

THANK YOU FOR VOLUNTEERING TO HELP OUR SHELTER CATS!



CAT TLC VOLUNTEER TRAINING GUIDE

*We're the
"open-door"
shelter
serving our
community's
neediest
animals!*



Santa Cruz Shelter Hours

We are staffed 365 days per year.

PUBLIC HOURS

Sunday – Saturday 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

VOLUNTEER HOURS

Sunday – Saturday 7 a.m. to 6 p.m.

NOTE: Volunteers MUST leave by closing time!

Parking & Access

Volunteers, please park toward the far side of the front lot or on the street. During events, please use street parking, if possible. When the shelter is closed to the public, gain access through the front side entrance or the gate into the kennel area via the touchpad code. Your mentor will provide instruction on shelter access during non-public hours.

Attire & Supplies

ATTIRE: Long pants, closed-toe shoes, **shirt with sleeves** – no exposed shoulders, backs or midribs. Clothing rule is for your safety when working with the animals.

SUPPLIES: Volunteer apron, name badge, pen, watch or phone (for knowing time of day only). A small note pad or piece of paper is also helpful.

Using your cell phone while spending time with the animals is highly discouraged and defeats the purpose of being here. It's also unsafe, as you're not paying attention to what is going on with the animal you have out. If you have to make or receive a call, do so when you are not with an animal.

Interacting with the Public

Remember the power of "I don't know!" As a volunteer, you are not as knowledgeable about the animals, or the potential adopters, as the staff is. If you get a question about a specific animal, please refer the person to client services or a staff member. It's always better to say "I don't know" or "let me find out for you," rather than give incorrect information. If a member of the public asks to see or spend time with an animal that you have out, direct them to Client Services and let them know the process for filling out an application prior to visiting with any animal.

Volgistics Volunteer System: Tracking & Scheduling

We would like to emphasize that all new TLC volunteers should commit to a regular weekly 2-hour shift when they begin. Using the Volgistics system to sign up for your shifts is very helpful to other volunteers and lets us know when volunteers can be expected. Coming in on a regular day and time is preferred, and a regular weekly shift will benefit new volunteers by making your volunteering a habit from the start.

You'll get to know other volunteers and staff much more quickly. Check the schedule posted outside of the volunteer coordinator's office. If you see holes in the schedule where you can help, use the sign-in monitor to schedule a shift. In addition, volunteers are always welcome to drop in when you have some extra time. The Volgistics handout will help you get started. You can also find the guide to using Volgistics at www.scanimalshelter.org/volunteer_documents.

Preparing For Your Shift

1. Clock into the Volgistics computer outside the volunteer coordinator's office using your PIN number, which will be assigned when you complete your Cat TLC training.
2. Check whiteboard in hallway for current medical information on the animals. This is the central location for noting non-urgent health observations for the Animal Care Staff. If you feel something is urgent or have concerns about behavior, please talk to a staff member.

Accidents, Injuries, Dangerous Behavior

If at any time while you are volunteering you are involved in an accident for which you will likely seek medical care, such as a fall resulting in an injury, you must fill out an accident form.

Always report a bite – whether accidental or not. If you are bitten by an animal and your skin is broken by the animal's teeth, you must fill out a bite report and report it to a staff member.

Ask the volunteer coordinator or a staff member for help with medical care and forms.

Wounds should be cleaned and dressed. A first aid kit is located in the volunteer coordinator's office.

If an animal is exhibiting behavior that you believe could lead to injury to you or the animal, immediately notify a staff member to discuss or evaluate the situation. This would include an animal putting its mouth on you in a way you feel is questionable.

Always Use Common Sense

Be aware, be prepared, be calm. Be kind to the animals.

Follow the rules to ensure safety of the animals, volunteers, staff members and the public.

Animal Care Staff

Animal Care staff are responsible for the health and well being of all of the animals in the shelter.

Andrea Jordan, Animal Care Supervisor – Office is located at the back of the Stray Dog kennels.

Sarah Goldberg, Animal Care Supervisor – Office is located next to the lockers.

Client Services and other Shelter Staff

Additional Shelter staff include Client Services (whose main focus is interacting with the public), shelter management (who keep the shelter's business side running), and many others whose pictures can be found on the photo board across from the break room

Linda Puzziferro, Client Services Supervisor – Located at Client Services desk (in the lobby)

Erin Conway, Volunteer Coordinator – Office is located by the volunteer check-in station, across from the lockers

Questions

For volunteer questions or an invitation to the Cat Volunteers Yahoo group, contact Erin Conway, Volunteer Program Coordinator. Contact information: erin.conway@santacruzcounty.us or 831-454-7202.

For more information on the animal shelter and the volunteer program, get to know our website. Lots of additional information can be found at www.scanimalshelter.org and www.scanimalshelter.org/volunteer_documents.

For additional training opportunities and events, go to the Events and Training section of our website: http://www.scanimalshelter.org/upcoming_events

Thank you for volunteering with the Santa Cruz County Animal Shelter!

EXPLORING THE SHELTER

Adoptable Cat Room and Get Acquainted Rooms (GARs)

- The Get Acquainted Rooms (GARs) are for cat TLC and for cat shows to potential adopters. One GAR may be marked for cats with Upper Respiratory Infections (URI).
- The GAR next to the Rabbit Room can be used for cat or rabbit TLC. If needed for a rabbit show, this takes priority over cat TLC.
- Non-contagious cats can be brought to non-URI GARs for TLC. Volunteers may use clean combs, toys, treats.
- **After using a GAR, straighten up the room and remove combs, brushes, uneaten treats, etc.**
- URI cats: Contagious cats with URI can only have TLC in the first GAR labeled "URI only." URI protocol is to use an orange apron over, or in place of, your volunteer apron. Toys in the GAR should be washed daily, as well as rugs and towels. Use a clean towel on your lap between cats to avoid spreading contagious germs.
- TLC with URI cats **MUST** be at the end of your shift to reduce the risk of spreading germs among the healthy cats.
- When giving cats TLC in the GARs, 15 minutes is the minimum time for TLC with the individual cat. 20-30 minutes is ideal, especially if the cat has not

been out for over a day, is an older cat, or is a cat that has been at the shelter for a while.

- Never leave the cat alone in a GAR when the shelter is open to the public. There is a risk that someone could let the cat out, and the public should not be interacting with the cats before filling out an adoption application.
- **DO NOT** take healthy cats into a GAR marked "URI Only."

Catnip is NEVER ALLOWED for use with the cats in the shelter!

Lost and Found/Strays Cat Room

- Off limits to volunteers unless asked by staff to assist in finding lost cats.
- Exception: When the shelter is at capacity, there will be adoptable cats in the Lost & Found Cat Room.

If there is a sign on the door that says "Adoptable Cats", you may take out cats for TLC from kennels **but only those that have a Green Sign that says "I Am Adoptable"** on their kennel

- If a kennel in this room does not have an "I Am Adoptable" sign, **STOP!** Do not interact with these cats. Do not give TLC or visit with any animals not listed as adoptable. Only staff and approved volunteers may interact with these cats.

Cat Isolation Room & “Ferals” Room

- Cats in these rooms are off limits to volunteers unless directed by Staff member. If asked by Staff to check for **lost animals**, first ask what the cat looks like, how long they have been missing, then step inside to see if any cats match the description before bringing the public in. Use quiet voices inside, and ask public not to touch kennels or animals.

Cat Station

- There are two white boards located by the Cat Station. The CAT TLC **behavior white board** is for reporting behavior information on a cat. If you see a cat's behavior changing – for better or worse – write it on the behavior whiteboard.

The CAT TLC **information white board** is for comments and/or requests, and meant to answer any common, and not so common, questions that volunteers may have. Example – What happened to kitty in F09? Answer: Kitty got adopted, went to foster, rescue, euthanized, etc. Animal Care Staff will also use this board for reminders on guidelines, notes, requests for volunteers, etc. If the answer warrants a more involved explanation, a supervisor will request you come find them. If you prefer to ask a supervisor or member of the staff directly, feel free to do so. This board is meant to facilitate communication between volunteers and staff, not to prevent it from happening.

THIS IS NOT A MEDICAL BOARD (SEE HALLWAY WHITE BOARD WHEN STARTING SHIFT)

- Location for toys, grooming tools, TLC cards.
- There are two notebooks on the counter, or in the cabinet, which volunteers can access for additional info. One is for writing notes on behavior of individual cats. The second has written protocols for prepping the GARs for overnight use by the cats, Catio use, and other procedures.

Laundry Area & Dishwashing Area

- Large **green bin** outside laundry area for soiled or wet towels & blankets.
- Replace wet or soiled items from kennel with towels or blankets from inside laundry area.

Food bowls and Litter boxes

- **Cats are fed by Staff only.**
- Check to see if cats/kittens have water.
- Volunteers are not to clean litter boxes unless requested by staff. Diseases are easily transmitted in this environment.

Clinic

- Volunteers do not enter the clinic unless explicitly asked to do so by shelter staff.

Dog kennels

- Cat volunteers should not interact with dogs in the shelter unless they have been cross-trained to work with dogs, but it may be necessary to walk through this area to get to Andrea Jordan's office.

Lobby/Hallway

- When the Cat Rooms are full, cat kennels will be placed in the lobby and hallway for overflow kittens/cats. These kittens/cats can be given TLC and procedures are the same as the Adoptable Cat Room.
- Information about volunteer opportunities, adoption prices and applications, and various shelter programs can be found on the Information Table in the shelter lobby.

CAT TLC PROCEDURES

Read Before Taking A Cat For TLC

Kennel Signage: Pay attention to kennel signage. Kennel cards inform you of name, age, gender, intake date, spayed/neutered, stray/owner surrender. Follow kennel signs when interacting with cats.

Medical Notes: If a medical note is on the kennel, read and follow any instructions per note.

Behavior white board: Check to see if shelter staff or other volunteers have written notes about the cat.

Yellow TLC Cards: The yellow TLC cards on each kennel are used for letting other volunteers and staff know when the cat was last given attention. Date and time, initials of volunteer, and comments on that cat helps ensure that all cats get TLC during the day. Extra cards can be found in the 2nd drawer by the cat station. Keep comments positive as the public will see them.

Cat Kennels

- Kennels in the Adoptable Cat Room may have 3, 6, 9 or 12 compartments, depending on the removable panels. It is important for volunteers to be aware of how many compartments are occupied, and how many cats are in each kennel so that additional cats will not get loose.
- Kennels in the hallway may have 2 or 4 compartments. Make sure to look for the arrows when kittens/cats are returned and make sure they are being put back into the correct kennel.
- Push buttons on kennel doors in to lock them.
- Explain to members of the public they must not play with panel sliders, because cats can be harmed. Open sliders can allow cats to run into the next kennel. If a cat does get into the next kennel, or escapes from you, immediately ask a staff member for help.

Interacting With Shelter Cats

The shelter can be a very stressful and frustrating place for most cats. Positive interactions can greatly help reduce their stress, and paying attention to the needs of the individual cat will help.

You can assist the Animal Care staff by reporting anything out of the ordinary, such as vomiting,

diarrhea, coughing/sneezing, lethargy, and noting your observations on the medical white board in the hallway. For concerns about behavior, use the white board by the cat station. For urgent issues about behavior or health, talk to an Animal Care staff member.

- All cats in the Adoptable Cat Room are adoptable and can be given TLC (unless there is a sign on their kennel saying "no TLC today" or other restrictions).
- When deciding which cat to take out first, start with cats that have been in their kennels the longest. If a cat hides, is resisting or sleeping, don't take this cat out. Some cats are shy and may need to be given TLC in their kennel. Whether you take a cat to a GAR or give In-Kennel TLC, mark the yellow TLC card with appropriate comments such as "playful" or "lap cat," your initials, and the time you completed your TLC session with the cat.
- If you are uncomfortable with a cat, move on to another one. Do not interact with any animal that is behaving in a strange way or that you are unsure of or uncomfortable with.
- To pick up a cat, turn the cat away from you, put one hand underneath the cat (**football hold**), and one hand on the back of the neck. Don't "scruff" the cat, just hold your hand there in case you need an extra grip. Keep the cat facing away from you so that you don't get scratched.
- If the cat displays behavior such as ears back, tail wagging, and/or hissing, the cat may be over-stimulated, or not want to return to his/her kennel. Let the cat calm down before returning him/her to the kennel. Stay nearby to keep others from entering the GAR. If you have trouble returning the cat to its kennel, ask an experienced volunteer or Animal Care staff member to help you.
- When returning the cat to its kennel, let the cat step into the kennel. Don't leave your hands inside the kennel, as this may feel threatening to the cat causing it to bite or scratch.

- Volunteers can do in-kennel TLC with the cats if GARs are occupied. Mark the yellow TLC cards with "Kennel TLC" or "KTLC" if unable to use a GAR. Do not hold the cat in front of the kennel or carry it around while giving Kennel TLC.
- Do not kiss/nuzzle the cat, or let the cat get close to your face and eyes.
- Do not balance a kitten/cat on your shoulders.
- Do not turn the cat on its back, or rub the cat's tummy. This may aggravate the cat and he/she may scratch or bite you.
- Grooming – combing or brushing is allowed, if the cat wants it. Only one comb/brush per cat then put the tool by the dishwashing sink for cleaning.

If a minor does not have a parent or guardian who is able to volunteer with them, and he or she is seeking to be involved with the shelter long-term, the shelter does partner with the Santa Cruz Volunteer Center for the YouthServe program. YouthSERVE trains adult leaders to work with youth volunteers in our community. YouthServe leaders must also do all of the training and be an active SCCAS volunteer.

MOVING TO TIER 2 VOLUNTEERING

Once volunteers have completed at least 20 hours of Cat TLC time, have shown a commitment to volunteering by scheduling and completing regular weekly shifts, and have demonstrated an ability to handle the adoptable cats, they can request to advance to Tier 2 level. Tier 2 training focuses on increasing a volunteer's knowledge of cats and their behavior, as well as increasing their ability to recognize and respond to individual cats' needs. The "Cat Behavior and Handling in the Shelter Environment" class and further mentoring will be required.

CAT SHOWS

All potential adopters must fill out an Adoption Application prior to petting or visiting with a cat. Direct interested parties to fill out the Adoption Application, ask them to write down the kennel number of the cat(s) they are interested in visiting, and submit it to Client Services staff.

The purpose of an adoption show (aka meet and greet) is for the prospective adopter to visit and interact with a cat to see if the cat is a good fit for them. Never show an animal unless requested to do so by Client Services staff. Training for being a Cat Show Volunteer is offered periodically and is recommended for volunteers before doing shows. It may also be beneficial to tag along with an experienced volunteer to learn best practices. The purpose of a show is not to "sell" the animal to a potential adopter. Never leave a prospective adopter unattended with an animal and always feel free to politely interrupt inappropriate handling or behaviors.

Volunteers interested in being a Cat Show Volunteer should contact the Volunteer Coordinator. Cat Show Volunteers should be reliable and available for a scheduled weekly shift. This can be a very rewarding volunteer position and is appreciated by Client Services staff. Volunteers should have the ability to interact professionally and in a nonjudgmental manner with clients, understand cat body language and behavior, have good listening skills, and be able to relay

information back to Client Services on matching up clients with animals.

NOTE: Any cat may become stressed if he/she has too much interaction or has become overstimulated by activity. Do not interact with any cat that you are not comfortable with, or that may be showing signs of fear or agitation.

Special adoption programs

Shelly's Angels: This non-profit organization will pay part of the cost of the adoption for cats that are over 6 years of age or cats that are harder to adopt.

Bogey Black Cat Fund: For solid black cats, the adoption fee is reduced with donations from the Bogey Fund.