



Youth and Community Group Volunteer Program Handbook

Welcome!

Thank you for your interest in being part of the Youth and Community Group Volunteer Program at the Humane Society of Central Oregon (HSCO). Your time volunteering for the HSCO will benefit the numerous animals that are housed at our facility.

For your Group to receive an educational and purposeful volunteer experience, it is important to follow and understand all policies and procedures of the HSCO. This manual will cover all rules that Youth and Community Group Volunteer Program participants are required to follow. In this manual, *Participant* refers to any student and/or client with a school or organization. A *Supervisor* refers to teachers, caretakers, substitute teachers, parents and any over 21 year old adult that is responsible for and will be accompanying the *Participants*.

I look forward to working with you and creating a wonderful volunteer experience for your Group.

Sincerely,

Billie Ameika
Volunteer & Programs Manager

About the HSCO Youth and Community Group Volunteer

Program:

The HSCO Youth and Community Group Volunteer Program is designed to ensure that your Group's volunteer experience will be educational and purposeful. Structured activities supplemented with educational lessons will be created for your Group depending on the outcomes you desire your *Participants* to receive. We will work together to educate your *Participants* about volunteerism, why the HSCO exists, how to care for animals, and the importance of Spaying/Neutering, Licensing, and Vaccinating.

HSCO Contact Information:

Volunteer & Programs Manager:

Billie Ameika

Billie@hSCO.org

Address: 61170 SE 27th St.
Bend, OR 97702

Phone: 541-382-3537

Website: www.hSCO.org

Youth & Community Group Hours:

- Scheduled times during business hours Monday – Friday 10am-5:30pm
- Occasional Saturday volunteer opportunities will be determined *only* by the Volunteer Manager.

Prerequisites:

- The minimum age of any *Participant* is 9 years of age.
- Some Groups may require supervision due to age, disabilities, or judicial requirements. For every 3 *Participants* we require 1 *Supervisor* to actively supervise and accompany the *Participants*. It is the sole discretion of the Volunteer Manager to determine when supervision is required.
- We limit our Group size to 12 *Participants* and 4 *Supervisors* at one time. If your organization has more than 12 *Participants* and depending on availability, you will need to schedule different days to keep within the maximum number of *Participants* allowed.
- All Groups must adhere to the headcount given to the Volunteer Manager. Activities are planned around the number of students stated.
- Any *Supervisor* that has the potential of accompanying the Group must go through Supervisor Training. *Supervisors* include teachers, parents, substitute teachers, caretakers or any individual responsible for the care of the *Participants* while volunteering at the HSCO. If your Group arrives with a *Supervisor* that has not attended the training, your Group will be unable to volunteer for the day. Upon approval, the Volunteer Manager will schedule a Supervisor Training session for your Group.
- The *Participants* involved with your Group can only volunteer with your Group. They are not individually approved to be volunteers; only the Group is. If they

- are interested in volunteering outside of the Group, they must fill out an individual application.
- Individuals within the Group that have a history of animal abuse/neglect, sex crimes, theft and/ or child abuse/ pedophilia will not be allowed to volunteer with the Group. The supervisors of the organization are responsible for determining if individuals meet this requirement. Non-compliance with this requirement may result in the assignment being terminated and the Group not being able to volunteer in the future.
 - Must provide proof of current certificate of insurance for the organization.

Expectations:

We are an open admission animal shelter which means we do not turn away animals brought to our facility. We also house stray animals that are waiting for their owners to pick them up. As a result, we may not know the history or the behavior of all the animals that come into our care. Hands on animal interaction is not guaranteed with group placements.

A shelter environment consists of strong smells, loud barking animals and members of the general public. At times it can be quite emotional because of lost animals, surrendered pets and even abused animals. For the animals it is quite stressful, hectic and fast paced. Awareness of this environment will help keep the animals in our care safe by knowing if individuals are comfortable and have good judgment when around the animals.

The shelter environment also poses risks to the general public, the staff and the volunteers. When handling animals you could become scratched or bit. Many of the dogs in our care are quite hyper and while walking them you can slip, fall, trip and/or be pulled by the dogs. The shelter is stressful for the animals and is also highly contagious. There are some diseases that can be passed to humans that the animals may carry. While the HSCO takes precautions to prevent the spread of disease, there is a potential to come in contact with these zoonotic diseases.

As *supervisors*, it is very important to know the emotional, physical and mental limitations of your *Participants*. The shelter environment may not be appropriate for all individuals wishing to volunteer at the HSCO.

Scheduling:

- Once your Group Application is approved, the Volunteer Manager will contact the primary contact in regards to setting up a schedule.
- Scheduling availability is dependent on the number of approved applicants.
- Once a schedule is created, you must inform the Volunteer Manager 48 hours in advance if your Group is unable to make its scheduled time.
- All scheduling will be arranged with one contact of the school/ organization. Upon approval by the Volunteer Manager, an alternative contact may be listed.

This will help streamline scheduling and prevent any miscommunication about the Groups allocated volunteer time at the HSCO.

- Your Group is only approved for the time scheduled with the Volunteer Manager. Please do not just show up at the HSCO, you will not be able to volunteer.

Time Commitment:

- Any Group that is interested in volunteering must have a commitment of 35 hours total for the Group.
- We do not do one time volunteer opportunities for groups participating in this program.
- Each Group must be on HSCO premises to volunteer for at least 45 minutes.

Important Deadlines:

- **August 1st:** Application deadline for all school affiliated Groups.
- **August 1st, November 1st, February 1st and May 1st:** Application deadline for non-school affiliated Groups.
- **Last Week of June:** An online survey will be sent to the primary contact for the school Groups to gather feedback on the Youth and Community Group Volunteer Program.

Application Process:

Any school or community Group that wishes to volunteer at the HSCO must fill out and return a Group application by **the designated deadline date**.

Accepted Groups must be able to meet the prerequisites listed above. We want to maximize the volunteer experience for the volunteers by meeting specific goals of the Group. For example, if your Group wants the *Participants* to be informed about the importance of volunteerism or you would like to educate them on how to responsibly care for animals, then your Group will be a top candidate. We will not accept Groups that primarily want to volunteer to “fill time” or are using the program simply as a means to fulfill required hours.

You will be notified whether or not your Group has been accepted.

Denied Applications:

Groups that will be denied are those that cannot meet the prerequisites listed. Due to the number of Groups interested in volunteering, we have a limit on the number of Groups that can volunteer during the week. This will ensure that the volunteer experience will be valuable and purposeful. If you are denied for the year you applied, you are encouraged to apply again the following year.

Approved Activities:

(Not all activities are available for all Groups. An assessment of your Group will determine which activities your Group will be participating in.)

Presentations

- Tour of facilities
- Hear from experts in the field of animal welfare

Projects

- Shelter operations/cleaning projects
- Cut out adoption designs
- Fill adoption packets
- Prepare newspaper for puppy pens
- Construct litter boxes
- Prepare canine “Kongs”
- Clean “Kongs”
- Help with clerical duties: folding brochures, stuffing envelopes
- Assist in cleaning of play yards and dog walking trails
- Construct cat toys

Dog Kennels (dependent on group and animals in residency)

- Walk dogs
- Groom dogs
- Train dogs with positive reinforcement
- Socialize dogs
- Exercise dogs
- Stock poop bag dispensers

Cat Kennels (dependent on group and animals in residency)

- Change litter boxes
- Socialize cats
- Brush cats while paying attention to their body language
- Change cat water when needed (dirty or empty)
- Provide toys for cats in their kennels
- Straighten cat get acquainted rooms after each use
- Wash cattery windows

Small Animals (dependent on group and animals in residency)

- Socialize small animals
- Provide fresh water to small animals

Youth and Community Group Volunteer Rules:

- All *Participants* and *Supervisors* must follow all HSCO policies and procedures. This includes how to properly handle the animals in the shelter's care.
- While volunteering, your volunteer uniform includes a volunteer lanyard and a name tag. These are required and indicate to the public and the staff that you are a volunteer.
- Please treat the animals in the HSCO's care with respect and sensitivity. Only positive reinforcement training is allowed at the HSCO. We do not condone any harsh training methods with our animals.
- The shelter is a stressful environment for all of the animals in our care, therefore we request that you refrain from loud voices, horseplay or bad language. We want to ensure that the animals are comfortable and we want to limit the amount of stressors during their stay.
- Stay on task. It is important to stay on task. If you finish an assigned task, the Group must stay together. Please see the Volunteer Manager if the Group needs a new task. The purpose of your time at the HSCO is to Volunteer. You will meet other volunteers but please stay focused and refrain from socialization.
- Pay attention to all information the staff is communicating with you. This includes any signs on the kennels, in the volunteer office, or in person. The staff will correct you if you are not handling our animals correctly. Please respect the staff.
- If a member of the public asks members of the Group questions, please direct them to the staff. Any behavior, medical advice, or opinions about the animals to the public are inappropriate and are the responsibility of the staff, not the volunteers. Never take an animal out for a member of the public.
- Please leave any electronics (cell phone, iPod, etc.) at home or at school. The shelter is not an environment in which these items should be used. We want to make sure that the animals you will be handling have your undivided attention. HSCO is not responsible for lost items.
- Do not enter areas that are "Off-limits" to volunteers without permission from the Volunteer Manager. This includes the break room, animal receiving, the vet clinic, and the "back hallway".
- If you get injured or bit while volunteering, you must inform the Volunteer Manager. Failure to do so will result from removal from the program.

Disciplinary Procedure:

The safety of our animals and our volunteers will be ensured by following the policies and procedures while volunteering at the HSCO. We are an open-admission shelter which means we do not know the history of many of the animals in our care. We house stray animals as well as animals that may be aggressive or on a bite quarantine. We have specific rules in place because of we want the best for our animals. Following the rules will ensure the safety of the animals.

The *Supervisors* are responsible to make sure that the *Participants* are following the rules. If a *Participant* breaks the rules, it will be documented. Each infraction will be documented and after the third incident, the Volunteer Manager will address these issues with the primary contact. The Group will be unable to come in until the issues are

addressed. If a pattern is developed, the Group may lose its ability to apply and volunteer in the future.

The severity of the infraction will determine the course of discipline. The following are grounds for immediate dismissal:

- Mistreating and disrespecting an animal, staff, or another volunteer
- Sexual harassment of a volunteer, staff member, or visitor
- Stealing from the HSCO, volunteers, staff or visitors
- Inappropriate language (abusive, profane, etc.) directed towards the animals, staff, volunteers or visitors

Animal Handling Limitations:

We understand that many individuals handle situations and environments differently. At times the HSCO can be loud with noisy people and animals barking. Occasionally, the shelter may have strong smells as a result of the animals that we house here.

We consider all interactions with the animals to be important and want to set our animals up for a positive experience when being handled. We want to ensure that individuals with good judgment can understand the risks associated with animal handling before socializing with the animals. It is our goal to keep the volunteers safe in this kind of environment.

It is the sole discretion of the HSCO Volunteer Manager and Staff to determine if and when your Group can interact with the animals. It is not guaranteed that all Groups will have permission to socialize and work with all of the animals as a safety precaution.