

Cat Volunteer Handbook

You Make a Difference!

THANK YOU for volunteering at PCHS and welcome to the organization! The time and energy you spend are appreciated by all of us who believe in rescuing and caring for animals in need. Your efforts make a difference not only by helping to make a cat's stay in the shelter happier, but help to socialize them to make them more ready for adoption. No job is too small, and every effort makes a difference.

Our volunteer training program is a work in progress. We welcome suggestions that you think might improve the program in any way. You can do this by talking to purple volunteers (look for the purple name tags) or by emailing info@pawsandclaws.org

Consider Becoming a Member of PCHS.

Please consider becoming a PCHS member, if you are not already. It is not a requirement, but we do encourage it and appreciate it. We are a non-profit 501(3c) organization which relies on donations from concerned individuals for most of our operating expenses.

We receive no money from government agencies to help meet expenses for the shelter and care of the animals. That is why it is so important that PCHS keeps its membership ranks strong. We also feel that members are "vested" with the organization and will feel more a part of the mission. Membership forms are available on the counter in the PCHS office.

PCHS Mission

- Promote and provide humane protection and shelter for abandoned or lost companion animals
- Seek adoptive homes for companion animals under our protective care
- Provide public education regarding societal problems of animal overpopulation

- Promote the principles of responsible companion animal care
- Advocate for spaying/neutering all companion animals
- Enhance appreciation of animals, prevent their abuse, and underscore their intrinsic value through humane education

Volunteer Mission: To support Paws and Claws Humane Society's organization mission by helping cats to be more adoptable through socialization and enhancing the cats' quality of life while at PCHS.

Opportunities in addition to visiting cats or dogs include:

- Cleaning
- Vet Visit
- Adoption Event
- Transporting
- Receptionist
- Orientation
- Adoption Counselor
- Medications
- Fostering
- Walking dogs
- Volunteer training
- Fundraiser Activity
- Computer & Website Support

To volunteer with cats at PCHS, you must

- Go through general orientation
- Go through Green Cat training
- Read and become familiar with this manual
- Follow the rules set forth in the manual, in your training, and on any signs posted in the building

Cat Volunteer Hours

- Mon, Wed, Fri 10:00-4:30
- Tues, Thurs 12:00 – 7:00
- Sat 12:30-4:30
- Sun closed

Volunteer Requirements

A minimum of 36 hours per year of volunteer time with cats is expected to maintain an active volunteer status. That averages about 3 hours per month. We realize there may be months when you have special circumstances, but this is an overall expectation. If you have not volunteered directly with cats in 6 months or more, you will need to retrain and complete a new application and waiver to do so. This is for your safety as well as that of the cats, as information for animal care will be periodically updated.

Prior to volunteering, attendance at a general orientation and a green/beginner volunteer training session is required. Every volunteer must have a signed waiver in our files. Waivers for those volunteers age 12-17 must be signed by a parent or legal guardian.

Age Requirements

Responsible Adult below refers to a parent, legal guardian, sibling (18 years or older), or another adult approved by the volunteer's parent/legal guardian.

- Minimum age is 12 years old
- Volunteers age 12-15 must be accompanied at all times by a responsible adult who has also gone through orientation and training sessions
- Volunteers age 16-17 need not be accompanied by a responsible adult while volunteering, but parent/legal guardian must have attended orientation and signed the volunteer's waiver

Cat Volunteer Teams

Cat volunteers will have nametags indicating one of these levels:

- **White** – volunteers age 12 or over who interact with cats currently out of their cages and who will be **accompanied by a responsible adult**
- **Green** – volunteers who interact with cats currently out of their cages and may assist at times under supervision of staff or purple volunteers

- **Purple** – volunteers who assist with cat exercise/rotation and other tasks as outlined in Purple training

The purpose of color-coded teams is to ensure that each volunteer is trained for the activities designated for that team. Training or proof of understanding/ability will be required of each volunteer before moving to a different team. Purple team volunteers, with input from staff members, will make the final decision as to what team each volunteer will be approved for.

Please do not be offended by these guidelines, as they have been adopted over the years in order to ensure the safety of animals in our care, the volunteers, the staff, and the general public.

Volunteers who have met the requirements and are interested in moving from one team to other should speak with an office staff person or send an email to info@pawsandclaws.org

White Team

White team volunteers must be at least 12 years old. This team may also include anyone the trainer/staff feels should have additional time, experience, or training. The White team volunteer must be accompanied at all times by a responsible adult. (All parties must have completed orientation, and, at minimum, Green level training).

Green Team

Green team volunteers are those age 16 or over. It may include volunteers who choose to remain at this level or are asked by Purple team members or staff to remain at this level.

Green team members may:

- Visit cats who are out of their cages or visit in the colony rooms
- Brush cats and play with them. Remember to clean hair out of the brush after use and put string toys away if used.
- Assist Purple team volunteers if requested with tasks such as washing dishes, scooping litter boxes, and other cleaning tasks that Purple volunteers have showed them how to do.

Purple Team

Purple team volunteers are those age 16 and over who:

- Have completed and have verified at least 12 hours of volunteer time as a Green team member
- Have completed purple team training
- Are comfortable with Purple team's duties/responsibilities
- Are able to independently read and understand the information on signs and notes posted in the cat rooms, including the cat cage cards

To move to Purple team, request training by emailing info@pawsandclaws.org

Retaining Volunteer Privileges

We LOVE our volunteers! But volunteering is a privilege and the health and safety of the animals, as well as your safety, are our primary concern.

The following infringements may lead to losing your privileges on any of the teams:

- You are not allowed to visit cats in the quarantine area at the rear of the shelter unless you are trained as a Purple team or Strongid team volunteer, or if you are requested to do so, and supervised by, a Purple volunteer, with the approval of a staff member.
- You are not allowed to give "tours" of the cat rooms or "train" non-volunteers, including friends or family.
- You are not allowed to work with the dogs unless you have also taken the dog training class. You may interact with dogs in the lobby, hallway, breakroom, or outside *if a staff member or the volunteer walking the dog says they are safe to interact with.* **Avoid interacting with dogs being brought in by members of the public, as their temperament will not be known.**
- You are expected to respect directions given by Purple volunteers and PCHS staff. *Disrespectful, abusive, or disruptive behavior toward the staff, the animals, other volunteers, the public, or the facility will not be tolerated.*

- Any of the above infringements can lead to you receiving a written violation. If you receive 3 violations, you will no longer be allowed to volunteer at PCHS.

These restrictions have evolved over the years to ensure the safety of all people and animals involved with PCHS. We do hope you enjoy your time volunteering with our animals as much as they will enjoy spending time with you.