

Shelby Humane Society Volunteer Orientation Handbook

381 McDow Rd.
Columbiana, AL 35051

205-669-3916

www.shelbyhumane.org

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Thank you for your interest in our organization! To get the most from your volunteer experience, please review this entire handbook. The following pages will provide you with important information about Shelby Humane Society and volunteering with our shelter.

About Shelby Humane Society

History

Founded as the Humane Society of Shelby County in 1985, the Columbiana animal shelter provides care to the homeless, abused and neglected cats and dogs in the Shelby County area. Originally designed to provide animal control services, our focus has grown to include community education and spay/neuter advocacy. In 2002, Shelby Humane Society adopted its new name and moved to a new facility across the street from the Sheriff's Department.

Shelby Humane Society is a non-profit organization. Income is generated through county and city animal services contracts, adoptions, pet cremations and donations. The shelter also relies on the generosity of local business and citizens to help fund the various animal welfare programs and shelter operating costs.

Mission

To care for homeless, abused, neglected and abandoned animals and educate the community to instill an increased awareness and commitment to the responsibility of animal ownership and protection.

Staff

Executive Director
Shelter Manager
Director of Development
Adoption Counselor/Rescue Liaison
Controller
Volunteer Manager
Medical Manager
Spay/Neuter Programs Administrator

Ronda Mink Steciuk
Sara Shirley
Erin Melaney
Angela Campbell
Carolyn Pevey
Jamey Roberts
Jennifer Freeman
Whitney Roberts

Board of Directors

President
Vice President
Treasurer

June Fletcher
Gail Powell
Debra Bowers
Billy Sims
Lynn Ray



Shelby Humane Society Services

Animal Rescue – Our shelter cares for injured, abused, mistreated or abandoned cats and dogs. We evaluate each animal brought to us and we attempt to place those suitable for adoption.

Education - Shelby Humane Society sponsors educational programs that cover animal welfare and pet ownership.

Spay and Neuter - Shelby Humane Society educates the community about the importance of spaying and neutering. Our Quick Fix program facilitates low-cost surgeries performed by the Alabama Animal Alliance and local vet's offices. All of our animals are spayed or neutered before adoption.

Cremation Service – Using modern technology that is friendly to the environment, as well as dignified for pets, Shelby Humane Society provides a cremation service for a practical and fitting solution to both disposal and maintaining the memories of pets.

Placement Service – The shelter works hard to match the right pet with the right owner. Besides our [main shelter](#) located in [Columbiana](#), we have weekend adoptions at the [PETsMART](#) location on Hwy 280.



Why volunteer?

In 2006, 61.2 million people officially volunteered for various non-profit, governmental, and ideal-based organizations across the nation. Their time was valued at almost \$100 billion, and these are just volunteers from the U.S. This could feed the entire continent of Africa (748 million people) three meals a day (2.24 billion meals) for more than a week, or the state of Alabama (4.6 million people) for four years!!

This proves that volunteers are a valuable resource for any organization.

So welcome to our family! Volunteering is a great way to meet and interact with the community as a whole, demonstrate your dedication to a cause, and simply get out of the house and make a difference. Shelby Humane Society offers what you need to do all that.

How do I become a volunteer?

Shelby Humane Society welcomes volunteers age 8 and older. Some volunteer activities have age requirements and adults must accompany most children. Please review our age qualifications before scheduling your volunteer times.

Review Our Age Qualifications

Adult Volunteers: ages 18 and older

Junior Volunteers: ages 14-17 with parental consent

Family Volunteers* (Adult with Youth): ages 8-13 accompanied by adult or legal guardian

*Our Family Volunteer program is designed specifically for parental participation with their children. Please only choose this option if you are sincere about volunteering with your child, even if only for the minimal amount of time.

Submit Your Information

To ensure your volunteer time is spent on activities you enjoy and also provides a valuable service to SHS, we use Internet-based software to assign and schedule volunteer activities. With the MyVolunteerPage.com software, you will create a customized volunteer account, see what shifts are available, and also schedule your work times. The database records your volunteer hours and even tracks your birthday and volunteer-related anniversaries.

1. Review the Volunteer section of our website, www.shelbyhumane.org.
2. Download, print and sign our Release of Liability. **Everyone must sign a Liability Release and turn it in prior to volunteering.** (If you are over 18, you only need to sign the top.)
3. Visit the MyVolunteerPage.com link to create a profile and then find the volunteer opportunity that best suits you.

If you would prefer to fill out a hard copy of our Volunteer Application, you may download it from our website or call 669-3916 ext. 26 and request that one be sent to you.

We rely of volunteers to work those hours to which they commit. Please do not sign up for activities that you know you might not attend. Also, it's tempting for good volunteers to over extend themselves and get burned out. We want you to have fun and not feel pressure to commit to more hours than you have to give.

Decide Which Volunteer Positions Interest You

The descriptions of each position can be found in the database. For some positions, we may interview you to assess your skills.

Adoption Counseling (must be 19 or older)
Driver (must have clean driving record)
Office Assistant (previous office work helpful)
Fundraiser

Foster Care Provider
Animal Socializer
Special Events Volunteer
Community Outreach

Once you have been selected for a position, we ask that you make a \$5 donation to cover your volunteer t-shirt and training. This lets the public know who you are and what you are doing.

NOTE: To volunteer at the main shelter in Columbiana, you must be 18+ or accompanied by adult.

Questions?

Please contact Jamey Roberts, [Volunteer Manager](#) with any questions. He can be reached by email or phone at 205-229-3916 ext. 26.

If you're unable to volunteer during a time for which you have signed up, you must inform the Volunteer Manager within 48 hours of the scheduled event.

How the Volunteer Program Works

1. Volunteers may serve in one or more positions; however, some must be trained before interacting with the animals, staff, and public. The training required by each position is listed in its volunteer job description.

2. We ask that you commit to a minimum of twenty (20) hours with our organization.* *Anything less would make it difficult for us to utilize a trained volunteer, as you would only have a brief period of time left with us.*

*Training counts toward total volunteer hours. Offsite locations only require a 12-hour commitment.

3. **Record your hours!!** All hours worked will be recorded on MyVolunteerPage automatically. However, if you are not in the database, record your hours on the "sign-in sheet" located at the front desk in the lobby (if you are working at the shelter), or with the Leader of the off-site event (i.e., in the adoption room of PetSmart 280). If you cannot find a sheet, ask the event leader to track your hours on a piece of paper.

4. There will be occasional volunteer orientations offered on the first or second Saturday of every month, especially for more specialized positions like adoption counseling and office assistants. It is the best time to meet your fellow volunteers and learn more about our shelter. You must attend at least one orientation before you can start working your way up through our program. Orientations count toward total volunteer hours.

5. The first ten hours of your commitment will be spent as a volunteer in training, if training is needed. You will learn your respective position under a Leader. Upon completion of the ten training hours, you will be promoted to Active Volunteer status. As an Active, you will complete the remaining ten hours of your commitment under minimal supervision. If, after you have completed twenty volunteer hours, you feel that you would be able to teach someone else that position, you will be promoted to Leader. As a Leader, you will help train new volunteers and even decide who fits each job at Volunteer Orientations. Your ultimate goal as a volunteer is to reach Leader. At this point, you should be a well trained, experienced volunteer with a clear and working comprehension of our mission and methods.

That all may sound complicated, so here is an example:

Jeff wants to be an adoption counselor. He realizes that he needs 20 volunteer hours before he can be qualified for this position. He volunteers at PetSmart for two weekends (Sat 10-5 and Sun 12-5) and has 24 total hours by the end of the second Sunday. He

attends an adoption counselor orientation, and tacks on two more volunteer hours (26 total). He goes to PetSmart for 8 hours of training (34 total). He is then promoted to active volunteer status. He helps at PetSmart for an entire weekend. This is 12 more hours as an active volunteer, and 44 total. Jeff is ready to become a Leader, if he thinks he is ready to do PetSmart alone. If not, he can continue as a regular active volunteer until he wants to try.

Dress Code

Volunteers must wear a Shelby Humane Society t-shirt to be purchased for \$5. Jeans or casual pants are recommended. Always wear non-skid, rubber-soled, closed-toed shoes to avoid accidents on the shelter floor.

Conduct

As a representative of Shelby Humane Society, you must be familiar with its policies and procedures. When dealing with visitors, you must always be polite, courteous, and helpful. As a policy, Shelby Humane Society provides a workplace free from discrimination and harassment, and promotes equal opportunity and equitable treatment. Any harassment or discrimination based on a race, religion, color, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, etc., is prohibited.

Drug and Alcohol Free Environment

Shelby Humane Society is a drug free workplace. No volunteer shall report for work while impaired from the consumption of alcohol or a controlled substance. If impairment is suspected, volunteers will be asked to leave without finishing their scheduled hours.

Off-Limit Areas

Areas that are off limits to volunteers unless otherwise authorized include: behind the reception desk, all personal offices, and all animal control areas (isolation wards, the surgery room, etc).

Accident Prevention/Reporting

Volunteers should immediately report any safety concerns to the Executive Director, Shelter Manager, or a Shelby Humane Society staff member. All injuries/illness must be reported immediately to the Executive Director or Shelter Manager, and the appropriate paperwork will be filled out.

Smoking

Smoking is prohibited inside the building. If you must smoke, please do so outside the shelter either out back or on the side of the building.

Privacy

Information pertaining to Animal Control records and cases, adoptions and volunteer activities are confidential and may not be discussed with others. Volunteers are specifically prohibited from discussing any aspect of Animal Control records and cases.

Adoptions

Volunteers are required to submit the same paperwork and comply with the same policies as any potential adopter.

Discipline

Volunteers who commit minor policy and procedure violations will be addressed verbally. These violations include: tardiness, absences, dress code violations etc. Continued violations could result in additional counseling or dismissal. Serious violations including: animal abuse, abusive or harassing behavior to staff or customers, possession of drugs or weapons, and disclosure of confidential information will result in termination of status as a volunteer.

Phone Calls

Volunteers that spend all their time on the phone do us little good at the shelter. Please refrain from phone calls unless absolutely necessary, and do not have phone calls directed through the shelter to you.



Cleanliness Leads to Healthier Pets

THE IMPORTANCE OF CLEANING

Shelby Humane Society must ensure that every cage, floor, surface and corner is properly cleaned to ensure the safety and health of each shelter animal. If the shelter is not properly cleaned, it can host a variety of bacteria and viruses that will spread quickly throughout the building and could harm the animals.

Because diseases are easily transferred from one animal to another, volunteers should always wash hands between visits with different animals. To protect your own pets, make sure they are current on vaccinations. Volunteers with pets should disinfect the clothing they wear at the shelter with Lysol or change clothes before interacting with their pets at home.

If you notice a sick shelter animal while volunteering, please notify a staff member right away.

The Diseases Cleaning Helps Prevent

Upper Respiratory Infection (URI) – URI is the most common illness in animal shelters. It is a viral infection that occurs in cats and affects the nose, throat, trachea and eyes. Often presenting itself as a cold, if gone untreated, it can become life threatening if secondary bacterial infections occur. URI is air-borne virus and spreads quickly. It is important to carefully clean every surface that a sick cat may have sneezed on to prevent the spread of illness. If a cat becomes infected with Upper Respiratory Infection, they are placed into our cat Isolation area and treated with antibiotics.

Bordatella (or Kennel Cough) – As a common virus that affects shelter dogs, Bordatella can be transmitted from dog to dog by sneezing or coughing; or direct physical contact with cages, toys or food bowls. Shelby Humane Society does vaccinate every dog available for adoption. Unfortunately, some dogs are susceptible to the virus due to age, physical condition or stress level. Kennel Cough is best prevented by properly cleaning toys, blankets, dishes and kennels with HDQ or bleach.

Intestinal Worms and Parasites – There are a variety of worms, including: tapeworms, roundworms and ringworms that are easily transferred from one animal to another. They can spread when an animal has contact with another animal's feces. It is important to pick up feces in the inside dog runs and outside kennels to prevent the spread of worms and parasites. Every cat and dog that is available for adoption has received de-worming medicine. The shelter also recommends that a veterinarian checks all recently adopted animals for worms.

Answering Questions to the Public

Because volunteers work during the shelter's open hours, they are often asked questions from the public. Many will see you working and assume you are a staff member and can answer all their questions. Please let visitors know you are a volunteer and there are certain questions only a staff member can answer.

Following is a list of questions you may be asked and their answers:

Can I adopt this pet? Only senior staff members and Adoption Counselors can decide whether or not someone can adopt a pet. Each potential adopter must meet certain requirements before taking a pet home. All must account for the health of their current pets, provide information on the care they intend to provide their potential new pet, and some must undergo a home visit if they intend to adopt certain breeds of dogs. No one can say for certain whether someone can adopt an animal until they have completed the entire application process.

Send all persons interested in adopting to speak with the Adoption Coordinator or another staff member.

What is the history of this pet? Each animal's kennel card provides the information that we know about it. If the client asks for more specific details that you do not know, please don't guess! Find an Adoption Counselor or senior staff member to help.

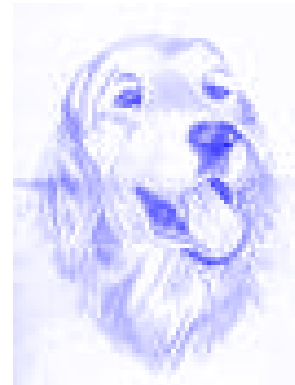
What is the adoption fee and what does it cover? The adoption fee covers the care the animal was given during its stay at Shelby Humane Society. It includes the shelter's cost for multiple vaccinations, deworming, spay/neuter surgery and a microchip (and its registration).

Dog adoptions are \$135 and cat adoptions are \$115.

Euthanasia – Why is it Necessary?

At no time will you, as a volunteer, ever be involved in any of the euthanasia process.

Euthanasia is probably the most difficult subject to understand at the shelter. Most people would rather not even think about it, but every year in the United States, animal shelters euthanize 4-5 million animals. It is a very real part of working at a shelter, and therefore, something we want to face up front. Although spaying and neutering has lowered the numbers of animals coming into the shelter, it hasn't changed the fact that there are still countless numbers of dogs and cats breeding indiscriminately in our



community, and there are just not enough homes for all of the unwanted animals. As a result, too many animals are left to starve to death, or die after being hit by a car, poisoned, or attacked by a predator.

Animals brought into the shelter are cared for in the most humane manner possible, with food, shelter and most importantly, many people to give them the care and attention they need. In many cases, the time spent at the shelter is the best time of their lives. To help you further understand the concept of euthanasia, we have compiled some common questions and answers about euthanasia.

What does the term "Euthanasia" mean?

The word euthanasia comes from the Greek word meaning "a good death".

Why do you have to euthanize animals?

Animal overpopulation occurs when there are simply too many animals and not enough homes available. This is the reason that SHS strongly urges animal owners to have their pets spayed or neutered. There are other reasons for euthanasia, such as: a sick, very old, severely injured or aggressive animal, to name a few.

How are animals euthanized?

Euthanasia is done by injection. There are usually two euthanasia technicians involved. One holds and comforts the animal while the other administers a tranquilizer. The pain to the animal is minimal and he feels a slight pinprick and then falls into a deep sleep. The lethal injection is then administered and death occurs in seconds.

