; and by consulting with individuals, groups, agencies, and institutions that work directly with feral cats. ACA is a 501(c)3 nonprofit association based in Bethesda, Maryland, with more than 95,000 supporters. For more information, go to [www.alleycat.org](http://www.alleycat.org).

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**D**o you really need more volunteers? To some this will seem like an odd question, but it's one that many organizations ask. Everyone had heard a volunteer horror story or two. And apart from the potential problems, volunteers do require an investment of time and effort by the leadership. That said, there is no denying that good volunteers will dramatically increase your organization's ability to make things happen. They will expand your presence in the community and help you achieve your mission. You can get more done for the animals with many hands, hearts, and minds than with only a few.

## Getting Ready for Volunteers

### PREPARING TO BRING VOLUNTEERS ON BOARD

There are a couple things you'll need to have in place before bringing volunteers on board:

- Written materials about your organization—specifically they need to convey the mission and scope of your work to volunteers.
- A plan for training and ongoing management of volunteers.

We'll cover both of these in greater depth below.

### WRITTEN MATERIALS

You probably already have written information about your organization available to the general public. But you also need written materials specific to volunteer recruitment and training. Make sure these materials are clear and easy to understand. The best way to ensure that they will communicate what you wish to newcomers is to have a friend who is

not already involved in the program read them over for you and provide feedback.

### The documents for volunteers should include the following:

**Volunteer recruitment materials.** Be sure this information is formatted in an appealing way to help you attract new volunteers. Pleasing or fun images of animals will really help catch the eye of your target audience. Be sure the recruitment literature includes:

- The organization's mission and goals.
- A brief outline of the organization's programs and services.
- A listing and description of the organization's volunteer opportunities.
- A questionnaire for potential volunteers to complete.

**Volunteer training packet or manual.** This should include:

- The organization's mission and goals (yes, you need this information included here as well as in the recruitment information.)
- An outline of the organization's programs and services.
- Clearly defined organizational policies and standards.
- A volunteer agreement. This agreement indicates that volunteers have read and will abide by the organization's policies and will provide their services on a volunteer basis (without compensation).
- A liability waiver. This waiver, along with the agreement stating their understanding of and willingness to abide by the policies, can help to protect your organization from being held liable not only for injuries sustained by volunteers, but also for the actions of the volunteers.
- Job descriptions. All volunteers need a job description for their work. The job descrip-

tions should clearly define tasks, expectations, and time lines for completion. Include who the volunteer reports to and who has the authority to make specific decisions.

**Specific information and/or training materials for specialized jobs.** Some jobs, such as providing foster care for animals in the volunteer's home or trapping feral cats, may require specific, detailed information for volunteers. Likewise, you might need them to agree to clearly defined written guidelines. For example, a foster care agreement might include the following information:

- That the organization is the legal owner of the foster animal.
- What care the volunteer is responsible for providing to the animal.
- Where the animal is to be kept. For example, will the animal be kept confined, allowed outdoors, allowed to mix with other animals in the household?
- What to do in an emergency.
- Who covers expenses for food, vet care, supplies.
- Who is responsible for arranging adoptions.

## TRAINING

If you are recruiting a number of volunteers at once, you might want to schedule a group training during which you hand out the volunteer training packet or manual. In addition to this general training, make sure you provide training specific to each volunteer's job, be it animal care, use of equipment, or office skills. Here are some tips:

- Explain and demonstrate a task, then watch while the volunteer does it.
- Take the time to observe even those volunteers who have had prior experience; you may learn something new or head off a potential problem.

- Allow plenty of time for the volunteer to ask questions.
- Pair up a new volunteer with a veteran for an initial period of a few days or weeks.
- If the task is complex or has many variables it will be helpful to provide written instructions and background information on the task or skill.
- Let your volunteers know that you are always willing to answer questions.
- Remember, training is an ongoing process, and should include ongoing, two-way communication. You'll want to keep in touch and ask volunteers how things are going.

## MANAGEMENT

To manage volunteers successfully, you'll want to appoint a volunteer coordinator with good communication skills, a positive attitude, appropriate expertise, and supplies/equipment adequate to do the job. The right individual will be able to genuinely delegate responsibility, while providing safeguards to ensure that critical jobs are completed correctly in a timely manner. ("Trust but verify...")

If your organization is young or small it may not be possible to hire staff, but you can still recruit a volunteer coordinator who may actually be a volunteer.

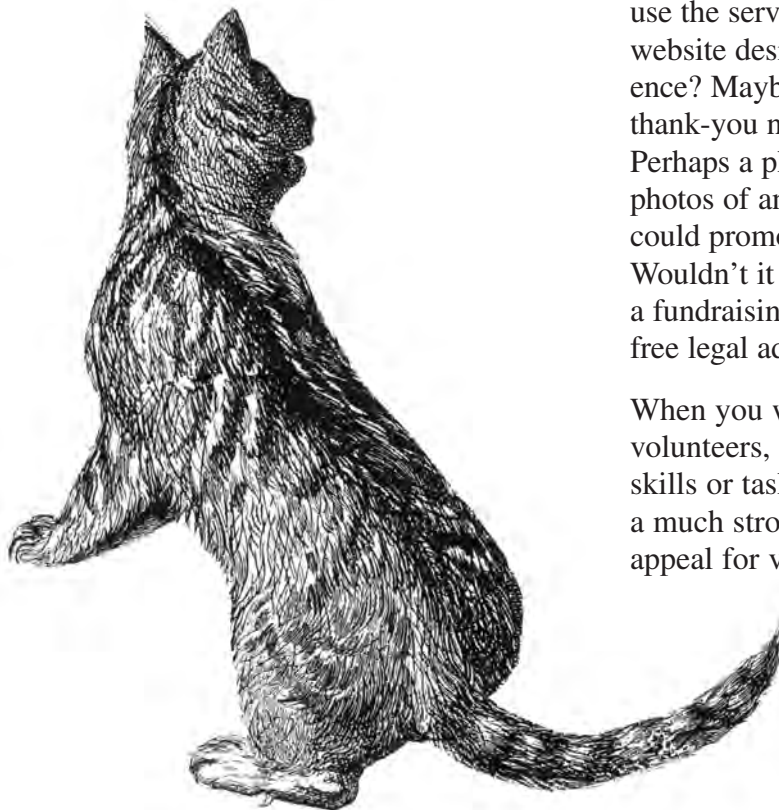
**The right fit.** Part of the volunteer coordinator's job is assessing people and matching them with appropriate jobs. Some people are seeking a challenge and an opportunity to take on a major project. Others are looking for an easy, stress-free volunteer experience.

The volunteer coordinator will need to take the time to find out what volunteer's are looking for and what skills they possess to find the right job for each individual.

**The right attitude.** It's beneficial to be tolerant of individual differences whenever possible without sacrificing the quality of care provided to the animals and the service provided to the public. That said, if a volunteer is creating problems, they need to be addressed promptly. The job description and volunteer agreement that you review with people when they start can provide the framework for follow-up discussions to address any problems that arise.

If a volunteer continues to create conflict and problems after you have spoken with them a couple of times about changing the problem behaviors, it may be appropriate to let the volunteer go, as you would an unsatisfactory employee. You are under no obligation to accept volunteer help from an individual who is pulling in a different direction, and it's not fair to other volunteers to keep a problem person around.

*"Responsibility and trust are high motivators."*  
—Jonathan T. Scott



## Finding Volunteers

Recruiting volunteers is not as difficult as you might expect. In fact, fundamentally it's simple; let people know what needs to be accomplished and ask them to help. Of course there are a few things you can do and specific strategies you can employ that will assist you.

### RECRUITMENT TIPS

**Be specific.** Be sure to specify what the volunteer opportunities are in your recruitment literature. This is important because when most people see a notice from a humane group that says "volunteers needed" they make an assumption that hands-on help with animals is what is needed. Some people are not able to do physical work, others worry about getting too attached to animals they cannot adopt.

While you no doubt need people who want to work directly with animals, it is almost certainly not the only help you need. Could you use the services of a writer? Or someone with website design or desktop publishing experience? Maybe you could use help writing thank-you notes or returning phone calls? Perhaps a photographer could help by taking photos of animals for adoption or a PR person could promote your work to the local media? Wouldn't it be nice if someone would organize a fundraising event? Could you benefit from free legal advice or accounting expertise?

When you write an ad, flyer, or poster seeking volunteers, if you include some of the specific skills or tasks you need help with you will get a much stronger response than with a generic appeal for volunteers.

**Make it easy and inviting.** When we have committed much of our time to helping animals it can be hard to remember that some people are in different places in their lives.

One woman who was volunteering 30 hours a week writing, editing, and distributing a daily e-mail newsletter to a community mailing list of 850 people told me how she got involved. The founder of the humane group told people that if they could dedicate “just one hour a week” that they could make a difference for the animals. She figured she could do that, and started off by going to the shelter one hour a week to walk dogs. Before long she was hooked and asked what else she could do to help. She was a professional writer, and it did not take long for the savvy founder to recruit her to take over his e-mail newsletter. She explained that if she had initially been told that such a large commitment was needed she would never have become involved.

Allow people to get involved at their own pace.

**Focus on fun.** No one wants to do something just because they should or because someone needs them to. People do things because they want to feel good, to help others, to have a good time with like-minded people. So in ads and other volunteer recruitment literature focus on the animals and on the fun and rewarding aspects of volunteering.

**Share your successes.** There’s an old adage that says “nothing succeed like success,” and it’s true. No one wants to join a lost cause, but most people are happy to cheer on a winning team. Keep your messages upbeat and positive. When you present a problem, present a solution along with it.

**“...Worth a thousand words.”** Most people who will volunteer to help animals will be attracted to a pleasing image or photo of an animal. Keep text to the minimum necessary to convey the information and allow plenty of

room for a good photo of an animal or, better yet, of a person interacting in a fun or heart-warming way with an animal.

## **HOW TO GET THE WORD OUT**

To find new volunteers you need to really get the word out there broadly to reach as many people as possible. This will require employing multiple recruitment strategies, but it does not have to be expensive or overly time-consuming.

There are several highly effective, inexpensive ways to reach people.

### **Word of mouth**

Invite current volunteers to bring a friend (or two or three) to a special get-together.

E-mail a list of volunteer opportunities to members and current volunteers and ask them to pass it on to friends.

Ask board members to provide a list of potential volunteers and then ask them to write or call each of them.

Let your members know through your newsletter that you need volunteers. Include a list of your specific volunteer needs and provide a checkbox on the donation-response form for donors to request more information on volunteering.

### **Newspaper and radio ads**

Many newspapers regularly feature a listing of volunteer opportunities from local non-profits for free.

Place classified ads. Many papers offer a non-profit discount or multiple-insertion discounts.

Ask editors or reporters at the local paper(s) if they would consider writing an article that profiles a current volunteer or one of your volunteer-run programs. In addition, provide your volunteer recruitment info and a list of other opportunities so the writer will know

that you are seeking additional volunteers and have literature available if people contact you.

Ask local radio stations to do public service announcements (PSA) to help you find volunteers. There's no charge—all you usually need to do is supply the text for the talk show host or DJ to read. Be sure the PSA is written as you would speak, in simple clear language. If it's fun and engaging it will be more effective. Keep in mind that it needs to be very brief—30 seconds or less. To be sure it's short enough, time it while you read it aloud.

### **Flyers and posters**

A simple poster campaign is an inexpensive but highly effective way to find new volunteers. Very basic 8 1/2" x 11" posters with an eye-catching image of an animal can work wonders. Be sure to include your website address, phone number, and a few of the specific volunteer opportunities.

Your flyer should list attractive, well-defined volunteer opportunities. Be sure to offer a variety of types of opportunities involving different skills and levels of commitment.

Broad distribution of your flyers and posters is critical; you can have the world's most wonderful materials, but unless lots of people see them, they won't help a bit.

The distribution plan should include area vet clinics, pet supply stores, markets, health food stores, health clubs, places of worship, libraries, etc. Ask members and current volunteers to post them where they work.

## **OTHER IDEAS FOR VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT**

**Radio talk shows.** You may be able to get on a local talk show as a guest.

**Company newsletters.** Many companies have newsletters (electronic or printed) for employ-

ees. Request that local companies share information about volunteer opportunities with your organization with their employees.

**Local cable TV.** Most stations have community bulletin boards and community-oriented shows.

**Community organizations and civic clubs.** Offer to speak at their meetings or ask to distribute literature to their members.

**Recruitment days.** Set up an information table at local pet supply stores or community events.

**The Best Friends Network.** Contact the Best Friends Animal Society Network and ask them to let Network members in your area know about your group's volunteer needs.

**Local Volunteer Center.** List your organization with the United Way and other local volunteer matching services. (Search online and in the local yellow pages.)

**The Internet.** Post your volunteer opportunities on your organization's website and on other online volunteer sites. Some of the larger national websites include: [www.volunteer-match.org](http://www.volunteer-match.org), [www.idealists.org](http://www.idealists.org), [www.servenet.org](http://www.servenet.org), and [www.networkforgood.org](http://www.networkforgood.org).

**Professional Services.** Seek specialized volunteers through professional associations. Search online and in the Yellow Pages for the local Bar Association, Accountants for Public Interest, and Chamber of Commerce to reach out to their members.

**Public Meetings.** Hosting open public meetings in each of the local communities is another inexpensive, effective way to connect with people. Of course you need to promote the meeting to make it a success, listing it in the local paper, with the local cable TV station, creating posters, and sending postcard

invitations to all the people on your mailing list in the community. Plan an interesting, informative agenda and keep the meeting on time and on track. A PowerPoint presentation with photos of your organization's work is an ideal way to engage people. Refreshments don't hurt either.

*"There is a great untapped resource of additional potential volunteers.... Our research shows that the best way to get people involved is simply to ask them. Nearly 90 percent of people volunteer when they are asked."*

—Sara E. Meléndez, President and CEO of Independent Sector

*"Put yourself in the shoes of a member who wants to get involved. How easy is it? Are such efforts rejected or encouraged? When a member offers to help and receives no response, the disillusion that sets in can be destructive to the relationship."*

—Annette E. Petrick

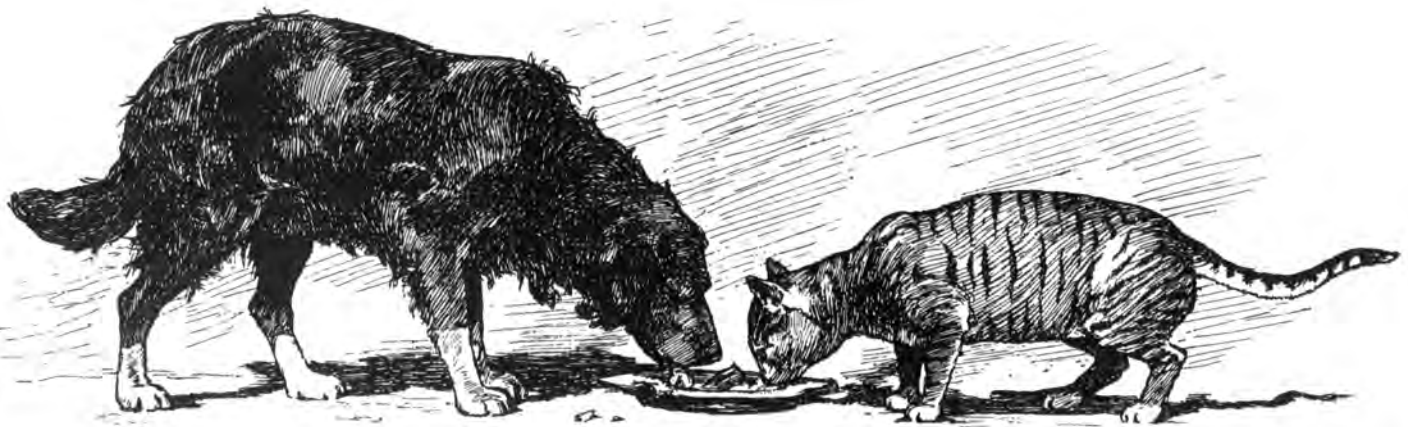
## **VOLUNTEER PLACEMENT**

Once an individual expresses interest, you'll need to learn more about him or her to match the person with the right job. A good way to do this is through a questionnaire. In addition

to basic contact information and availability, you'll want to find out about prospective volunteers' past work and volunteer experiences, any special interests or skills, what they liked and disliked about these experiences, what they see themselves doing within your organization, and why they are volunteering. You may also want to ask them to sign a liability waiver. The questionnaire should be followed by an interview. Allow time to answer their questions, and be sure to provide them with a written copy of the organization's goals, policies, and volunteer guidelines.

## **SEEK OUT QUALIFIED HELP**

For important jobs you'll want to exercise some care in selecting the right person. The first person to raise his or her hand in a meeting may not be the best person for the job. You can interview a prospective volunteer much as you would a job applicant. When you think you have found a qualified person with the right personality for the job, ask them to take on the responsibility. Most people will be pleased and flattered that you have selected them for an important role. And they are more likely to make time in their schedule, even if they are already very busy, because you have taken the care to select them.



## Keeping Volunteers

### Provide a good volunteer experience.

How can you keep volunteers motivated and involved? You'll need to invest time and resources into managing volunteers to ensure that you are fulfilling their needs. But don't worry, this will be returned to the organization many times over.

Here are some suggestions that may help:

- Place volunteers carefully and do ongoing assessment. Don't assume that volunteers will be happy where you have placed them. Talk with them regularly and make adjustments as needed. Volunteers' needs, interests, and commitment level may change over time; a volunteer may be ready to become more involved, to take on a new challenge, or she may want less responsibility as time goes on. By keeping in touch with volunteers about other opportunities and talking with them regularly you'll be able to make the most of each volunteer for the organization.
- Share information. Keep volunteers abreast of developments within your organization and the humane movement in general. Share copies of articles and related information that pertain to their work, such as veterinary care developments, new dog training methods, or the latest adoption practices.
- Offer training opportunities. This may include an offer to attend a seminar or conference or to receive a related publication.
- Provide encouragement and feedback on their performance. Always treat volunteers with respect and courtesy. Make time to listen.
- Provide needed supplies and equipment.

- Ask for feedback and recommendations. Address concerns and implement good ideas.
- Do not waste volunteers' time. All meetings should be productive and necessary.

Show appreciation and recognition. Here are some ways to do this:

- Thank-you notes (can be personal and handwritten or more official, e.g., on letterhead stationery and signed by the executive director or all the board members)
- Certificate or award
- Parties and get-togethers
- Sincere in-person thank-you
- Small thoughtful gift
- Article in the local paper
- Mention on the website or in the newsletter
- Chance to participate in educational opportunities (seminar, conference)

It's helpful to keep in mind that part of our larger mission is to encourage compassionate feelings and actions, and for this reason alone investing time in creating positive volunteer experiences is worthwhile.

*"Enthusiasm is contagious. Start an epidemic."*  
—Don Ward





# Resources

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## Web-Based Resources

### Points of Light Foundation

A national nonprofit organization that promotes volunteerism and provides information on training and managing volunteers.

1400 I Street NW, Suite 800

Washington, DC 20005

**Website:** [www.pointsoflight.org](http://www.pointsoflight.org)

### Action Without Borders

Lists local volunteer opportunities by subject, such as Wildlife and Animal Welfare.

Organizations can post volunteer opportunities and find volunteers by looking through volunteer profiles.

**Website:** [www.idealists.org](http://www.idealists.org)

### VolunteerMatch

A nonprofit online service that helps interested volunteers get involved with community service organizations throughout the U.S. You can either find or post volunteer opportunities.

**Website:** [www.volunteermatch.org](http://www.volunteermatch.org)

### SERVEnet

A program of Youth Service America that provides local volunteer matching and best practices information.

**Website:** [www.servenet.org](http://www.servenet.org)

### Network for Good

A nonprofit organization that connects volunteers and donors with charities.

**Website:** [www.networkforgood.org](http://www.networkforgood.org)

## Books

### Volunteer Management: Mobilizing All the Resources of the Community

*by Steve McCurley and Rick Lynch*

paperback, 1996

### Volunteers: How to Get Them, How to Keep Them

*by Helen Little*

paperback, 1999

### Volunteers Wanted: A Practical Guide to Finding and Keeping Good Volunteers

*by Jo B. Rusin*

paperback, 1999

## Sample Volunteer Ads

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### Volunteers Needed!

#### Do you love animals?

Meet like-minded people and have fun helping homeless animals by volunteering as little as one hour a week.

Opportunities include volunteering at our no-kill cat shelter in [location], returning phone calls from your home, and using your photography skills to help promote animals for adoption.

If you are able to help out or would like a complete listing of volunteer opportunities, please call [phone number] or visit our website at [URL]. [Organization name] is a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping animals.

*[organization logo]*

### We need you!

*[cartoon image of  
a dog and cat]*

#### Volunteers are needed for [organization name].

Opportunities include: website design, foster care for dogs or cats, dog walking, phone representatives, data entry, other office work, transportation, and desktop publishing.

Call [phone number] or visit our website at [URL] for a full listing of volunteer opportunities.

*[organization logo]*

# **Sample Radio Public Service Announcement**

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**(30 Seconds)**

Help set the pace to save homeless animals! Volunteers are needed for the Walk for Animals, on May 31st in [location].

In addition to the 3-mile fun walk there will be music, entertainment, refreshments, clowns, and more!

Proceeds will fund low-cost spay/neuter services and care for homeless animals.

For more information contact [organization name] at [phone number] or visit online [URL].

# Sample Job Descriptions

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## Feral Cat Colony Feeder

**Responsibility:** Providing ongoing care to the cats in a designated feral cat colony.

**Reports to:** Team Leader for community cat program

**Tasks:**

- Provide food and water on scheduled days.
- Clean up the site routinely.
- Ensure that shelter is available to the cats.
- Alert the team leader immediately if there are any issues affecting the cat colony, health problems, newcomers, concerns from the public, dangers, etc.
- Call other feeders to arrange a replacement if you cannot make it within two hours of the appointed feeding time.

## Phone Representative

**Responsibility:** Providing assistance to people who contact the organization for information or help.

**Reports to:** Phone Captain

*Satisfactory completion of a training session is required.*

**Tasks:**

- Returning calls within the designated 36-hour time frame.
- Following the policies of the organization and handling calls in the prescribed manner laid out in the *Phone Reps Handbook*.
- Maintaining accurate records as required.
- Notifying the phone captain of any problems or unresolved situations.

## Event/Program Chairperson

**Responsibility:** Organizing/overseeing [specific event or program] to ensure its success.

**Reports to:** Executive Director

**Tasks:**

- Setting goals and budget for the event/program with the executive director.
- Establishing a timeline for the event/program with due dates for specific tasks.
- Appointing coordinators, delegating tasks, and coordinating their efforts to ensure that all the key aspects of the event/project are adequately covered.
- Ensuring that policies and procedures are followed and that tasks are completed in a timely fashion.
- Keeping the team informed on an ongoing basis, including arranging and chairing productive, periodic meetings.
- Keeping the executive director apprised of progress and any problems.
- Filling in as needed to complete tasks on time.
- Overseeing [spearheading or assisting with specific activities] for the team.
- Maintaining accurate records and handing them over to the secretary at the close of the event/project.

# Sample Volunteer Opportunities

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Thanks for your interest in helping! In order to help us find the best job for you, we suggest that you review this list and select a couple of opportunities that interest you. Indicate your area(s) of interest and return this list with the enclosed volunteer application. Our Volunteer Coordinator will call to discuss your interests, availability, and talents and to provide additional information on the opportunities that you have selected (the job description and how much time is needed). Training will be provided.

- Hands-on work with animals
- Shelter Volunteers to work in our no-kill cat shelter in [location] (a.m. or p.m.)
- Foster homes for cats and/or dogs
- Transporting cats and/or dogs to and from veterinary clinics
- Liaisons to work with local animal control organizations to get photos and descriptions of adoptable cats and/or dogs
- Trapping feral cats for neutering and vet care
- Feeding feral cats in local controlled colonies (food provided)
- Cat Action Team volunteers for [locations]
- Canine Friends Program volunteers to assist with placement program
- Phone work, paperwork, and other volunteer work
- Phone Representatives to return phone calls (from your home)
- Spay/Neuter Program Reps to return calls and handle paperwork (from your home)
- Placement Program Coordinator, photography, writing, phone and/or mailings
- Corresponding Secretaries to send out information or send thank-you notes
- Mailing and filing assistance
- Phone Captain (overseeing and delegating calls that come in to [organization])
- Adoption Screeners for cats and dogs
- Publicity: writing and or phone follow-up
- Fundraising: planning and event-day volunteers
- Distribution: putting up posters for cat and dog adoption and special events
- WALK FOR ANIMALS: organizing, planning and event-day help as needed
- HOLIDAY AUCTION: requesting and gathering items
- Special Events Coordinator to organize monthly events at local pet supply stores
- Sponsorship program for cats and dogs, assistant to handle paperwork
- Coin Canister Program Coordinator
- Can Redemption Program Coordinator
- Animal Food Donation Coordinator
- Meeting Coordinator to arrange General Meetings
- Assistant to arrange for refreshments for meetings
- Emergency Rescue Coordinator
- Feral Cat Survey Coordinator
- Animal Medical Records Assistant
- Bookkeeping Assistant

# Sample Volunteer Application

---

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY/STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP CODE: \_\_\_\_\_

HOME PHONE (INCLUDE AREA CODE): \_\_\_\_\_ CELL PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

EMPLOYER: \_\_\_\_\_ WORK PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

EMERGENCY CONTACT NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

EMERGENCY CONTACT HOME/CELL PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ WORK PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

Please tell us about your skills and interests:

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND: \_\_\_\_\_

CURRENT OCCUPATION: \_\_\_\_\_

HOBBIES, INTERESTS, SKILLS: \_\_\_\_\_

PREVIOUS VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE: \_\_\_\_\_

Have you had any previous experience caring for animals or working with a humane group?

Why are you interested in volunteering for [organization name]?

Availability: What times/days would you like to volunteer?

- MORNING     AFTERNOON     EVENING  
 WEEKDAYS     WEEKENDS     FLEXIBLE

Do you wish to volunteer weekly, monthly, or on an occasional basis?

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Do you have access to a car you can use for volunteer work?

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How did you hear about [organization name]?

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Please provide the names and phone numbers of two personal references:

NAME:

PHONE:

---

NAME:

PHONE:

---

Any comments you'd like to share with us?

---

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**Please review the attached list of volunteer opportunities and check those that are of interest to you.**

YOUR SIGNATURE:

DATE:

---

*Return this form and your selection to Volunteer Coordinator, [organization name and address].  
Thank you.*

For office use only

AREA OF INTEREST:

ROUTE TO:

---

DATE:

CONFIRMED:

---

NOTES:

---

# Sample Guidelines for Volunteers

---

## Volunteer's Name:

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*We truly appreciate your generosity with your time and talent in offering your services as a volunteer.*

*In order to more effectively help animals as an organization we must sometimes put our personal preferences aside to work together as a group and with the community. As volunteers for the [organization name] we are agreeing to cooperate to achieve our common goals.*

*We have found that it's helpful to provide guidelines and general information on how the organization functions to avoid confusion and misunderstandings for volunteers and others who act as representatives of [organization name].*

**Professional presence.** Sometimes people can be difficult to be sure, but it's important that all volunteers and staff maintain a polite and professional attitude whenever they are representing the organization. Even if the other person is getting nasty, unpleasant confrontations should be avoided. If a problem arises, please let your supervisor know about it as soon as possible.

**Personal opinions and organizational policy.** When you are representing the organization in public, people will have a tendency to perceive everything that you say as the official policy of the organization, even though this may not be your intention. Please take care not to represent any of your personal opinions in such a way that people might interpret them to be the policy of the organization.

If anyone asks you a question about our policies that you cannot answer with certainty, you can always reply that you will check into it and will get back to them. This answer is also appropriate if you are talking with a reporter.

**[Organization name] materials.** Do not customize or otherwise alter [organization name] flyers, documents, posters, presentations, or other materials.

If you would like to create materials for the organization, please seek approval before you begin work on the project. This will help to avoid duplication of effort or time spent on something that cannot be used at this time.

**Public comments.** If you would like to write a letter to the editor or article on behalf of the organization, contact the executive director. Do not write letters or otherwise represent the organization without obtaining express, advance approval from the executive director.

Do not make public statements that are critical of other organizations. Statements about other organizations need to be approved by the executive director.

**Commitments.** Unless you have been authorized to make a specific decision, do not make commitments for the organization, including offers of assistance or promising a pet to someone.

**Fundraising.** We always welcome assistance from volunteers and members with spreading the word about the organization and our programs. One easy way to do this is to distribute literature about the organization to friends, acquaintances, and family.

If you would like to help fundraise in other ways, please confer with the executive director or assistant director. It's important to get approval before soliciting donations, as we need to avoid duplicating requests,

ensure that requests are appropriate (some funding sources may be controversial), obtain any required permits, and appropriately acknowledge all donations.

**In-kind donations.** It is obviously important that all donations be used in the manner in which they are intended to be used and we are legally responsible for documenting this, even if the donation is modest in size. We also want to appropriately acknowledge all donors and to keep in touch with them through our newsletter.

All donations must be reported to the assistant director in writing, including the name of the donor and a listing of items, their estimated value, and their disposition. Example: “July 1, 2005: 2 cases of cat food donated by Sally Smith, 101 Main Street, Canton, MA 02021; est. value \$15; used to feed managed feral cat colony on East Street” We will document the donation in our records and send an official acknowledgment to the donor.

**No-kill policy and euthanasia.** [Organization name] is a no-kill humane organization. We do not “euthanize” healthy animals. We do practice euthanasia in the true sense of the word, to end suffering of a critically ill or injured animal or as a very last resort in the case of a dangerously aggressive animal. Such a decision is made in consultation with a veterinarian and, when appropriate, a behaviorist. Euthanasia is always administered in the most painless method available by a licensed veterinarian.

**Admitting animals to the shelter or foster homes.** Unfortunately, we cannot take in every animal, though we wish we could. At this time we have limited resources, space, and volunteers to help. These factors limit the number of animals we can properly care for. To take in even one more animal than we can properly provide care for would be irresponsible and unfair to the animals.

Whenever possible we try to accommodate the requests of our volunteers and members, but if we are unable to meet your request, please understand that we also receive hundreds of requests for help each week from the public, many involving animals in dire need of our help. We strive to prioritize care so that the neediest animals receive our attention first. Sadly, we are unable to help them all at this point in time.

We maintain a waiting list of animals in need of shelter and veterinary care. Your support enables us to help ever-growing numbers of animals and to address the core issue that affects companion animals: overpopulation.

**Policies and procedures.** Organizational policies and procedures are established by the board of directors and the executive director. Decisions regarding the day-to-day operation of the organization are under the authority of the executive director, assistant director, or designated program manager. This includes, but is not limited to, such matters as accepting animals into our care, euthanasia, fundraising methods, approving financial expenditures, exceptions to standard procedures, and all other operational matters.

Volunteer input is always appreciated. We recommend that you address comments on policies, procedures, and decisions to the executive director or assistant director.

**Compensation.** As a volunteer it’s important that you understand that the organization will not be compensating you for your time or work.

I have read and understand the above volunteer guidelines and agree to follow them. If I have any questions at any time in the future I understand that I may ask my supervisor, the executive director, or assistant director for information or clarification.

**Signature:**

**Date:**

# Sample Foster Care Agreement

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*I understand and agree that:*

- 1] The animal(s) described below are the property of [organization name].
- 2] The [humane society] will provide veterinary care for the animals(s).
- 3] I will provide food and fresh water on a daily basis and a litter box (for cats) at all times.
- 4] If the animal is in need of veterinary attention, shows any signs of illness, or is lost or injured, I will contact one of the people listed below immediately.
- 5] If I am unable, or no longer want, to care for the animal(s) I agree to contact one of the people below immediately. [Organization name] agrees to remove the animal(s) from the premises at my request, as soon as possible.
- 6] I will keep cat(s) indoors at all times. I will keep dogs on a leash when out of the house at all times. Cats will be transported in a carrier. In the event that the animal(s) gets loose, I will contact the people below at once.
- 7] A representative from the [humane society] will be calling regularly to see how the animal(s) is (are) doing and may arrange to visit.
- 8] The [organization name] contact people listed below may remove the animal(s) at any time for veterinary care or other purposes.
- 9] Will not allow the animal(s) to be removed from the premises or give the animal(s) to any third party without prior approval from one of the people listed below.
- 10] The adoption of the animal(s) into a permanent home will be in accordance with the [humane society's] policies. I understand that I may refer anyone interested in adopting the animals to the contact people below.
- 11] Everyone in the household knows about and agrees to having the animal(s) in the home.
- 12] Other terms (Note: may include not allowing fostered animals to mix with others in the household or details on reimbursement of expenses for food and other supplies)

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*I have read and understand the terms of this agreement and will abide by all the conditions stipulated.*

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

PRINT NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS WHERE ANIMAL(S) WILL BE KEPT: \_\_\_\_\_

LOCATION IN THE HOME/BUILDING WHERE ANIMAL(S) WILL BE KEPT: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE NUMBER AT ADDRESS WHERE ANIMAL(S) WILL BE KEPT: \_\_\_\_\_

PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR DAILY CARE:

DAYTIME PHONE:

EVENING PHONE:

CELL PHONE:

SIGNATURE OF ORGANIZATION REPRESENTATIVE:

**[Organization name] contact persons:**

*Call any time of the day or night if there is a problem.*

NAME:

PHONE:

NAME:

PHONE:

NAME:

PHONE:

**Description of animal #1:**

NAME:

AGE:

SEX:

S/N:

SPECIES:

BREED/MARKINGS:

NEW NAME (IF ANY):

ORGANIZATION FILE #:

OTHER NOTES:

SPECIAL CARE REQUIREMENTS:

**Description of animal #2:**

NAME:

AGE:

SEX:

S/N:

SPECIES:

BREED/MARKINGS:

NEW NAME (IF ANY):

ORGANIZATION FILE #:

OTHER NOTES:

SPECIAL CARE REQUIREMENTS:

**Description of animal #3:**

NAME:

AGE:

SEX:

S/N:

SPECIES:

BREED/MARKINGS:

NEW NAME (IF ANY):

ORGANIZATION FILE #:

OTHER NOTES:

SPECIAL CARE REQUIREMENTS: