



Volunteer Training Manual

An introduction to volunteering at the
Marion Area Humane Society

General Information

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Website: www.mahspets.org

Address: Marion Area Humane Society
2264 Richland Rd.
Marion, OH 43302

Hours of Operation open to Public: Monday thru Friday: 1:00 pm to 6 pm
Saturday: 11:00 am to 4:00 pm
Sunday: Closed

Board of Directors:

There are about 9-10 members on the board of directors. Four of the members comprise the executive committee. For 2017 they are:

- President: Pat Fox
- Vice President: Sandy Azaroff
- Secretary: Jennifer Haberman-Boleyn
- Treasurer: Shea Miller

Introduction

Thank you for your interest in volunteering with the Marion Area Humane Society. This manual will provide you with a list of activities that are available to you as volunteers, and it will also equip you with the background knowledge that you may need to answer questions from the general public about the Marion Area Humane Society. This manual will also tell you how to stay safe and also to have fun while volunteering at any of our upcoming events or while performing any of the volunteer duties that you choose to do.

What is the Marion Area Humane Society?

The Marion Area Humane Society was incorporated in 1967 to help protect the animals of Marion County. MAHS is an independent non-profit organization, and it is not linked with any larger organization or government agencies. We do not receive funding from larger organizations or from the government or from any tax payer monies. Our main sources of income are donations, bequests, adoptions, and fundraisers.

The Marion Area Humane Society is a shelter and an adoption center. We are a shelter for unwanted and neglected animals and are an adoption center that places our animals in new homes where they will be cared for properly. We also have a humane agent who investigates reports of neglect of animals in Marion County.

Where do we get our animals?

We provide shelter to over 2,000 cats and dogs a year. We are the only organization in Marion County that accepts stray and unwanted cats, but our shelter does not accept stray dogs. Stray dogs must be taken to the Marion County Dog Warden's office. Our dogs are primarily surrendered by the people who cannot take care of the animals anymore or who no longer want the pet.

Once the animals are surrendered, they are kept in isolation for a period of time to assess whether or not they are healthy and safe to be placed for adoption. They will also receive their shots and are wormed so they are current with both vaccinations and worming.

Adoption Program

Animals that have completed their isolation period are brought to the front of the shelter and are then available for adoption. Information about adoption prices and what they include are as follows:

Dog Adoption Fee: \$175 and includes spay/neuter surgery, rabies, DHPP, and Bordetella vaccinations, worming, flea treatment, and a heartworm test. **Theses services typically cost about \$350.00 at a vets office.

Cat Adoption Fee: \$75.00. It includes spay/neuter surgery, FRCCP vaccination, feline leukemia testing, worming, and flea treatment. ** These services typically cost about \$250 at a vet's office.

** Neutering or spaying is required for all adopted animals, there are no exceptions to this rule.

What is Our Euthanasia Policy?

Euthanasia is a very difficult subject to consider. It is something you must think about before making a commitment to volunteer with this shelter. Unfortunately we do sometimes have to euthanize because of illness or when a pet is considered unadoptable because of aggression or serious health issues. We do not place time limits on our animals. For example, a dog will not automatically be euthanized if it reaches so many months at the shelter. We have had dogs waiting to be adopted for as long as two years when they finally found their forever home. We have relationships with rescues where some of our older dogs or certain breeds are sometimes placed. When space becomes an issue, we often utilize our foster families to house the dogs or cats until they can be placed in a permanent home.

Our euthanasia decisions are based on health and temperament and is considered a last resort. All euthanasia technicians have received training and are certified to perform this task safely and humanely. Volunteers are never asked to participate in the euthanasia process.

What age do you need to be to volunteer?

We have three age categories of volunteers: Under 16, 16 and 17, and 18 and over. Any volunteer who is under the age of 18, must have parents' consents on liability forms to volunteer. Any volunteer who is under the age of 16, must have their parent or guardian with them when they volunteer. The parent or guardian must be working alongside of the minor while volunteering at the shelter. **Note: Some of our dogs are powerful. For this reason only volunteers that are over 16 or over may take a dog on a leash outside the building. (Fenced yards are an exception.)

What can volunteers do?

Volunteers can do many important things at the shelter. We ask that when you begin your volunteer shift, that you sign the volunteer book in the lobby and sign-out when you leave. These hours are important to us so that we can track volunteer hours and recognize individuals who are contributing on a regular basis. Stop at the office window when you arrive and let them know you are here to volunteer and what it is you would like to do. Or better yet, ask them what work needs to be done. They may give you special instructions and an up-date of current situations in the kennel.

Here are some of the many volunteer tasks that can be done are:

- Walking the dogs on a leash or playing with the dogs outside in the yard. Keeping our animals exercised and socialized is very important for our animals' well-being especially for our long-time residents.
- Cuddling cats and letting them out one by one to have time outside of their cages to play.
- Photographing our pets and uploading to the office manager for posting onto our website.
- Bathing and grooming our dogs or grooming our cats.
- Taking dogs to community events where we can showcase them in hopes of adopting them
- Cleaning the lobby, bonding rooms, cat cages, or kennels

- Beautifying the yard by pulling weeds, picking up trash, planting flowers
- Putting away donated items that are left in the lobby.
- Changing our sign out front to spotlight events, other shelter needs, or to highlight a dog or cat
- Assist the volunteer coordinator with orientation, record keeping, and scheduling
- Being a greeter for our shelter
- Helping out in the office as requested by the Office Manager
- Being a foster family to a cat, dog, or a litter of puppies and kittens

Fundraising and Events

Since we are a non-profit organization, the humane society relies on our fundraisers and donations for income. If you have any fundraising ideas, please share them with a staff or board member. Perhaps you would like to organize a drive at your workplace or organize a bake sale. Volunteering at the shelter or volunteering for events does not require a large time commitment. As a volunteer you may sign up for as many or as few events or jobs as your schedule permits. However, we do ask that if you sign up for events or jobs at the shelter that you please make every effort to follow through with your promise. If you are to volunteer at the shelter and can't make it, call the office manager and let him/her know. If you find out you will not be able to fulfill your commitment for an event, please call the volunteer coordinator as soon as possible. See page 2 for the contacts page for phone numbers. If you haven't been called to volunteer for an event, but would like to be, call the volunteer coordinator, so he/she can schedule you for the next available event.

What Volunteers Do At Events and Fundraisers?

Most of our events are posted on our website: <http://www.mahspets.org> Community Events and Fundraisers are extremely important to MAHS for these reasons:

- To spread information and educate the public about our cause,
- To raise funds to help support our mission
- To increase the exposure of our adoptable animals
- To recruit more volunteers
- To network with other organizations that may help us achieve our goals

Volunteering for Events:

Anyone who indicates on his/her application an interest in doing events/fundraising, may receive a call from a volunteer coordinator to help on a particular day. If you find that you are not being called, but would like to go to an event, call the volunteer coordinator and ask if there are openings to help. Volunteers are assigned on a first come, first serve basis. If you are not able to handle dogs that are large or you have medical limitations, you need to let your volunteer coordinator know so that the correct dog is selected for you.

The volunteer coordinator will give you basic information about the event. For instance he/she will let you know when you need to be at the event and if you are to pick the dog up at the shelter before the event or if it will already be at the event when you arrive. You may also be required to return the dog to the shelter after the event. All of this should be explained to you when you accept the assignment from the volunteer coordinator. If you are not given this information when you are asked to work, please ask questions. Scheduling volunteers is a time consuming job and it most likely was overlooked.

For each group of volunteers, we have a supervisory person in charge of the volunteers at the event and you will be told in advance who your supervisory person is. The supervisory volunteer is the person you will turn to during the event if you have questions. Also, if any dog is misbehaving or if there is an incident, you need to notify the supervisory volunteer immediately. Frequently, Marion Area Humane Society Board Members are the supervisory volunteers at the events. Other times it is an experienced volunteer that one day could be “you” in charge.

Policy for Transporting Dogs to Events:

You must be 16 or over to work at an event and handle a dog. You must be 18 or over to transport any dog to an event. If you are under 18, then you must request that your parent/guardian or another volunteer who is 18 or over transport the dog for you. Remind the volunteer coordinator that you are under 18 when he/she call so that he/she can help to make transportation arrangements for you.

Dogs must be either seat belted into your car or put in a crate when travelling to an event. We generally provide seatbelts for the dogs and no longer provide crates. If you prefer a crate, let your volunteer coordinator know, so that the shelter can make arrangements for a crate instead. If you prefer to use your own crate, and it is large enough to contain the dog you are taking, then you are welcome to use your own crate. **One dog per volunteer for transporting.**

Event Day:

If you are to pick up a dog on event day at the shelter, you need to arrive 30 minutes earlier before the event is to begin. Be prompt, because having a successful event requires volunteers who are dependable. The shelter personnel will get the dog out of the kennel and harness it for you. You will need to take the dog outside to let it potty before putting it in your car. Take a clean blanket from the kitchen to cover the seat in your car and latch the dog into your seatbelt. The blanket comes in handy at the events, too, for the dog to have a comfy bed. ****Remember: dogs can have accidents in the car so if you have concerns, transport the dog in a crate to the event.**

When you arrive at the event, allow a few minutes for your animal to ‘unwind’ a little outside before going immediately to the event. Very likely, the supervisory volunteer will still be trying to get the table set up for our event anyway. The supervisor will take a bag that will have all the needed supplies in it for the event: tablecloth, paperwork, donation box, dog treats, water bowls, etc., and you just need to take the dog to the event. **** Only shelter dogs are to go to the events. Leave your own dog at home please.**

Once at the event, here are do's and don'ts:

- Do keep the dogs apart from each other at all times (3 feet). ***This is the problem we see most often at the events. Please follow this rule at all times.**
- Do keep the dogs apart from dogs owned by the public. The public means well, but for the safety of all the dogs, we need our dogs away from other people's dogs that are being brought into the store or to the event. Be polite and explain this to the public as best you can.
- Do give your dog occasional SMALL treats but not LARGE ones and pour only small amounts of water in the water bowl at a time.
- Give your dog frequent bathroom breaks and ALWAYS clean up after your dog poops.
- Do follow all instructions from your supervisory volunteer. He/She are in charge that day.
- Watch for signs of aggression in the dogs. These signs include: Growling, nipping or biting, lowering the body, hackles raised, pupils dilated, wrinkling the nose, curling lips-teeth may be visible, or tucking the tail.
- Do report any aggressive incident to the supervisory volunteer immediately and isolate the dog immediately from the public. The supervisor will determine if the dog needs to be returned.
- Do clean up after your dog when it poops. No matter how cold it is, it is our job to leave the yard and the premise as clean as when we arrived.
- Always keep your dogs on a leash. Always, with no exceptions.
- **Never handle two dogs at the same time.** If someone asks you to hold his/her dog, ask him to hand it to the supervisor. If you are holding two dogs on a leash and a fight starts, you have no way of breaking-up the fight.
- When a dog barks at a new dog coming into a store or at certain people, redirect it by immediately walking the dog away and come back only when the dog calms down.
- Be mindful of what you say. You are representing the Marion Area Humane Society. Speak positively and if tough questions are asked, have the person speak to the supervisor.
- Dogs must be supervised and under control at all times. No horseplay or roughhousing by the dogs are allowed. Again, dogs need to be separated from each other.
- No animal abuse at any time will be tolerated. For example, hitting a dog with a leash or yelling at the dog is not acceptable.
- If a family shows an interest in a dog, explain that you will take the dog back to the shelter where they can interact with the dog in the bonding room. Leave immediately for the shelter with the dog.
- If you take a dog back to the shelter because of adoption or ill behavior, depending on the time and the number of available dogs, you may be asked to bring a different dog back to the event. That decision will be made by the supervisory volunteer and the shelter office staff member.
- Provide polite customer service, even when the public is not so polite. Be accurate about the information you provide. If you are not sure, ask your supervisory volunteer.
- Do leave the area cleaner than when you arrived. Remember these events are important to our shelter, and we want to be invited back.

Volunteering at the Shelter – Handling Dogs Safely:

Dog Walking Rules:

- When you arrive, let the staff know that you are going to be walking dogs, so they can let you know if there are certain situations at the shelter that you need to be aware of.
- Note the “Walk Me” signs and “Have Been Walked” signs on the cages. It is okay to walk a dog twice in one day, but we are trying to get all dogs exercised daily if possible. Once you are done walking the dog, please flip the sign to “Have been walked”.
- Exercising the dog in the fenced in area is considered “Have been walked”.
- If you take the dog to the fenced areas for exercise, remember only one dog at a time in the fenced runs and be sure to latch the gate.
- When taking the dog out of the cage, watch the dogs reaction. If they are huddling in the back of the cage, wait a bit to see if they come to you. If they do not, then let the dog alone.
- If there are two dogs in a cage, it can be difficult to get just one out, so ask another volunteer or a staff member to help you.
- If you have any doubts about getting dogs out of the cage, ask the staff for help, or move onto a dog that you are more comfortable with.
- Observe the temperament signs on the cages. If it says ‘don’t walk’ then don’t.
- Even if you are walking with other volunteers, the dogs must always be kept at least 15 feet apart when walking and also in the shelter. For example, if there are two of you, let the first person get through the doors with their dog before you get your dog out of the cage.
- Never should two dogs be taken out of their cages at the same time. If one slips away and the other is out of the cage also, there could be a serious dog fight.
- When exiting the cage area, do not walk your dog into the hallway if you observe another dog in the hallway or coming in from the back door or bonding room. Always yield to the other dog and let them get out of the way first.
- When walking the dogs, continue to observe the 15 feet rule. Clean up poop when you walk.
- Walk south toward the houses and Sommerlot Hoffman Rd. Do not travel toward the dog pound.
- Use the “No Pull leashes” hanging in the hallway unless you are walking a small dog or thin dog. If that is the case, ask the staff for a harness for the smaller dog.
- The no pull leashes go under the dogs stomach and the looped end goes through the ring. Then hook the snap onto the collar of the dog and hold onto the looped end and you are ready to go.
- There is a shelter cat that has free rein at the shelter, keep your dog away from the cat at all times. Some dogs wish serious harm to cats.
- Always put the leashes back on the same rack when you are done.

General Dog Handling Rules

- If a volunteer plans to be working with dogs and taking them out of the cages, please let the staff member know.
- Sanitize your hands before walking a dog and between handling different dogs. This will help keep disease from spreading. Hand sanitizer can be found throughout the shelter.
- Please be sure the dog you are taking out has a properly fitted collar. You should be able to fit two fingers under the dog's collar, but the collar should not be able to slip off over the dog's head. If the dog does not have a collar, ask a staff member for help.
- Dogs must always be on a leash when they are in the shelter. This includes when you are walking them through the kennel areas. If you need help getting a dog on its leash, ask a staff member for help.
- If you are the only person with a dog in the back yard, you may take the dog off its leash to run and to play. Always check to see if another dog is running loose in the back yard before you take your dog outside. If more than one dog is in the back yard, they must all be leashed.
- Report any unusual behavior to a staff member. This includes: Bloody or runny feces, running in small circles, excessive scratching, and excessive coughing. Any aggressiveness is to be reported immediately to a staff member.
- If you are bitten by a dog, report it immediately to the office staff and complete a bite incident report.
- DO NOT ATTEMPT TO BREAK UP A DOG FIGHT. If a fight occurs, immediately get a staff member. Sometimes a loud noise will break up the fight.
- Do not taunt, tease, or hit shelter dogs. If a dog is behaving in a manner that you think is not appropriate, report it to a staff member.
- Always clean up after your dog, whether in the kennel, in the yard, or walking them.

Safety in the Cat Room:

- Sanitize your hands before and after leaving the cat room and between each cat you handle. Cats easily spread disease so this is very important. The hand sanitizer is located on the wall outside the cat room.
- If a cat does not act like it wants to be petted or held, please do not bother the cat.
- Remember, most of our cats have claws, so be careful when handling them.
- If a cat fight breaks out, leave the cat room immediately and get a staff member. Do not attempt to break up a cat fight.
- Cats must stay in their designated rooms. Please do not interchange cats.
- Please report any unusual behavior or illnesses to staff members.

Employee Only Areas:

Certain areas of the shelter that are off limits to volunteers. These areas include:

- Front Office
- Medical Room
- All Dog and Cat Isolation areas
- Intake Room
- Director's office

Volunteers may only enter these areas with staff supervision or with permission from a staff member. Volunteers do work in some of these above areas and are given permission at the time they are volunteering. For instance, if you are helping out in the office area you will be given permission to be in the office while you work or if you are cleaning in the morning, you will be granted permission to enter the back isolation areas.

Proper Attire:

When you come to volunteer, dress comfortable, with sneakers or other shoes with traction that cover your feet. Flip flops are not acceptable. Long pants are recommended. Remember, you may be working with bleach or other products that can damage your clothing. If you are volunteering in the office and greeting the public, dress appropriately to greet the public. Avoid wearing anything that is suggestive or profane. You are representing the Marion Area Humane Society, and we want you to reflect a positive image.

Have Fun

Don't forget to have fun volunteering. The dogs especially know when someone is happy and relaxed with them. In turn the dog will take on your relaxed energy and have a better experience.

This manual contains a lot of rules, but it is all to protect our dogs and cats and our volunteers. We can't be successful without our volunteers, so a big thank you for donating your time. If you have any suggestions to improve your volunteer experience, please text, email or call the volunteer coordinator.



Last Revised: 08/25/2017