

Sampson County Animal Shelter

ADOPT-DONATE-VOLUNTEER

Volunteer Orientation Handbook



Welcome

Welcome to Sampson County Animal Shelter's Volunteer Program! Being a volunteer is extremely rewarding, educational, exciting and fun. You can have a huge impact on the lives of the homeless animals that enter our shelter every day. A purr from a shelter cat or a wagging tail from a homeless dog will touch your heart and bring you back for more. It is a rewarding experience knowing that YOU can make a difference in the lives of these animals. Because of volunteers like you, dogs are walked; cats are cuddled; young, ill or frightened critters can recuperate in foster homes; and pets can find their forever homes through adoption. If you would rather volunteer for tasks that do not directly involve animals, that's great too! We always need help with clerical duties, fundraising, special events and special projects. No task is too small!

We would like to thank you for choosing to participate in our program. As a volunteer, you are a valuable asset to our organization and to the many animals in our care. This guide has been prepared for you as a reference. It contains information regarding volunteer responsibilities, procedures that need to be followed, and ideas on how to make your volunteer time with us safe, fun and beneficial to all.



**The heart of a volunteer is not measured in size,
but by the depth of the commitment to make a difference
in the lives of homeless animals.**

Some of our volunteer opportunities include:

- ♥ Helping adopters find the perfect pet
- ♥ Transporting Animals for Recue Groups
- ♥ Photographing animals
- ♥ Answering the phones
- ♥ Cleaning animal pens/cages
- ♥ Recruit and orient new volunteers
- ♥ Socializing animals
- ♥ Walking dogs
- ♥ Bathing dogs
- ♥ Clerical
- ♥ Foster animals
- ♥ And more!

If you can't come in to the shelter, there are many more ways you can help. . .

- ♥ Collect and donate items from our wish list, such as towels, blankets, or enrichment toys for dogs, cats, and other small animals.
 - ♥ Collect donated items for the animals at SHS in lieu of birthday gifts.
 - ♥ Donate to rescue groups that are dedicated to saving our animals.
 - ♥ Save and collect newspapers for our cages.
 - ♥ Set a positive example by being a responsible pet owner.
 - ♥ Spread the word about the Samspon County Animal Shelter.
- ♥ We welcome your creativity! Use your individual talents and skills to make a difference for animals at the SCAS and in the community

Most volunteers will begin with positions such as dog walking, cat care and dog bathing. Volunteers can achieve more responsibility and duties by working closely with our staff to advance their skills.

Our volunteers enjoy the opportunity to grow and advance!

Shelter Volunteer Policies and Guideline

SCAS relies on its volunteers to be dependable and effective during their volunteer hours. By meeting these commitments, the program operates smoothly and the maximum benefit is derived for the animals. All shelter volunteers must abide by the policies and guidelines.

Orientation

Before beginning volunteer service, all active members must attend a general Volunteer Orientation which is scheduled as needed. During this orientation, each active volunteer will receive a copy of the Volunteer Handbook, a Volunteer Application, the Volunteer Agreement and Liability Release Form.

Parking

Please park in the spaces farthest away from the main entrance of the building. This will allow visitors to use the front spaces for parking. Please do not park on the grass.

Volunteer Sign In/Out

Whenever you visit the shelter to volunteer, please make sure to sign in and out in the binder in the front office. In the case of an emergency, we need to be able to know who is here. Also, we compile and report volunteers hours in monthly reports. These numbers used to let all of you know what an incredible contribution you make to the animals here.

Personal Belongings

We recommend that during your volunteer time at the shelter that you lock your personal belongings and valuables in your car since we do not have a way to secure them for you.

Professional Conduct

As a representative of SCAS, it is important that volunteers be familiar with the shelter's policies and procedures. Volunteers should be polite, courteous, and helpful when communicating with all shelter staff and with all visitors to the shelter. It is the policy of Sampson County to provide a workplace that is free from discrimination and harassment, and one that promotes equal opportunity and equitable treatment. Any type of harassment or discrimination based on a person's race, religion, color, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, etc. is prohibited.

When dealing with customers, you must always be polite, courteous, and helpful. If you are asked a question to which you do not know the answer, please find a staff member for assistance. Do not question customers as to how they could drop their animals off at a shelter, etc.

Volunteers must not interfere with the duties of SCAS staff. Arguing or acting ill-mannered towards staff or other volunteers will result in volunteer privileges being permanently revoked at the discretion of the director. Do not question the staff about their job responsibilities, etc.

If a volunteer has a question about shelter policies, please direct them to the Director.

Volunteers are required to wear a Volunteer Badge and should introduce themselves as such when assisting customers.

Dress Code at the Shelter

When working at the shelter we must be conscious of our appearance to the public. It is also important to be able to function comfortably and safely with our volunteer tasks. We recommend wearing casual pants or jeans and non-skid rubber soled shoes. For safety and modesty, the following items may not be worn while volunteering: slip on shoes (flip-flops), sandals) open toed shoes or low cut tank tops. Jewelry such as dangling earrings or other piercings, necklaces and bracelets are also prohibited as these can be caught by an animal's paw causing injury or damage to yourself or the item

Confidentiality

Any information pertaining to records and cases to which you may become privileged, including but not limited to names, addresses, phone numbers, details of cruelty cases, is confidential and may not be discussed with others or removed from the shelter. This includes the personal information of adopters. Under some circumstances staff may be prohibited from discussing with you specific details regarding cases that are under investigation, or pending criminal court action. Volunteers are specifically prohibited from discussing any aspect of records and cases with any representative of the media, as this is the sole responsibility of SCAS staff.

Accident Prevention

SCAS strives to provide a safe, hazard free workplace. Accidents do happen, but with training, forethought, attention to detail, and personal responsibility for keeping areas hazard free, we can greatly reduce the number of accidents in our shelter. Accident prevention is everyone's job. If you see a safety hazard (such as urine in the aisle way, spilled kibble, etc...) please address it immediately. If you don't know what to do, or if you are unsure if it is a safety hazard, please talk to a staff member right away.

Accident Reporting

All volunteer injuries must be reported immediately to SCAS staff.

Euthanasia

Euthanasia is a very sad but very real part of shelter work. Volunteers are NEVER involved in the euthanasia process. The euthanasia area is off limits. Volunteers are not permitted in the shelter when euthanasia is taking place. All of us at the Sampson County Animal Shelter take the act of euthanasia very seriously. We understand that you have chosen to volunteer here because of your love for animals. We expect that you will develop attachments to individual animals at the shelter. Dealing with the loss of these animals, whether through adoption or euthanasia, will be one of the most challenging aspects of your volunteer experience. We must require that you do not question the staff, or try to make them feel guilty about carrying out the very difficult, emotional and necessary job duty of euthanasia. Understand that often a staff member will already have had an opportunity to grieve the loss, so their emotions when

revealing euthanasia may be different than your own. If you have any questions regarding a disposition of a pet please speak with the Director.

Although we make every effort to find rescue or adoptive homes for the animals at our shelter, the reality is that there are more animals than there are desirable homes. When our shelter becomes filled to capacity, we must select animals to euthanize using criteria of length of time at the shelter and our judgment as to the adoptability of the animals. These decisions are an extremely stressful, heartbreaking part of our job responsibility. Individuals who cannot support humane euthanasia should not join our volunteer program. Volunteers who cause discord for staff regarding the euthanasia of animals will no longer be welcome to volunteer with SCAS

Off Limit Areas

The back area of the shelter known as the quarantine area is off limits to volunteer staff. This includes “peeking” to see what animals are housed there. The office inside of the kennel area is for staff only. The outside area behind the shelter is also off limits to volunteers.

Disease and Prevention

Can I Catch that?

Zoonotic diseases are diseases that humans can get from animals. The most effective means of preventing the spread of zoonotic disease is to:

- Wash your hands frequently with antibacterial soap, or hand sanitizer, especially after handling any animal prior to eating.
- Wear gloves when cleaning or changing papers.
- Immediately disinfect scratches and bite wounds.

Just a few of the illnesses that humans can catch from animals include: Ringworm, External Parasites (mites, fleas), Giardiasis, Nematode (worm) infections, Rabies and Salmonella. You should not let this list alarm you, but rather remind you that you are volunteering in a hospital-like environment where they often exist, so the above precautions are important.

Can my pets catch that from me?

Just as you can catch illnesses from animals, you can also unknowingly carry illnesses home to your pets. The most effective means of preventing the spread of illness to your pets (or spreading illness from your pets to our shelter animals) is to:

- Make sure that your own animals are up-to-date on all their vaccinations
- Change your clothes before socializing with your animal at home and vice-versa
- Check the soles of your shoes before leaving the shelter to ensure you are not tracking feces into your car and home. Even better, designate a pair of shoes to be your “shelter shoes” and take them off before entering your home