



Volunteer Handbook

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Organization Information & Hours

Executive Director: Gary McIntyre
Phone: 304-422-5441*
Email: executivedirector@hsop.org

Humane Society of Parkersburg (Shelter)

Shelter Manager: Justina Morris
Phone: 304-422-5541
Email: manager@hsop.org

Address: Humane Society of Parkersburg
P.O. Box 392
Parkersburg, WV 26101

Phone: 304-422-5541
Fax: 304-485-4261
Website: www.hsop.org

Business Hours: Monday–Friday: 10:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Saturday: 10:30 a.m. to 4:00
Sunday: CLOSED

SPOT Clinic (Low Cost Spay/Neuter Clinic)

Phone: 304-917-4275
Email: clinicmanager@hsop.org

Address: The SPOT Clinic
506 29th Street
Parkersburg WV 26101

Phone: 304-917-4275
Fax: 304-917-4279
Website: www.hsop.org

Business Hours: Tuesday & Thursday: 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

***For after-hours shelter emergencies to reach management call 304-422-5541 and select option “9” as soon as the message begins playing. This will ring the shelter personnel on after hours call.**

Contacts

Volunteer Coordinator:	Lori Elliott – lorijanehsop@gmail.com – 304-615-1138
Nursing Home Liaison:	Lori Elliott – lorijanehsop@gmail.com – 304-615-1138
Foster Care Coordinator:	Debbie Hines – debhines@cascable.net – 304-482-0330
Rescue Coordinator:	Debbie Hines – debhines@cascable.net – 304-482-0330
Cat Handling Instructor:	Rose Wilson – roselmcdowell@yahoo.com
Evening Walk Leaders:	Lee Buckingham (Friday, Saturday & Sunday) lee.buckingham@cascable.net – 304-488-6217 Lori Elliott (Monday) lorijanehsop@gmail.com – 304-615-1138 Pam Romine (Tuesday) Blakesmom16@hotmail.com – 304-488-0472 Lori Elliott (Wednesday) lorijanehsop@gmail.com – 304-615-1138 Samantha Tannous (Thursday) sptannous@gmail.com – 304-482-9208

Opportunities

There are many ways to be of service to the homeless animals in our community at the Humane Society of Parkesburg. While some volunteer jobs involve the animals themselves, there are many other ways too.

Inside the shelter

- Socializing with the dogs and cats in our shelter
- Helping with shelter maintenance and cleaning
- Office work
- Serving as a summer camp counselor
- Helping keep our grounds attractive
- Assisting with events and fundraisers in our shelter – such as special adoption events, open houses, camp, shelter events like Pet Photos with Santa, etc.
- Helping with laundry

Outside the shelter

- Working at fundraising events that happen outside the shelter – such as Walk Your Paws, the Tailwaggin' Tailgate Party, Bingo events, adoption events at other locations
- Fostering animals in your home
- Gathering auction or raffle items for fundraising events
- Taking animals to events outside the shelter – such as school carnivals, safety fairs, animal related events in our community, etc.
- Taking pets to nursing homes
- Driving animals to other shelters or rescue organization or even to adoptive homes in other cities/states
- Advertising events or selling tickets to our events
- Making food items or baked goods for events such as Bingo
- Seniors for Seniors pet program – helping senior adopters with their pets – driving them to vet appts., delivering supplies, fostering their pets when unable

What We Do

It is important regardless of whether you are a volunteer who handles our animals in and about the shelter or a volunteer who chooses to support the animals through helping with events, helping care for our facilities and grounds or baking cookies for a fundraiser. In all cases, you are a representative of our organization and as such it's important that you understand about our mission, our values and our challenges are. Before becoming a volunteer, you should be sure that you understand these and are able to support them.

Our mission:

- Provide shelter, rehabilitation, and adoption for homeless animals
- Prevent cruelty, neglect and abuse
- Promote responsible pet ownership
- Inspire compassion and respect through education
- Reduce pet overpopulation by providing affordable spay/neuter services and targeted wellness services

A few important concepts that you should be aware follow.

ANIMAL CONTROL

The animal control services we provide -- investigating cruelty and neglect, picking up unlicensed dogs, picking up vicious or injured animals, etc. are done under the direction of a contract with Wood County and are fundamentally controlled by West Virginia State Code. What that means, is that our Officers can only do what is stipulated and/or allowed under that contract and pursuant to the State Code.

Animal control services is often one of the most challenging aspects of what we do. In large part because of what our Officer cannot do. Especially when people want our Officers to pick up a stray cat (not in the contract) or pick up a stray dog late at night, which is outside the contracted service hours for collecting strays. The Officers do provide 24x7 support of emergencies, but such are vicious and injured stray animals or helping law enforcement with emergencies that involve animals.

OPEN ADMISSION SHELTER and EUTHANASIA

Another concept that we want you to be aware of is the fact that as an open-admission shelter, one that does not turn animals away because of breed, age, adoptability, health or space in our shelter, it does mean that our Staff does have to euthanize animals when necessary. We are not a no-kill shelter. While it certainly is our aim and hope that we can place every adoptable animal and work very diligently to do just that, euthanasia is a part of our world.

As volunteers, you will never be asked to be involved in such activity BUT likewise we ask that you respect the incredible challenge this is to our staff and not ask questions, try to intercede or express your discontent regarding such activity when it does occur in the presence of our staff. It is the most difficult task they much perform in this job and we ask that our volunteers to sensitive to that. If you do not feel you can support this concept, we ask that you do not volunteer in our shelter.

Representing the HSOP

Volunteers are an integral part of the Humane Society of Parkersburg. They are vital in so many ways to the success of our organization and our ability to provide the best possible care for the homeless animals that find their way to our shelter. Whether volunteering inside or outside the shelter, you are a representative of our organization and as such, it is essential that just like our staff, management and Board, you too observe the same expectations to ensure that the Humane Society is represented accurately and positively. We expect that as a volunteer you will:

- Represent us in a positive and professional manner.
- Be courteous and accurate in representing our organization.
- Recognize that just like our staff and Board, how you act and what you say could affect whether or not animals are adopted, whether or not donations are made, and whether or not the public views our shelter in a positive or negative light.
- Realize that misrepresentation and misinformation can be very damaging and as such, communicate accurately our values, policies and procedures.
- Refer questions or issues that you are not prepared to resolve to a staff member, management or a Board Member.
- Understand that using your position as a volunteer as a threat or in a manner that is inaccurate or unbecoming to our organization will not be tolerated.

How We Communicate

There are several ways that we will communicate with our volunteers what is going on around and about the shelter. Our website is always a way to learn more about what we do and what is happening but remember it provides information available to the general public and may not contain all information pertinent to volunteers. Please watch for emails and Facebook posts on our HSOP Group page for upcoming events, areas where we need help, etc.

The primary ways that we communicate with our volunteers include:

- **Email everyone:** As events approach or special needs occur, we will normally reach out to our volunteer base via a broadcast email to the entire group letting you know of a need for your help. Please watch for our emails and make sure your spam filter is allowing them to come through. These messages will normally come from ourhsop@hsop.org.
- **Contact a specific person:** If there is a specific need that we know aligns with a skill or only one or two people are needed to fill a need, we will commonly reach out directly to those who we know can and will help. For instance, if you're an electrician and we need electrical help, we will come directly to you rather than a broad message sent to all. This contact may come by email or phone and may be from our volunteer coordinator OR depending on the need, you may hear from our Executive Director or the manager of the shelter or Clinic.
- **HSOP Facebook group:** The group page is used daily to share happenings in and about the shelter and always includes the daily posting of our evening walk hours by the Walk Leader.
- **Twitter:** Evening walking hours are available by following [ElleBuckingham@twitter.com](https://twitter.com/ElleBuckingham) on Twitter.
- **Volunteer Bulletin Board:** For those that are in the shelter, we sometimes will use the Volunteer Board at the Volunteer Desk go inform you of news and needs specific volunteering in the shelter.

Volunteering in the Shelter

General Guidance

Hours for volunteers:

- Monday thru Friday – 10:30 to 5:00 (normal business hours)
- Saturday– 10:30 to 4:00 (normal business hours)
- Sunday (and observed holidays) – 12:30 to 3:00 (Shelter is closed but open for volunteers)
- After hours dog walking – Hour depends on the evening hours scheduled by the volunteer Walk Leader but usually are between 5:30 and 7p.m.

Parking: During Shelter and Clinic business hours park as far away from the front door of those buildings as possible to as to not interview with customer parking. In the evenings you may park anywhere convenient to you.

Sign in: ALWAYS sign in and sign out at volunteer desk

Lanyards: ALWAYS wear your lanyard so that the staff and public recognize you are a trained volunteer. We also recommend you wear a Volunteer t-shirt to stand out even more and help people recognize you are a volunteer and not an employee. Lanyards are sold for \$1 during orientation or at the Intake Desk of the shelter during normal business hours.

Dress code:

- We recommend long pants and clothes you don't mind getting ruined or dirty.
- Wear non-skid shoes to avoid slips and falls. Absolutely no sandals or flipflops. The floors are often wet from mopping and slippery.
- If you have very young, very young or animals with health problem, we would recommend that you change your clothes AND of course wash your hands before handling your own pets. Those with compromised immune systems may be sensitive to some of the germs picked up on your "shelter clothes".

Injuries: If you receive an injury of ANY type, no matter how minor, please notify the staff, ask for help and/or the first aid kit and treat the injury. Cleaning out scratches and/or bites as soon as possible is extremely important.

Signage in shelter:

Please take notice of the signage in and about the shelter that provides instructions and warnings.

- Such as reminders about washing your hands, doors that may be entered or not, Contagious or Not Available to be Handled signs on cages.
- Everyone must adhere to all medical, dietary or other instructions placed on cages and kennel doors.
- If a cage is covered, do not disturb the animal. Do not lift the cover and look at the animal. The cover is there for a reason.

Handwashing: Handwashing is VERY important to limit the spread of germs between animals. Dry wash and regular sinks and soap is available.

Following signs, safety procedures and animal handling procedures are important because not doing so can result in:

- You putting animals at risk of illness and injury
- You putting yourself at risk of being injured
- Risking the loss of your privileges as a volunteer

Remember that your top priority while working with or handling an animal in our shelter, is THAT animal! To ensure the safety of the animals, the visiting public and yourself, this is a must.

General Animal Handling

- Volunteers should generally not feed the animals (with the exception of a few treats for the dogs) unless otherwise instructed by the Staff. Please do not refill food bowls or overfeed treats to the dogs. You may refill empty water bowls if you find them.
- Cats should not be fed treats at all as they can cause some cats stomach problems AND the staff actually uses treats as a means to socialize scared cats. Overfeeding of treats can make these efforts more difficult, so we ask that you do not give treats to the cats when you visit with them.
- Also, in general, the staff is responsible for cleaning cages and kennels.
 - In order to minimize the spread of disease, we do not use litter scoops. But rather use plastic gloves that are thrown out between every box to remove dirty litter from the boxes.
 - If the box is very dirty and the litter is older, we will empty the entire litter pan into the trash.
 - If you choose to clean out a litter box make sure you are disposing of dirty litter in correct trash can to reduce the odors in the shelter.
- Never hit, strike, yell at or roughly handle any of our animals.
- Read the animals cage cards on the front of their cage before opening their door and add positive notes about the animal when learned. Be honest and write legibly.
- Pay attention to the cage you remove an animal from so that you can make sure and return the animal to their cage or kennel.
- If you have someone accompanying you while you're handling our animals, the animal must be your top priority and cannot be handled by any untrained guests.

Cat Handling Basics

- Cats that are plainly sick, on medication or have a red mark on the board (designating them as sick) should not be handled at all! DO NOT touch the bars of the cages of these cats as it is highly likely they are harboring germs as well. See more information below about safe handling.
- Again, no treats for cats or canned food.
- You can fill water bowls if they are low or empty.
- Be careful when opening cages. Cats will sometimes jump out or fall out. Also ensure cage is properly latched when you close the door.
- Don't put cats on the floor.
- Be calm and relaxed when handling the cats, speaking softly. Volunteers with small children – please supervise your children closely and ensure they are paying attention to this policy closely. High pitched voices can sometimes frighten the cats especially.
- Note the cat's behavior. If the cat seems frightened or nervous, don't pick it up. If this happens while you are holding the cat, calmly return it to its cage as quickly as possible. Never force a cat out of their cage.
- ALWAYS read the notes on the cage and the cage card and follow their guidance. If a cage is covered, do not disturb the animal. Do not lift the cover and look at the animal. The cover is there for a reason.
- Do not let cats from different cages interact or touch each other. This can spread germs and disease.
- If you notice that the cat is sneezing, has runny eyes, fleas, is scratching or appears ill, please inform a staff member immediately or leave a note on the cage.

The spread of disease with cats is affected substantially by handling by people, we have some very specific and strict procedures about how they are to be handled. Please read below.

1. Cats in the lobby should be visited with first (before those in the back cat room) as they are healthy and should not be exposed to the rest of the cat population.
2. For kittens (in different cages) less than 12 weeks of age, we ask that you not touch or handle them as they have a weaker immune system. If you feel they need extra attention, please speak to the staff to make arrangements.
3. When handling cats you are asked to either change your shirt or also wear a gown between every cat that you hold to limit the potential spread of germs on your clothing. If you are just petting the cat in their cages, which most would prefer over being held, you do not need to wear a gown or change your shirt. Just ensure you wash your hands between each cat. Hand sanitizer is provided at both ends of the cat aisle for your convenience.
4. In general, it is suggested that you choose one or two cats to hold during your visits to again limit the potential spread of disease.

Do's and Don'ts of Cat Handling

DO:

- Read cage cards and add positive notes
- Sanitize/wash hands before & after each cat
- Be careful when opening cages, cats may jump
- Minimize # of cats you hold, change shirts in between
- Reach out to other volunteers –Buddy Up
- Wear short sleeve shirts to minimize spreading of germs
- Refill water and clean litter box if needed
- Post pictures and positive notes about the cats on Facebook
- Be calm and relaxed - speak softly
- Check latches when shutting doors

Don't:

- Handle sick cats (make a note for staff)
- Place cats on the floor
- Handle covered cats – may be sick or scared
- Don't feed – some may have special food or are being altered the next day
- Handle more than one cat at a time unless they are in the same cage
- Attempt to pick up a cat that appears frightened or nervous
- Post negatives about the cats on Facebook

Dog Handling Basics

- Dogs marked with No Volunteers or Not Available cannot be handled by volunteers.
- Dogs under 6 months of age are not to be taken out by volunteers.
- Dogs over 6 months but only have one DHLPP vaccination is considered Black Zone dogs (see volunteer boards) and cannot be taken onto the grass or into play yards.
- Dogs over 6 months that have two (2) DHLPP vaccinations are considered Green Zone dogs and may go on the grass and in the play yards.
- One dog in a yard at a time only unless they are living together.
- All dogs must be securely restrained at all times when outside of their kennel or a play yard.
- Slip leashes are NEVER left on a dog in a cage or kennel. And never left on a dog in a play yard unattended.
- If you ever have trouble removing a leash, please ask a Staff member or Walk Leader for assistance.
- Please clean up after your dog.
- Please be sure to read the Dog Volunteer Boards to see what dogs may go outside and where they can walk (grass or concrete). Also mark the Dog Volunteer Boards with the time you took them out and whether or not they went 1 or 2.
- Again, please be sure that you return the dog you have taken out to its proper kennel or cage.

Do's and Don'ts with the Dogs

Some guidelines to follow at HSOP when handling and working with our dogs:

DO's

- Refer to the Volunteer Dog Walking Boards.
- Choose dogs to walk that you are comfortable handling by yourself.
- Pay attention to the Level Designation on the Volunteer Walk Boards for each dog.
 - **Green** = Easy to walk, no pulling, no jumping, and generally good for all volunteers
 - **Blue** = Average dog, may pull a little, or jump up. May be too strong for some volunteers.
 - **Red** = Experienced volunteers only. May be very strong or have issues requiring special care.
- Take responsibility for your dog and pay close to the dog you are walking. (Turn off your cell phone)
- Read the dog's cage card and volunteer board before taking a new dog out.
- Let the dog smell you through the cage before opening the door. Remember that direct eye contact can intimidate some dogs; avoid direct eye contact and this includes the small dogs in the upper cages. Such eye contact can cause some dogs to act out.
- Ask the Staff or Walk Leader for help or advice when needed.
- Open the door and lasso the dog as they exit the kennel or slip the leash over the dog's head while they are still in the kennel, from outside the door.
- Put only one dog at a time in a play yard, unless exercising dogs that are kenneled together.
- Cleanup after your dog. Dispose of stool in proper containers.
- Return the dog to the same cage.

DON'Ts

- Walk a dog that you don't feel very comfortable with
- Force a dog to come out of their cage if they are afraid or cowering in a corner.
- Go inside the kennel and shut the door behind you with a strange dog.
- Allow dogs to approach other animals.
- Allow dogs to approach other people UNLESS invited
- Open a door or enter an area without having a good hold on your dog.
- Scold, yell or strike any dog.
- Roughhouse with shelter dogs while playing with them.

Dog Handling Benefits

Philosophy

No matter what you choose to do with your time with our dogs -- playing, walking or just hanging out -- all will benefit from the one-on-one interaction. Just getting out for a short walk or play time can make a huge difference to them. Don't underestimate how you can help our dogs.

Three Benefits to Dog Walking

- Exercise and one-on-one time away from noise and chaos of the Shelter
- Helps us to learn more about our dog
- Helps our dogs to learn from us

Exercise and One-on-one Time

Even a short break from the boredom of their kennel can really be beneficial to a shelter dog. A little fresh air, exercise and play can help to keep our dogs happy and healthy. Below are just a few things that you can do in just a few minutes that our dogs would love.

1. Hanging out in the lobby with the dog. Petting, brushing or just observing the dog in that area.
2. Sitting outside on a bench visiting with the dog.
3. Playing in the play yard.
4. Walking down the driveway and around the shelter area.

Helping Us Learn About the Dog

There's more to walking a dog than just the walking. You can also help us learn more about the animal that might help us find it the best home possible. From your first meeting at the kennel, to a walk through the lobby, in the play yard and on a walk -- each provides you with opportunities to learn about the dog you are spending time with.

At the kennel

- Is the dog friendly, shy, scared or aggressive at the kennel with you as a stranger upon first meeting?
- Are they barking at people walking by or other dogs?
- Do they sit quietly or jump on you when putting the leash on?
- Are they chewing their toys or bed?

Walking through the kennel

- How do they walk on the leash? Pulling or walk with a slack leash.
- Are they scared of the floor?
- Are they friendly to the other dogs in their kennels?
- Are they barking, lunging or growling at other dogs as you walk?

Lobby

- How did they react to being outside the kennel area? Excited or calm?
- How did they react when walking by cat cages in lobby? Interested, ignore, sniffed, lunged or barked at the cats?
- How did they react to people/strangers in the lobby area? Scared, excited, friendly, calm, ignored?
- How did they react to other dogs in the lobby area?

In the play yard

- Did the dog go to the bathroom soon after arriving in yard?
- Do they appear playful and healthy when off leash or when running?
- Did they play ball or play with the toys in the yard?
- Did they come when called when off leash?
- Did they jump on you or run into you during play?
- How did they respond to brushing or your touch? Any areas on their bodies that they were sensitive about?

On the walk

- How were they on leash? Pulling or relaxed
- Did you have to encourage them to walk?
- Did they jump on you while on leash?
- Did they know how to sit or laydown?
- Did they try and chase any passing cars?

As you can see from just this list of things, there are many opportunities for you to witness and learn about how the dog is doing, what they know, what they respond to, etc. that can be very valuable in not only caring for this animal during their stay in the shelter, but also in helping to place them in the best home.

Helping the Dog Learn

Many dogs end up in the shelter simply because they didn't get proper training and/or discipline and their owners decided it was easier to just get rid of the dog, rather than expend the effort to train them. These problems can be corrected with a little patience, time and effort. You can help us help them get the training they need.

Two of the biggest problems we see is poor leash manners and rough play – specifically, jumping. Rehabilitating these dogs is not difficult if done properly and consistently. Additionally, dogs that know how to walk properly, sit on command, come when called and make eye contact with you, make a good first impression with potential adopters.

Jumping up

Why we don't want to encourage this behavior:

- Bad first impression for potential adopter
- Scares some people and small children
- Gets you dirty, scratched or knocked down
- Promotes dominant behavior in some dogs

What to do about it

- Ignore them and/or turn away so they fall to the ground. Along with this, totally ignore them when they are jumping, even going so far as to turn your head away from them. Don't say anything to them or touch them. You may try turning away or step away so that they fall to the ground and feel ignored.
- Remember, don't pet them, speak nicely to them or hug them when they jump up – that only encourages the behavior. Only when they sit or stand quietly by you should they get pets and praise.

Leash pulling

Why we don't want to encourage this behavior:

- One of the first impressions potential adopters get is leading the dog from the kennel to the outside – being pulled across the parking lot is not a good first impression
- Dangerous to the person being pulled as it could injure them or pull you down
- Dangerous for the dog – bad for neck
- Also dangerous as the dog could get away from the handler and get hit by a car or escape.

What to do about it

- Stop and stand still, not allowing dog to go anywhere until they stop pulling. The moment they are calm and quiet on the leash, take a few steps forward. If they begin to pull again, stop and start over, until they stop pulling again. Be prepared to be patient. It will get better over time but takes consistent reinforcement for this to work.

OR

- Quick and firm jerk on the leash and then soften. You can accompany this with a firm “No Pulling” which may get their attention focused on you rather on whatever they are pulling towards. Use the jerk and release repeatedly until the dog responds to you and puts some slack in the leash.

DO NOT let the dog pull constantly on the leash. This constant pulling is not good for the dog nor does it do anything to discourage this behavior. A jerk and release will do much more to distract them from pulling and teach them how to walk well on the leash.