

(Updated December 2019)

Venango County Humane Society

286 South Main Street

Seneca, PA 16346

814-677-4040

Welcome

Thank you for your interest in becoming a volunteer with the Venango County Humane Society. Volunteers provide VCHS opportunities to enhance our programs and services. Many of our programs and events would not be possible without the help of volunteers. Volunteers are an extension of the VCHS staff. We welcome you!

Brief History

The Venango County Humane Society was incorporated as a private, non-profit organization in 1956. The shelter, on Deep Hollow Road, was built in 1971. In 1993, an addition and major renovations were completed. Our current shelter, located at 286 S. Main Street, Seneca, PA, was completed in June 2015.

Responsibility and dedication to VCHS

- Volunteers will follow the policies of the Venango County Humane Society.
- Volunteers will display compassionate care for all animals at the shelter.
- Volunteers will act professionally with the animals, co-workers and the public.
- Volunteers will present themselves positively as a representative of the Humane Society.

Process and Information for new volunteers

**Volunteer Application:** New volunteers with VCHS will complete an application. This will be kept on file providing the name and phone number of an emergency contact. Volunteer, Katie Parsh, will call and schedule you for the next Volunteer Orientation.

**Volunteer Orientation:** All new volunteers will attend a volunteer orientation. At the orientation (or ASAP thereafter) you will receive a name tag. Please wear this name tag, so the public can identify you as a volunteer. After volunteering, please return your name tag before leaving.

We also require you to complete a volunteer sign in and out sheet. The book is located at the Volunteer Station.

**More Detailed Volunteer Training:** At the orientation, you will be asked to call to schedule your time. You will need to complete this prior to coming in on your own at least one day before. Our Senior Volunteers helping in this area are Yolanda Vargason and Katie Parsh. You can schedule the days you would like to volunteer after the orientation today on the schedule board. Katie is the Lead Dog Kennel Assistant and Sam Hout is the Lead Assistant for the cats.

**Volunteer Supervision:** Please report to a staff member on arrival and upon leaving and sign in/out accordingly. The staff will suggest areas where you can work. Once you are comfortable, please begin to work with the animals by walking them or socializing with them in the meet and greet rooms. Should you have questions or concerns, please bring them to the attention of any staff member.

**Volunteer Placement and Duties:** Volunteers will be placed in the requested area, if available. Please be open to other activities especially in the beginning of your volunteer experience. Sometimes there are needs at the shelter and volunteers can help satisfy these. If there is something specific you are interested in, please indicate this area of interest on your volunteer packet. Your first experiences with the animals will require you to be with a staff person or supervisor.

**Volunteer Hours and Schedules:** Scheduling of volunteer hours is necessary for good workflow each day. Please sign up on the schedule in the volunteer area or call, preferably a few days before. If you are scheduled to come in and cannot do so, please call and let the staff know so they can plan accordingly. A weekly, organized, predictable volunteer schedule is our goal. A reliable and predictable schedule is helpful to our animals and staff. Daily cleaning of the shelter is completed in the morning before 11:30. The shelter is open to the public from 12:00 p.m. to 5. You are able to volunteer as early as 8:30 a.m. daily and on Saturdays and Sundays until 4:00 p.m. Please schedule your volunteer hours accordingly. In the morning, if workers are busy, please help with laundry.

**Volunteer Sign-In Sheets:** There is a Sign-In book, at the volunteer station. A larger calendar is for signing in with your complete weekly schedule. Please identify yourself to the staff and take a name tag. Please sign in with your name, the date and the time you arrived. After volunteering, complete a brief description of your activity including a specific animal name if possible. This is for our purposes and also for others who want to volunteer after you; so they can choose a different animal to socialize, if applicable.

**Volunteer Attire:** Appropriate clothes are required for all volunteer positions. For safety reasons, we ask that you wear closed toed, flat shoes, long pants and shirts with short or long sleeves. Do not wear

dangling jewelry, scarves, low cut tops or anything that may be a visual distraction or threat to an animal. Please wear freshly clean clothes. Please do not wear any torn or ripped clothing. Please change and wash your clothes when you return home. Humane Society apparel is available for purchase. Please feel free to browse through our selections.

**Protecting Yourself and Animals from Possible Spreading of Disease:** When working with the animals, it is critical that you wash your hands or use hand sanitizers after handling each puppy, kitten, cat or dog. Diseases can be spread by direct or indirect contact. Some diseases are highly contagious and can lead to death. When appropriate, a smock or cover for your clothing, as you work

with individual animals, may be required of you. Our goal is to save and home animals; therefore, following instructions and using precautionary measures are a priority.

**Report Unusual Animal Activities/Occurrences:** Volunteers can be the eyes and ears of the shelter. If you see any of the following symptoms and these have not been pointed out to you prior by the staff,

please report these ASAP:

- Eyes that are watery, swollen, or have discharge.
- Ears that are red, swollen, or have foul odor.
- Nose with discharge of any type.
- Sneezing, coughing or wheezing.
- Wounds, lesions or hair loss.
- Constipation, or runny/bloody stool.

- Limping or chewing at paws.
- Vomiting.
- Lethargy.

If there is an emergency, please report right away to the front desk.

Volunteer Animal Socialization: If you're approved to work with animals, a staff member can retrieve the cat or dog from the kennel or cage for you. Never open any animal kennels/cages yourself. **NO VOLUNTEER IS TO GET AN ANIMAL OUT OF IT'S CAGE FOR THE PUBLIC.** If someone wants to see an animal, get a staff member. This is for your protection as well as the protection of other people and other shelter animals. **PLEASE ADHERE TO THE COLOR CODES FOR ALL ANIMALS! GREEN and YELLOW is "OK" for Volunteers.** (please check why the animal is yellow coded). **RED – STAFF ONLY!**

Injuries: For the safety of the animal, visiting public, volunteers and staff, all bites or scratches must be reported. Any incident or injury occurring while volunteering must be reported to the VCHS staff immediately. Animal bites or scratches that break the skin, no matter how small, are considered injuries and should not be treated lightly. If any animal bites you, a bite report must be completed immediately.

Volunteer Guidelines and Tips:

- Do NOT get into the front desk drawers or cupboard without checking with the staff first. If you need something, ask. This will prevent any liability if something comes up missing, or gets misplaced.
- Do NOT use the refrigerator. It contains medicines. Please bring a cold pack for your meal.
- Always conduct yourself in a professional manner while involved in shelter activities or fund raising events. You are a representative of our shelter.
- Perform your tasks as instructed by the staff and/or senior volunteers.
- Report any abusive behavior to the shelter manager. This includes physical or verbal abuse to other volunteers, staff members and any shelter animals.
- When approached by the public for questions, please be polite and answer general questions. For specific questions or questions about animals, please refer them to a staff member for accuracy.
- Always be a team player. Our goals are all the same... to find the best homes we can for these animals. Let's work together.
- As a volunteer, we want you to understand that you are providing services in a volunteer capacity without any expressed or implied promise of salary or employment benefits.
- The use of drugs or alcohol is strictly prohibited while volunteering at the shelter or any sponsored event. You may not come to the shelter or sponsored event under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- The Venango County Humane Society is a smoke-free workplace. Smoking is only permitted inside in your vehicle and never while walking any dogs. Please do not leave any cigarette butts on the property.
- Your volunteer involvement may be terminated if you do not meet your commitment in an appropriate manner or fail to adhere to the policies and procedures as dictated by the staff.
- The Surgery Prep Room and the Cat Isolation Rooms are off-limits to volunteers. This is for the safety of all involved.

- If scheduled, please report for volunteering on time. Please notify the shelter staff if you will be absent or late. This allows the staff to plan and coordinate duties for the day.
- It is not permissible to bring your spouse, dating partners, children, relatives, friends, or pets to the shelter while performing volunteer activities.
- Keep your involvement at the shelter confined to your duties and avoid interfering with staff in a manner that would prevent them from keeping to their schedules.

#### Confidentiality:

- Volunteers must maintain STRICT CONFIDENTIALITY regarding the animals coming into the shelter including when the State Dog Warden or Police or officials drop off any animal.
- All names and addresses and personal information of people surrendering animals, adopting animals or reclaiming animals are to be held in the strictest confidence.
- You are prohibited from posting pictures or comments about all the shelter animals on any social media and must sign a Social Media form.

#### Volunteer Disciplinary Procedures:

Being a volunteer is a privilege, not a right. Providing a safe and enjoyable experience is one of the Venango County Humane Society's top priorities. The policies are in place to serve as guidelines for appropriate behavior, confidentiality and safety. If a volunteer commits a violation of the rules or breaks legal restrictions, formal and informal consequences will apply. If you have difficulties working with other volunteers or staff, bring the situation to the attention of the shelter manager or volunteer lead. VCHS has a zero tolerance policy for physical or verbal abuse of any staff or volunteer and/or animal. All disciplinary procedures will be documented and acted upon accordingly.

#### Other Ways to Volunteer:

- The Venango County Humane Society Thrift Store is located at the corner of 8th and Liberty Streets in Franklin. We need volunteers to work in the store, restock the shelves, go through items that were donated, etc. The store has two paid employees and the rest of the staff is made up of volunteers. It's a fun way to support the shelter as all monies taken in, after expenses, go right to the animals!
- Fundraising / Events: We have an active fundraising committee that works all year with different events in our area. We sell Daffins candy bars all yearlong at the Thrift Store, shelter, at all events, and at various places throughout Venango County. Please ask our Fundraiser Chairperson if you would like to help at any event.

#### Required forms to be signed and kept on file:

- Volunteer Application. Must be completed prior to being called in for orientation. Make sure that it is completed and all statements are accurate.
- Volunteer Orientation Manual Acknowledgment and Agreement – Each volunteer will be provided with a Volunteer Orientation Manual at orientation, which will be reviewed at that time. This form must be signed and dated indicating the manual has been explained at the orientation and they understand and agree to the terms.
- Volunteer Release Agreement and Covenant Not to Sue – Volunteers will be required to sign and date this at the orientation. This form releases the shelter from any liability in the case of

injury and also provides us the permission to publish volunteer activity pictures on our Facebook Fan Club Page.

- Volunteer Cell Phone Usage Policy – Volunteers will be required to sign and date our cell phone policy form at the orientation also. The use of cell phones is not permitted at the shelter. Therefore, volunteers who bring cell phones to the shelter are required to keep the ringer shut off or placed on vibrate mode, and to keep cell phone use confined to breaks and meal periods. The shelter may provide cell phone allowances to volunteers in certain positions in an effort to improve efficiency and effectiveness.
- Social Media Policy – must be signed. Do not take or post any pictures of the animals on any form of social media.