Volunteer Training Manual

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Welcome to the Humane Society of Tampa Bay Volunteer Program!
The Humane Society of Tampa Bay relies on volunteers to help us care for over 7,000 dogs, cats, potbellied pigs, rabbits and miscellaneous pocket pets who come through our doors every year. Volunteers assist in caring for sick and needy animals in our community, and educate the public about animal welfare and humane treatment of animals.

The Humane Society of Tampa Bay is a non-profit organization with limited staff and budget. Without the help of volunteers, we would not be able to do all that we do to help animals in Hillsborough County.

In addition to your orientation, we hope that this manual will provide you with information that will deepen your interest and commitment to becoming an HSTB volunteer. Volunteers work in a variety of areas within HSTB and play an important part in enabling us to provide high quality care and public education. Without volunteers, this organization could not help as many animals as we do not provide the services that we provide to the public. Your service is invaluable and greatly appreciated!

**Our Vision**
Leading the way because every life counts.

**Our Mission**
Dedicated to ending animal homelessness and providing care and comfort for companion animals in need.

**History**

The Humane Society of Tampa Bay was established in 1912 as the Hillsborough County Humane Society with the mission “to enforce the law applicable to the prevention of cruelty to children and cruelty to all animals of any description, capable of suffering, and to do everything and anything which is legal to prevent cruelty and harsh treatment to children and animals.” It is one of the oldest corporations in the state of Florida.

In 1926, the organization was left a bequest by two sisters, Allison and Helen M. Holland, of the property and a two story house on 3607 N. Armenia. In 1929, the animal shelter began operations using the declaration, “We speak for those who cannot speak for themselves.”

In the 1970’s, the organization outgrew the original house and the current facility was built, however it was not until the early 1980’s, that the Holland house was demolished and the facility was enlarged to include the kennels.

In 2000, as a result of the community overpopulation problem, the Humane Society of Tampa Bay opened the Spay and Neuter Clinic. In 2004, the HSTB began the “No Kill for Space” program which means that no adoptable animal is euthanized to make room for another. We do however euthanize animals that are too sick to be treated or too aggressive or behaviorally unsound to be suitable for adoption. The Humane Society of Tampa Bay is a managed admission shelter. We only accept animals that we believe can be adopted. We do not take in stray animals. They need to be taken to the county facility where their owners can look for them.

The Humane Society of Tampa Bay is committed to a community approach to lowering the euthanasia rate in our county. We have an aggressive transfer program which takes in animals from other shelters that are open admission and house animals that are at risk of being euthanized.

In January 2007 HSTB joined the ASPCA, No More Homeless Pets, Animal Coalition of Tampa, and Hillsborough County Animal Services in the ASPCA® Mission: Orange™, a mutual mission to create a humane community where every adoptable dog and cat is guaranteed a loving home and where all animals are treated with respect and kindness.

In 2012, the Animal Health Center opened offering affordable, high-quality veterinary care to the public, seven days a week and in June 2014 the Animal Health Center was awarded the prestigious AHAA Certification.
Funding
HSTB is funded by individual donations, wills and bequests, foundations and grants, and money received from shelter and clinic services, and fundraising programs and events. We do not directly receive county, state, federal or United Way funds. Nor do we receive financial support from any of the national animal welfare agencies like the Humane Society of the United States, American Humane Association or American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (except for grants for specific purposes). As a not-for-profit organization, fundraising is crucial to our existence, and we ask our volunteers to support our fundraising endeavors.

“Managed Admission” facility
The Humane Society of Tampa Bay is a “Managed Admission” shelter. This means that we only take adoptable animals by appointment. We will not euthanize one animal to make room for another. We also are not a sanctuary. An animal’s quality of life will always be a top priority. We will not keep an animal in the shelter system who is showing obvious signs that he/she is not adapting to shelter life or is unadoptable. Managed admission shelters limit the amount of animals they accept because they lack the resources or space to properly care for them. Hillsborough County Animal Services (HCAS) is a local, government run, open-admission shelter.

It is important to note that whether or not a shelter is open or managed admission does not make one better or worse than the other. All shelters exist to help homeless animals. The shelters are not to blame for having to euthanize unwanted animals. The public who did not spay or neuter their companion animals plays a direct role in pet overpopulation. HSTB is committed to taking adoptable animals from Hillsborough County Animal Services and other shelters that have a high euthanasia rate.

Fiscal Responsibility
HSTB has received a four star rating from Charity Navigator for the past five years. A four star rating is given to a charity when it exceeds industry standards and outperforms most charities in its cause.

Programs and Services

Because of the magnitude of the Humane Society of Tampa Bay’s sheltering program and its long history in the community, we feel that it is important that volunteers in all areas of HSTB service be provided with information about the sheltering of animals and the associated programs.

Animal Intake
HSTB is a managed admission shelter. We accept dogs and cats by appointment only. Animals received are brought in by owners and also transferred from other shelters. A trained and dedicated staff works every day to provide a high standard of humane care for the animals entrusted to us.

Pet Adoptions
HSTB encourages interested persons to adopt an animal from our shelter. Trained counselors interview and educate prospective adopters/guardians. HSTB strives to place companion animals in kind and responsible homes where we are confident they will receive proper care and attention throughout their lifetimes.

All adopted animals are spayed or neutered prior to placement to promote the health of the pet as well as combat overpopulation. In addition, pets receive their up-to-date inoculations, testing for common but serious diseases, deworming, grooming, and microchip identification.
Foster Program
We often have animals who are not quite ready for adoption due to age or illness health issues. Foster care volunteers provide in-home care and socialization for cats/kittens or dogs/puppies. This position helps HSTB save more lives. The timeframe for each foster position ranges from overnight stays to several weeks. To participate in this program, volunteers must fill out a Foster Care application and interview with the Foster Care Coordinator.

Lost and Found
The best way to ensure a lost pet’s return is to keep current information (collar, rabies tag, ID tag, and microchip) on the pet at all times. HSTB does not accept stray animals. All stray animals are to be taken to Hillsborough County Animal Services so that they can be reunited with their owners. If they are not claimed, the animals are either transferred to HSTB or another rescue group, are made available for adoption at HCAS or unfortunately, many are euthanized.

Humane Euthanasia
Humane euthanasia is provided as necessary to alleviate animal cruelty and suffering. HSTB provides humane euthanasia services to pet owners who have made the difficult but necessary decision to say good-bye to their beloved pets. Volunteers are not involved in this procedure.

Animal Health Center
In 2014 the HSTB Animal Health Center was awarded the coveted AHAA certification (American Animal Hospital Association). We are the only non-profit in Florida and one of only 1,800 throughout the United States to have this accreditation. The Animal Health Center (AHC) provides low-cost spay/neuter surgeries and affordable, high-quality veterinary services to the public, seven days a week. The clinic averages more than 12,000 sterilization surgeries annually. In addition to keeping pets protected from disease, we also offer microchipping so that lost pets can be returned to their owners. Any proceeds from the AHC benefit the mission and programs of the organization.

There are no income requirements at our clinic. Everyone is welcome!

Trap, Neuter, Vaccinate and Release (TNVR) Program
It is estimated that there are more than 200,000 feral or community cats in Hillsborough County. Through the TNVR program, cats are humanely trapped, spayed or neutered, vaccinated for rabies and distemper, ear-tipped (the universal sign that a feral cat has been sterilized), and returned to their colony where they are fed and monitored by a volunteer caretaker, all at no cost to taxpayers.

Animals
HSTB volunteers deliver free pet food once a month (first Saturday of the month) to homebound and elderly residents of Hillsborough County who are on limited incomes who would otherwise be unable to keep their animal companions.

Pet Food Assistance
HSTB provides free pet food to people who are in financial need to enable them to keep their pets.

Mobile Adoption Center (MAC)
The Humane Society of Tampa Bay has a 32 ft. Winnebago for use as a Mobile Adoption Center. The MAC can take 15-30 adoptable animals out to a select number of events in the community. This is used on a limited basis as most people come to the shelter to adopt.

Pet-A-Pet Program
HSTB volunteers take their own pets to nursing homes, schools, and hospitals as therapy pets. Animals must be up-to-date with their shots and have passed our Safer Test.

Shot Clinics
HSTB holds free shot clinics in disadvantaged neighborhoods to help people keep their pets and their neighborhoods safe.

Children’s Birthday Parties
HSTB hosts birthday parties for children. This is a fun, educational, and interactive party for all the children who attend.

Critter Camp
Each year HSTB offers seven, one week summer camps for kids ages 8-12. Kids have a chance to learn about and play with animals.

Community Outreach
Through exposure in the community, HSTB strives to make people aware of our programs and the needs of animals, responsibilities of pet ownership/guardianship and the issues surrounding animal welfare.

Special Events
The Humane Society of Tampa Bay has many fundraising events and opportunities for the community to help support our programs and have some fun at the same time. Our major events are Bark in the Park (March), Passion for Pets (May) and Tuxes & Tails (Oct).

Money raised from all special events goes toward providing food, shelter, and medical care for the thousands of adoptable animals that are relinquished to us each year.

Policies and Procedures for Volunteers

Role of Volunteers
Volunteers provide HSTB with 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 HSTB staff.

Responsibility and dedication to HSTB
Volunteers must understand and abide by the policies of the Humane Society of Tampa Bay. Volunteers must have a serious concern for animal welfare and be able to support our mission and goals. A volunteer is expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner with the animals, co-workers and the public. Volunteers should present themselves in such a way as to reflect favorably on the Humane Society, consistent with the goals and objectives, policies and procedures.

Guidelines for new volunteers
Before volunteers are accepted into the HSTB volunteer program, volunteers must be able to meet the following guidelines.

• Able to volunteer 30 hours in the first 6 months and adhere to a weekly schedule
• Fluent in English
• Meet the age requirements set in place (16 years or older)
• Have a completed application and release on file
• Attend appropriate orientations, interviews and trainings where necessary

Age requirement
The minimum age for volunteers in all areas of HSTB is 16 years old. The parent or guardian must sign the liability release form for the minor. High School and College students doing their community service for school will be asked to fill service positions (cleaning, laundry, dishes, etc.).

Children under 16 can volunteer with a parent or adult care-taker.
Applications and Emergency Contact Information
All volunteers must have an application on file before they may begin volunteering.

Animeals volunteers will be asked to show proof of a valid Florida driver’s license and current automobile insurance coverage.

Volunteers wishing to assist in our Foster Care program will submit a Foster Application to the Foster Care Coordinator.

Process for new volunteers
All potential volunteers must fill out an application, attend a volunteer orientation and attend a follow-up training session with the Volunteer Manager. On the first day of volunteering, a $5.00 donation will get a new volunteer a t-shirt and name tag. The Volunteer Manager will then place volunteers in area(s) based on the volunteer’s interests and the needs of HSTB. Volunteers that can adhere to a weekly schedule will have preference for shifts and days.

Volunteer Orientation and Training
All new volunteers with HSTB will be asked to attend an orientation. This meeting will allow potential volunteers to see what HSTB does, how they can be involved in our mission and what is expected of our volunteers.

Volunteers wishing to work with the animals may be asked to attend an animal handling class. This training will allow volunteers to become acquainted with the process for handling animals safely, working in the kennels, working with adopters and may include some behavior training elements and any other elements deemed necessary by the staff. Other trainings for adoption assistants, outreach and special events will be offered as needed.

Release of Liability
Volunteers will be required to sign a Volunteer/Photo Release Form. This form releases HSTB from liability of any nature. Volunteers are instructed that they are volunteering at their own risk and that pictures may be taken of them to use for educational or promotional purposes. Parents or legal guardians must include their signature on the minor’s form.

Harassment
HSTB is an equal opportunity non-profit organization. We do not tolerate harassment in any form, including sex, gender, race, color, religion, national origin, disability, age, ethnic background, military service, citizenship or any other characteristic protected by law.

Volunteers who believe they have experienced any form of harassment while serving HSTB should report the incident to the Volunteer Manager immediately.

Placement
Volunteers will be placed in the most suitable volunteer positions after the application review of the Volunteer Manager. Interests, abilities, goals and time constraints will determine where they are placed. On occasion when you are volunteering, you may be asked to fill another position by the Volunteer Manager or other staff member that is needed at the time.

Volunteer Positions and Descriptions
All long-term volunteers for HSTB are provided with a general description of the volunteer areas at the orientation. Before placement, volunteers will be given a detailed position description including; position title, purpose, responsibilities, qualifications, training needed, time commitment and supervisor.

Attire
Appropriate clothes are required for all volunteer positions. For safety reasons, we ask that open-toed shoes or shorts not be worn while working directly with the animals. Volunteers are to wear a volunteer t-shirt and nametag during
their volunteer time so staff and the public can recognize the volunteers. After volunteers complete 30 hours of service within the first 6 months, they will have the opportunity to purchase a permanent name tag.

Hours
In order for volunteers to maintain an active status, they must commit to volunteering a minimum of 30 hours over a 6-month period. Volunteers are required to log their hours for work done at the shelter, Animal Health Center, Animeals, Outreach and Special Events on the computer located outside the Volunteer Manager’s office. Volunteers can either log their time on the volunteer computer at the shelter for time worked or online from the HSTB web site through the Volgistics online software system. You will be given your login information and Volgistics training after you have completed orientation. It is recommended that volunteers schedule themselves ahead of time for shifts using Volgistics.

Supervision
Volunteers work directly under the HSTB supervisor in the area they are working. Volunteers are to report to their supervisor when they arrive and before they leave. It is the role of the supervisor to match the volunteer with an appropriate staff member to provide any extra on the job training that is needed in their area. The Volunteer Manager will place the volunteers into the individual supervisor’s area and schedule their first shift. The supervisor (or staff member selected for this) will then be expected to ensure that they have enough volunteers for any given day or event. The Volunteer Manager can provide extra assistance in this area, if needed. If at any time the supervisor knows of a change in volunteer status, they should provide the Volunteer Manager with this information.

Volunteer Insurance
HSTB cares about our volunteers. Therefore, we provide Volunteer Accident Insurance, free of charge, to our volunteers. Unforeseen accidents and injuries do happen, but everyone can work together with the security of knowing that they are protected, just in case. Volunteers do not need to have their own insurance.

Injuries
Any accident or injury occurring on the job must be reported to the HSTB supervisor 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 filled out as soon as possible. The animal will be placed on a bite quarantine and then assessed on temperament. Being involved in a bite case does not automatically mean the animal will be euthanized.

Changes in Volunteer Status
Volunteers are welcome to change their volunteer areas as long as they inform their supervisors and discuss it with the Volunteer Manager. Volunteers are responsible for informing the Volunteer Manager regarding changes of personal information. Any volunteer wishing to terminate their volunteer status is asked to notify the Volunteer Manager and complete an exit survey.

Volunteer Materials
Volunteers will be given the appropriate materials at orientations, classes and for special events and outreach. This includes but is not limited to handbooks, volunteer brochures, donor brochures, current newsletters, job descriptions and other pertinent information. The Volunteer Training Manual is available on our website www.humanesocietytampa.org or from the Volunteer Manager’s office.

Shifts
We try to use shifts for volunteers depending on the area in which you will be volunteering. We do this in order to ensure we will have the help we need and that all volunteers can be engaged and utilized while at HSTB. Shifts depend on staffing, volunteer availability and are subject to change depending on the day. HSTB asks that all volunteers login upon arrival when volunteering at the shelter or clinic. The Volunteer Manager can request that volunteers change positions to fill vacancies as needed.
**Group Volunteers**
Community groups or corporations interested in volunteering with our organization can contact the Volunteer Manager to see if there are short-term group projects or special events available. We will not be able to accommodate all groups requesting temporary volunteer time. We will take into consideration the size of the group, available special events or projects and the amount of time the group wants to participate. Everyone in the group must be 16 years of age.

**Community Service**
All court ordered community service inquiries should be directed to the Kennel Supervisor. We are not able to provide community service hours for minors wishing to complete court ordered hours (Kennel Supervisor: 813-774-4317).

**Parking**
We ask that volunteers park at Gulf Coast Fabrics at either end of Armenia Ave and Howard Ave.

**Signing In/Out**
You must sign in and out before and after each shift. You will be assigned a pin number on your first day of volunteering. If you are unable to sign in to the computer, please put your hours in the sign in sheet next to the computer and your hours will be entered manually. If you are volunteering outside of the shelter, please log your hours through your home computer.

**Schedules**
Volunteers are asked to schedule their volunteer time. We prefer that volunteers pick one day and a 2-hour time frame that they will volunteer each week.

**Volunteer Appreciation**
All volunteers will be invited to the Volunteer Appreciation Party. Below you will find perks that active volunteers will receive. To be eligible for these perks, you must be an active volunteer who donates a minimum of 100 hours per year. If you are going to use these perks, please see the Volunteer Manager first to get your discount card.
- Adoption fee waived
- Exam fee waived at Animal Health Center

**Volunteer Communication**
The Volunteer Voice is our weekly e-Newsletter that is sent via email to volunteers each week. The newsletter includes:
- Adopted animal list
- Policy updates
- Shelter changes
- Reminders
- Upcoming event
- Volunteer opportunities

Other updates and volunteer requests are sent out during the week according to volunteer needs.

**Training Classes**
To help volunteers feel more comfortable in different areas of the shelter, we offer training throughout the year. Class information will be sent out in the newsletter and you are welcome to sign up for any class that you are interested in.

**Animal Handling**
Keeping animals safe and happy is our top priority. Please recognize your skill and comfort level. Do not handle an animal who you are not thoroughly comfortable with. Watch the reactions of the animal that you are handling. If an animal is not comfortable in a situation, please leave the animal and get assistance or further direction.

**Gold Shirt Volunteers**
Gold shirt volunteers are experienced HSTB volunteers with at least 500 volunteer hours. They are available to answer questions and mentor new volunteers. They often provide guidance to new volunteers on procedures, training and/or protocol.

**General Rules**
Do not ever drag a dog with a slip lead around its neck. Please ask for assistance if you need to carry him. Do not take a dog or cat who seems overly shy or fearful. You are not expected to handle all animals on site: some may need expert handlers. If you get into a situation where you do not feel comfortable, please stop, back away and ask for assistance.

**Protecting Yourself and Animals from Possible Spreading of Disease**
It is critical that you wash your hands or use hand sanitizers after handling each puppy, kitten, or cat. You do not have to sanitize your hands between animals in the free roaming cat rooms.

Diseases can be spread by direct or indirect contact. Some diseases, such as, Panleukopenia and Distemper, are highly contagious and can lead to death. Our goal is to save these animals, therefore, following instructions and using precautionary measures are a priority.

Volunteers are the eyes and ears of the animals. If you see any of the following symptoms, please report on the Concerns Log in the kitchen:
- Eyes that are watery, swollen, or have discharge
- Ears that are red, swollen, or have foul odor
- Nose has discharge
- Animal is sneezing, coughing, or wheezing
- Animal has wounds, lesions, or hair loss
- Constipation or runny/bloody stool
- Animal is vomiting
- Animal is lethargic

If there is an emergency, please report right away to front desk or exam staff.

**Euthanasia**
Humane Euthanasia is provided as necessary to alleviate animal suffering. It is done by injection of Sodium Pentobarbital by certified technicians, as this is the most humane method. Maintaining a balanced attitude toward euthanasia is not easy. Animal shelters find themselves in the double bind of being responsible for humanely sheltering the animals entrusted to them, while sometimes euthanizing the animals for which they have cared, due to illness or change in temperament. HSTB does not euthanize for space, but it is sometimes necessary to euthanize for the safety of the public or to relieve animal suffering. Humane treatment of animals is always our primary objective. Volunteers are not involved in this process. However, if you feel that an animal may be suffering or is dangerous, please bring this to the attention of the front desk.

**Termination**
Volunteers may terminate their volunteer position at any time. Volunteers may also be terminated by the Volunteer Manager or other HSTB management if the volunteer has violated the volunteer policies or is not a good fit for the Humane Society of Tampa Bay. Please advise the Volunteer Manager when terminating your volunteer status and complete an exit survey.
What do we ask of volunteers?

That you:
1. Have a genuine concern for animal care and protection.
2. Enjoy working with animals and people.
3. Attend an orientation and any additional training.
4. Make a commitment to work a minimum of 30 hours over a six-month period and stick to a weekly schedule if possible.
5. Be at least 16 years old.
6. Understand and support our philosophies and policies.
7. Be honest with yourself concerning your needs and wishes.
8. Be an ambassador of the organization wherever you go.

You will receive:
1. A feeling of accomplishment for contributing to the care and protection of animals.
2. A variety of job opportunities.
3. A chance to develop new skills or polish old ones.
4. Training and continuing education programs.
5. The opportunity to work in a recognized and respected humane organization.
6. Support and feedback from a professional staff.
7. Quarterly HSTB newsletters and a weekly volunteer newsletter.
8. An invitation to the Volunteer Appreciation reception and award ceremony.
9. Appreciation from staff for your contribution. Although it may not be said often enough, the staff is sincerely grateful for the time and talent you give through your volunteer activities. We need you!
10. Opportunity to meet people with similar interests and make new friends.
11. Dog kisses, puppy breath, purring and the secret handshake!
Volunteer Positions

Administrative Assistant
Help the office with letters, phone calls and small projects.

Adoption Assistant
Assist the adoption office with visitation between prospective adopters and animals. Protect the animals and people during the visit and alert adoption staff to any potential problems. This position is crucial to helping HSTB adopt out more animals. When there are no visits to be conducted, volunteers may socialize the animals. Volunteers must have 15 hours of experience and will need to first shadow another staff or volunteer.

Animal Companion
Help animals become more adoptable and help to reduce shelter stress by providing exercise, relaxation and playtime for animals in our care. Volunteers must first shadow a mentor for 3-4 hours.

Animals
Once a month deliver pet food to elderly and homebound citizens so that they can keep their pets. *Florida driver's license and liability insurance required*

Food Assistance
Help people who come in to the shelter who need food to keep their pets in their home. Food Assistance table is open during regular shelter hours. Bilingual is a plus.

Foster Program
In home care for cats/kittens or dogs/puppies in your home who are not ready for adoption due to age or health. This position helps HSTB to save more lives. Volunteers must fill out a foster care application. Foster care coordinator will contact you when appropriate animal(s) come in to the shelter.

Kennel Assistant
Assist kennel staff in the care of animals and help maintain sanitary conditions (cleaning cages, washing bowls, sweeping floors, laundry, feeding animals, etc.). Animals are much happier and more presentable when they are in clean cages. Volunteers will first shadow a mentor to learn appropriate cleaning procedures.

Mobile Adoption Center (MAC)
Assist our shelter on wheels as we take animals for adoption out to various events in the community. Help maintain sanitary conditions (cleaning cages, washing bowls, etc.), includes adoption assistant duties. The MAC is used on a limited basis.

Outreach Ambassador
Distribute information and literature, at local community events, about the Humane Society of Tampa Bay programs and services. This position helps us to reach more people in the community. It increases our donations as well as to educate the public about animals. Adoptables will go to certain events.

Animal Health Center
Preparing surgical packs, cleaning, filing, greeting clients and helping staff prepare items for surgeries and procedures.

Special Events
Assist with the planning and production of special events and fundraising projects.
**TNVR Volunteer**
Go into the field with our TNVR (Trap, Neuter, Vaccinate, and Release) Manager to trap and transport feral cats for spay/neuter at our clinic. We also need drivers to return “community cats” to the location where they were trapped. Additional opportunities are to assist in the staging of and preparing feral cats for surgery on Mondays at the Animal Health Center.

**Animal Intake**
Preparing surgical packs, help cleaning, filing, and moving animals from Animal Intake to shelter.

**Pet-A-Pet**
Volunteers take their own pets to assisted living facilities and retirement homes.

**Children’s Program**
Volunteers assist with birthday parties, Critter Camp, and help give children’s tours