

PAWS AND CLAWS HUMANE SOCIETY

GREEN LEVEL DOG VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

Volunteer Mission: To support the Paws and Claws Humane Society's organizational mission by making the dogs more adoptable through positive reinforcement, exercise, and socialization, therefore increasing the dogs' quality of life while at PCHS.

Web page: www.pawsandclaws.org

General email: info@pawsandclaws.org

Dog volunteer hours

M-F 7 am to 7 pm

Sat 7-11 am, 12:30-7 pm

Sunday and holidays 7-11 am, 4:30 to 7 pm (note, on holiday mornings volunteer hours are generally shorter to allow staff to leave earlier)

Thank you for volunteering at PCHS! The time and energy you spend are greatly appreciated. Your efforts make a difference not only by helping make a dog's life happier while he/she is in our shelter, but go a long way toward helping to make a dog more adoptable. We hope you enjoy your time volunteering with our animals as much as they will enjoy spending time with you. We love our volunteers!

Our volunteer training program is a work in progress, changing to meet the needs of the dogs. Please offer any suggestions that you think may enhance the program in any way.

AGE REQUIREMENTS

- Responsible adult (RA) is defined as a parent, legal guardian, sibling 18 years or older, or another adult approved by the parent/guardian. The RA must go through the general orientation and training classes. The child/RA team is one child, one adult, and one dog while walking dogs.
- Minimum age to volunteer is 12 years old.
- Volunteers 12-15 must be accompanied by an RA at all times while volunteering.
- Volunteers 16 and 17 can train and volunteer on their own, but a parent or legal guardian must attend a general orientation and sign the waiver of liability.

DOG VOLUNTEER TEAMS

The purpose of the color-coded team approach is to ensure that each volunteer is trained for the activities designed for that team. Training and proof of understanding/ability will be required of the volunteer prior to moving onto a different team. The Blue Team trainers will make the final decision as to whether or not a volunteer can move to the next team. Volunteers who have met the prerequisites and wish to move to the next level of training should speak with an office staff person or send an email to info@pawsandclaws.org.

WHITE TEAM

- Volunteers are 12-13 years old and must be accompanied by an RA at all times while training and volunteering.
- The White Team member may enter the dog rooms, but the RA must get the dogs in and out of their kennels and maintain control of the leash at all times. A second leash may be attached to the dog's collar for the White Team member to hold onto.

YELLOW TEAM

- Volunteers on this team are generally 14-15 years old and must be accompanied by an RA at all times.
- The Yellow Team member may enter the dog rooms, but the RA must get the dogs in and out of their kennels.
- The Yellow Team volunteer may be responsible for a green dog's leash.

GREEN TEAM

- Volunteers on the Green Team are those 16 years old and over. Blue Team trainers will determine if a volunteer is appropriate to move onto the Green Team.
- Green Team volunteers may only walk green dogs.
- Walk dogs along the sidewalk to the west as far as the stoplight at Whiting's Nursery and to the east as far as the first RAC driveway.
- Assist staff with cleanup/feeding/socializing.
- Observe at Adoption Day events.
- Bathe and brush green dogs.

EXPERIENCED GREEN TEAM

- After completing 12 hours of volunteer time, you are considered an Experienced Green Team volunteer. You may stay on this team or choose to train to the Purple Team.
- In addition to the above Green Team activities, you may walk dogs to the west as far as the next to last utility pole, and to the east you may cross the RAC driveways and follow the Lourdes west service road to Cascade Meadows. Do not enter Cascade Meadows.
- Assist at Adoption Day events with green dogs and transport green dogs to and from these events with permission of the person in charge of the events.
- With permission of the shelter director, take a green dog through obedience classes.

PURPLE TEAM

- To move to the Purple Team, the volunteer must have 12 hours of volunteer time on the Green/Experienced Green Team and complete the Purple Team training.
- Must be comfortable with the Purple Team's duties/responsibilities.
- Must demonstrate the ability and willingness to act on the dog's behalf.
- To move to the Purple Team, contact the office (288-7226 or info@pawsandclaws.org). The trainer will contact you to set up a 2-hour training session.
- Purple Team activities include all those described above for the Green/Experienced Green Teams.
- May walk green or purple dogs.
- Walking route is the same as for the Experienced Green Team.
- Transport dogs to and from Adoption Day events and assist at those events.
- Transport to vet appointments.
- Assist with all other official PCHS activities at the request of the person in charge of these activities (ask office staff about signing the waiver to do transports).
- Take a dog through obedience classes with the shelter director's permission.

BLUE TEAM

- The Blue Team volunteers are the volunteer program team members. They have completed Green and Purple training.
- Walking routes are the same as those of the Purple Team members.
- Their responsibilities include defining the rules and protocols for handling the dogs and helping to maintain them as well as training volunteers.
- Maintain/revise dog volunteer handbooks.

TRAINING CLASS REVIEW

The following section contains some of the most important points covered during training class. The list is by no means complete, so do not hesitate to ask questions of the staff or other volunteers.

- Wear your name tag with your appropriate team color at all times.
- Wash your hands or use hand sanitizer after interacting with each dog.
- Remove hair from brushes when finished and leave them in the sink for staff to wash.
- Toys should also be washed between dogs (put hard rubber toys in the sink and soft toys and tennis balls in the laundry tubs).
- Obey quarantine/staff only signs in the office, kennel rooms, and outside yards. Deliberately interacting with quarantine/staff only dogs may result in a written violation. Three written violations will result in losing your dog volunteer privileges.
- Do not hesitate to decline to interact with any dog if you are not comfortable with that dog. Do not hesitate to decline a request for a task if you are not comfortable with that task.

WHEN TAKING A DOG FOR A WALK

- Notice notes on the white board or kennel door regarding the dog's likes/dislikes. Read the kennel cards for information about the dog and memorize the dog's name and kennel location. Return the dog to the proper kennel.
- If there is a harness hanging on the dog's kennel door, please use the harness while walking the dog. If you need help getting it on the dog, ask staff or another volunteer for help.
- Check the collar for proper snugness. You should be able to comfortably fit two fingers between the collar and the dog's neck.
- If a leash clip is broken or cracked, throw it away and get a different one.
- Take at least two poop bags on walks. Picking up after dogs is mandatory!
- Unless a sign on the white board or kennel door indicates treats should be withheld from a dog, feel free to take treats with you on the walk.
- Have the dog out for at least 15 minutes. If the dog turns out to be more than you're comfortable handling or the weather is unpleasant, it's best to take the dog back to its kennel or sit in a room with it.
- Treat and praise the dogs for good behavior in their kennels. Treats should be given under the kennel door—don't stick your fingers through the chain link.
- Treat/reinforce for good behavior while walking. Treats are great, but so are praise and pets.

APPROACHING, CALMING, LEASHING, AND EXITING THE KENNEL

Volunteers can only take one dog at a time, even if there are two dogs in the same kennel. There may be certain experienced volunteers who have the shelter director's permission to walk two dogs at a time, but for all others only one dog is allowed.

- Make sure no one else is getting a dog out of a kennel in the same room.
- Try to wait until the dog has calmed before opening the kennel door.

- Slowly open kennel door, standing in the doorway while opening the door to block the dog from escaping before being leashed. Step into kennel and close door OR from the door reach under the collar and secure the leash.
- Exit the kennel first or with the dog next to you, keeping the leash very short, and not letting the dog lead you out of the kennel.

KEEPING THE DOG UNDER CONTROL UNTIL YOU GET OUTSIDE

- Be aware of other people and dogs in the kennel room.
- Keep the dog next to you while leading it out of the kennel area. Exit as calmly and quickly as possible.
- Do not enter the hallway if another dog is already there.
- If your dog starts to growl or lunge, you can continue walking forward calmly with the dog, open the main door from the kennel to the hallway and walk through first or with the dog next to you on a short leash, calmly exiting the back door of the building. Try to maintain the same approach as you exit the back door into the parking lot.
- Never take dogs out through the lobby.

HOW TO CONTROL THE DOG OUTSIDE

- Take your time in the driveway to get to know the dog and to see how it behaves. If you are not comfortable or confident with the dog's behavior, you can continue to walk the dog there, take it into the play yard, or return the dog to its kennel and get a different dog.
- Walk only on the sidewalk. Do not cut through our parking lot or our neighbors' parking lots.
- Do not allow the dogs to urinate/defecate on the PCHS bushes or neighboring business's landscaping and signs. Utility poles and large mature trees are okay.
- Do not allow the dogs to sniff or eat goose poop or drink from puddles.
- Obey the "No Pets" signs at Cascade Meadows.
- Always be aware of your surroundings while you have a dog out and be ready to step off the sidewalk if that is what is necessary to keep everyone calm and safe.

AWARENESS OF ENVIRONMENT

- Monitor the environment for approaching people, loose dogs, dogs on long leashes, dogs that are not controlled by their owners, icy areas, etc. It is much easier to avoid a situation and/or react correctly when you have ample time.
- Try to avoid letting your dog have eye-to-eye contact with another dog.
- When an owner approaches with another dog, try to maintain your body between the dogs. If possible, move off the sidewalk to create more separation.
- Remember that when you have a dog out of its kennel, you are the advocate for that dog's safety. While being polite and respectful to the general public, whether on or off PCHS property, avoid putting the dog in a situation where the dog's safety or yours might be in jeopardy or where it becomes upset or frightened. Be ready and willing to act on the dog's behalf if it becomes necessary. Keep in mind that PCHS can be held liable if a dog bites or otherwise hurts someone.

ENCOUNTERING LOOSE DOGS

- Avoid eye contact between the dogs.
- Signal owner to retrieve the loose dog.
- If a loose dog gets close, turn away to avoid eye contact.
- If no owner is present, maintain your dog very close to your body and try to avoid both dogs having eye contact. Move in the general direction of the shelter when you can summon help if needed.

PEOPLE WANTING TO PET YOUR DOG

- If someone tries to pet the dog you're walking, you can state, "I'm a Paws and Claws volunteer and am currently training the dog." Telling the public that you are training a dog lets them know that petting is not wanted but does not offend or scare anyone. You could also simply tell them you do not know the dog well enough to know how the dog is around others so it's best if they stay away.
- If a child approaches without a parent, tell them to stop and let them know that you are sorry, but you are not comfortable with the way the dog behaves with children or that you are a volunteer and not allowed to give access to the dog to unaccompanied children.
- If you are comfortable with the dog (have had it out several times and know how it is around strangers) AND you are dealing with adults, you can use this as a time to promote the dogs and PCHS, but explain to them how to approach the dog. Ask that they not run at the dog. They should walk slowly toward it, crouch down, and let it smell your hand from under its chin. If it seems okay (hackles not raised, not growling, not in a stiff posture, not looking off to the side), tell them they can pet it on its back first and then, if okay, on its head. They shouldn't pat its head or touch its legs or feet.

KEEP DOGS SEPARATED

- Keep dogs three leash lengths apart (both at shelter and in public) to prevent negative interactions. Certain staff test shelter dogs with other dogs for compatibility. Volunteers should never test dogs' interactions.
- Always use a leash with a loop on the end, with your hand through the loop and a grip on the leash below. Flexi-Leads (retractable) are NOT allowed.
- If a dog pulls, try to turn the other direction with the dog, or you may have to just plant your feet until whatever the distraction is passes.
- If nearing another volunteer with a dog, communicate about who is going which direction so that the dogs can be kept separated. Keep your dog on the opposite of the other dog.
- Be careful going around corners and going in and out of the kennel area.
- If two dogs get tangled, this is the only time it is justified to jerk on the leash to separate them. NEVER reach in with your hands—chances are you'd get bitten if you do.
- Avoid letting public and shelter dogs sniff each other. Respiratory infections can be passed to the shelter dogs, potentially causing a kennel-wide outbreak that could cost PCHS thousands of dollars.

DOG ESCAPE

- Do not give chase, as the dog may think this is a game and keep running.
- Call the dog's name and run in the other direction.
- Drop to the ground, clap your hands, and call the dog with high, happy tones, as if you're having a party and are asking the dog to attend.
- Throw treats.
- Carry your cell phone to call the shelter for help (288-7226) if the above measures don't work.

OTHER REMINDERS

- Reward for good behavior. Treats are great, but so are praise and petting. Reinforce good behavior as it's happening, not after or in anticipation of.
- Not every dog will feel comfortable with every person. Some dogs are shy or lack socialization, some have been abused. Something about you may remind the dog of an unpleasant event in its past. If you are comfortable with the dog and you have the patience to work with it without forcing it, the dog will learn that you can be trusted.
- Do not run or yell around the dogs.
- Do not stick your fingers through the kennel doors.

- Report any incident of aggression by a dog toward a person or another dog. PCHS needs to be aware of the situation to avoid future, and possibly more serious incidents.
- If you get injured while volunteering, whether dog-related or not, let shelter staff know so that you can fill out an incident report. This is a legal requirement.
- If you notice any dog health issues, report them immediately to staff, either directly or by writing a note in the notebook in the dog's room (e.g., limping, vomiting, hot spot, diarrhea, lethargy).
- Wear stable shoes. No flip-flops or sandals.
- There are no trash cans along the walking route. Be sure to take poop bags back to the dumpster behind the shelter. Do not leave them by the sidewalk to pick up on your way back—our neighbors and their patrons would not appreciate seeing poop bags lining the sidewalk.

SOCIAL MEDIA

- PCHS maintains a Facebook page where staff post pictures and notes about the animals, adoptions, and upcoming events.
- You may make comments under the pictures posted, but keep the comments positive. Comments can be misconstrued as negative, thus reducing the chances for that dog to get adopted. Any questionable comments will be removed, and you may be banned from the site if the issue continues.
- Comments like the dog is friendly/cuddly, walks well on a leash, loves people, loves to be brushed, etc., are all appropriate.
- Comments like the dog pulls hard on a leash, lunges at people/other animals, doesn't look friendly, etc., are not appropriate. The dogs are stressed in the kennel environment and oftentimes don't exhibit their best behavior while with us, especially when first arriving.
- The adoption counselors know the dogs well and are honest with potential adopters about the dogs' personalities and behaviors and do see the comments made by other staff and volunteers in the notebooks. They work with the adopters to find the best fit for both them and the animal. Volunteers should not interfere with the adoption counselor's duties.

THINGS NOT TO DO

- Do not interact with the cats unless you've taken the cat training class.
- Do not work with dogs above your level of training.
- Do not remove a dog from the designated walking areas or property, except for transporting to vet appointments, adoption day events, and specific one-time exceptions as approved by the shelter director.
- Do not bring anyone with you who is not also a trained volunteer.
- Do not test the shelter dogs with other dogs or cats to see how they interact.
- Do not enter the quarantine room or work with dogs marked "quarantine" or "staff only."
- Do not walk dogs outside of the posted volunteer hours.
- Do not use retractable leads.
- Do not take dogs out through the lobby. Use the back door only.
- Do not loiter with dogs in the hallway.
- Do not cross a street while walking a PCHS dog. Doing so will result in losing volunteer privileges.
- Do not enter the staff-only concrete runs attached to the kennel rooms.
- Do not let anyone other than a trained volunteer have control of the leash.
- Do not give tours, give kennel room access, or train non-volunteers including family and friends.

Disrespectful, abusive, or disruptive behavior towards 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. Three written violations will result in your volunteer privileges being revoked.

The restrictions above have been evolved over the years to ensure the safety of all the people and animals involved in the shelter, so please don't take offense if they seem strict.

WALKING ROUTES

Walking routes are defined in each team's section earlier in the handbook. A map showing these routes is below.

Take extra care while crossing driveways. Do not cross any street.

Some distances from the PCHS sign to:

- Back door: .08 mile
- Cascade Meadows sign: .3 mile
- First RAC driveway: .2 mile
- Whiting's stoplight: .2 mi
- Next to last utility pole before West Circle Drive: .4 mile
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