

HUMANE SOCIETY OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY VOLUNTEER MANUAL

Thank you for caring about our animals enough to volunteer your time helping to make their stay at the Humane Society a happy experience and/or for assisting at special events to raise funds to help provide for their care.

The Humane Society staff considers volunteers to be valued allies in the field of animal care and welfare. If you have any ideas about how we may better serve the animals, the community, or you as volunteer, please share them with our Volunteer Coordinator.

ORIENTATION

All volunteers are required to attend a volunteer orientation class prior to actually working at any HSTV facility. ***There are no exceptions to this rule.***

Orientation classes are held the second Saturday of every month.

Our **Volunteer Co-ordinator is Kathi Yeager**. She may be reached at kathiy@tds.net.

AGE REQUIREMENT

Volunteers must be at least age 12. Those at least 12, but under 16, must be accompanied — at all times — by a parent or guardian who is at least age 18. One parent or guardian may be responsible for no more than three volunteers between the ages of 12 and 15. Those aged 16 & 17 may volunteer alone but must provide a consent form signed by a parent or guardian. All volunteers must have a car available. Neither HSTV staff or volunteers are available to provide transportatoin in case of an emergency which requires the closure of any facility.

HSTV reserves the right to terminate the services of any volunteer.

DRESS

We strongly recommend that long pants be worn in case of a fall while walking a dog.

Please wear sneakers or rubber soled shoes (not sandals). This will offer more stability when walking dogs, particularly large ones.

For your safety, we recommend that dangling earrings not be worn.

EDUCATE YOURSELF

People often make mistakes about animals and their behavior because they think of animals as little people in fur coats. Resources like those listed below will help you begin to see things from an animal's perspective instead of trying to relate their actions to human behavior.

Books: "Is Your Cat Crazy?", "Ain't Misbehavin'", and "The Dog Who Would Be King" are all books by Dr. John Wright.

An excellent website to visit may be found at www.AnimalBehaviorAssociates.com

NAME TAGS

All volunteers are required to purchase a name tag and **wear it** when working at an HSTV facility or event. Name tags can be purchased from Brandon's on Bearden Hill. Their number is 588-2211.

It is very important that volunteers sign in and out when working. Some organizations from whom HSTV receives grants ask how many volunteer hours are donated annually. The only way we can keep track is with these sign in sheets.

VOLUNTEERING AT OUR ADOPTION CENTER

HSTV welcomes volunteers who want to work "hands on" with the animals. This provides the animals with extra love and attention and helps to keep them well socialized.

However, helping to provide for the needs of animals often includes more than just walking/playing with them. Volunteers may be asked to brush and bathe animals (and will be shown how to do this) as well as to assist with feeding, spot cleaning cages, feeding and washing dishes. Sometimes volunteers may be asked to help "police" our grounds to pick up litter and pooper scoop. Anyone wishing to work "hands on" should be ready and willing to pitch in when asked.

WALKING DOGS

When you are walking a dog, please keep the dog you are walking away from any other dogs who are being walked and away from dogs who are behind the fences. Even dogs who are friendly when playing together unleashed in an enclosure may decide to "tangle" when one (or both) of them are on leashes.

You may not enter any multiple dog enclosure, because you may become the cause of an altercation as the dogs vie for your attention.

ASSISTING ADOPTERS

It is very important that volunteers refer any questions about our adoptable animals, adoption procedures, etc. to trained staff. ***Only volunteers trained and designated as “Adoption Assistants” * are to answer questions, or offer advice/opinions about animals.***

No matter what a regular volunteer’s personal experience with or opinions about animals, animal behavior, training, feeding, etc., these are not be shared with visitors to the Humane Society.

Of course we want volunteers to be friendly and helpful to the public, but any inquiry such as those described above must be referred to trained personnel.

* If you want to be trained as an “Adoption Assistant”, you must first be interviewed and interviewed by our Adoption Supervisor and then complete training with them.

IF YOU ARE INJURED

If you are injured in any way at any Humane Society facility or event (or if you know a visitor has been injured), tell a manager immediately so that a report can be filed.

SICK OR INJURED ANIMALS

If you notice an animal that does not look “right” to you for some reason (limping, coughing, diarrhea, nasal or eye discharge, etc.), tell a manager immediately. This does not often occur but the sooner we know an animal may have a problem, the sooner we can begin to provide medical support.

Do not hesitate to say something because you feel you might be overreacting or mistaken. You may well be the first person to notice something important.

AGGRESSIVE ANIMALS

We do our best to screen our animals for behavior problems before making them available to the public. However, aggression may take many forms and may only show itself after an animal has become comfortable in its surroundings. We do not wish to place any animal that may be a danger to either humans or other animals.

If you notice any type of aggressive behavior, even over food or toys (possessive aggression), please report it to a manager immediately. This will help us prevent an injury to either a person or another animal.

SAFETY
FIRST - FOR YOUR AND THE ANIMAL'S SAFETY

- **NEVER** attempt to grab a fleeing animal.
- **NEVER** reach with your hands or insert any other body part into a fight.
- **NEVER** begin screaming should a fight occur.
- If one or more dogs are on leashes when a fight begins, **DROP THE LEASH(S)**. One animal may be able to escape the other and neither you or the dog(s) will get tangled and possibly worsen potential injuries.

Points to remember when approaching an animal:

- An animal should first be touched or petted in the non-threatening areas: under the chin or on the chest.
- Never “loom” over the animal.
- Looking directly into the eyes is considered by the animal to be a threatening dominance gesture.
- Always move and speak quietly and gently.
- Kneel or squat so that you are more on the animals' level.
- Always leave the animal room to exit around you if he/she feels threatened.
- Do not attempt to “kiss” an animal.

Keep in mind that animals are prone to bite, flee or be frightened when:

- they are eating.
- they are fighting with another animal.
- there is a sudden loud noise or unexpected movement.

Signs of a potentially aggressive response:

- Yawning - a yawning animal may be conflicted.
- Backing away, turning face away
- Lifted lips with or without teeth exposed
- Hackles (hair along back) raised
- Growling, snarling, hissing
- Staring
- Tail raised stiffly and/or wagging stiffly

NOTE: These suggestions for both your safety and the animals' will only work if you take the time necessary to observe an animal *before* you approach it or open a cage/run door.