



Whatcom Humane Society  
— CARING FOR ANIMALS SINCE 1902 —

# Volunteer Handbook

Volunteer Manager:  
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## **Whatcom Humane Society Statement of Principle**

The Whatcom Humane Society (WHS) believes that all animals, as sentient beings, have value beyond economic measurements and are entitled to legal, moral, and ethical consideration and protection.

## **The Whatcom Humane Society**

- Advocates for animals;
- Educates the community to promote humane treatment and respect for animals;
- Provides for abandoned, injured, abused or neglected animals.

## **Vision**

All animals in our community are treated with kindness, respect, and compassion.

## **Targeted Results**

- All domestic animals in Whatcom County have permanent, responsible, and loving homes. All animals, regardless of species are treated with respect and compassion.
- WHS operates a state-of-the-art shelter facility and resource center.
- WHS is widely recognized and respected as a core service in the community.
- WHS educational programs promote responsible animal care and prevent abuse, neglect, and overpopulation.

We invite *you* to join our cause!

## **BASIC SHELTER INFO**

### **Address**

2172 Division Street  
Bellingham, WA 98226

### **Shelter Office Hours**

Sunday-Monday 11:00 am - 5:00 pm  
Wednesday-Saturday 10:00 am - 6:00 pm  
Closed Tuesday & major holidays

### **Adoption Services / Kennel Hours**

Sunday-Monday 12:00 pm - 4:30 pm  
Wednesday-Saturday 11:00 am - 5:30 pm  
Closed Tuesday & major holidays

**Phone:** 360-733-2080

**Fax:** 360-733-4746

**Website:** [www.whatcomhumane.org](http://www.whatcomhumane.org)

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## **About WHS**

The Whatcom Humane Society (WHS) has been caring for animals throughout Whatcom County since 1902. As the oldest non-profit animal welfare organization in Whatcom County, WHS is committed to caring for any animal in need. As an open-admission shelter, the dedicated staff and volunteers at the Whatcom Humane Society cared for over 4,000 homeless, unwanted and abused animals in 2015.

The Whatcom Humane Society has a long-standing, positive working relationship with the City of Bellingham, having provided 24 hour animal control and rescue services since 1973. In addition to providing these services for the City of Bellingham, WHS also has animal control contracts with the Cities of Blaine, Ferndale, Sumas, Everson/Nooksack and a working agreement with the Nooksack and Lummi Indian Reservations.

Since December 1, 2007, the Whatcom Humane Society has provided animal control and rescue services to all of unincorporated Whatcom County (with the exception of the City of Lynden).

## **Where Do We Get Our Funding?**

- Contributions: includes donations, bequests, event proceeds, grants, sponsorships, online giving and income from Paws Awhile account for 57% of our annual income.
- Animal Control contracts: includes contract payments, impound fees, board fees and licensing account for 33% of our annual income.
- Animal Adoptions: includes proceeds from adoption fees, the veterinary clinic, public microchips and owner surrender fees account for 9% of our annual income.
- Investments and other income account for 1% of our annual income.

## **Why Do Animals Come to WHS?**

Over half of the animals that WHS receives come in as strays. This means that they are picked up by animal control or by members of the public because they are running loose in the community. Most of the strays that WHS receives are not feral (wild) animals, they are domesticated pets who have been lost or abandoned by their owners.

About 35% of the animals that WHS receives are owner surrendered. This means that the animals were given to WHS by their owners who were unwilling or unable to keep them. A small percentage of the animals WHS receives are seized from their owners or brought in for protective custody. These animals are usually at WHS because their owners were abusing/neglecting them, or were institutionalized and unable to care for them.

## **What Happens to the Animals?**

- They are assessed for behavior and health
- All receive medical care, socialization, and training
- When necessary, pets are put into temporary foster homes for medical care or socialization
- They are adopted! For a minimal adoption fee, pets receive behavior evaluations, are spayed or neutered, microchipped, vaccinated, and blood tested (cats for Feline Leukemia and FIV)
- They are reclaimed by their owners
- Pets that aren't thriving in the shelter environment are transferred to private rescue groups whenever possible
- When necessary, animals are euthanized.

## **Why Does WHS Euthanize Animals?**

Euthanasia is the term used for humanely putting an animal to death. Euthanasia is an unfortunate reality in animal shelters. WHS is not a no-kill shelter. We are an open admission shelter. An open admission shelter never turns an animal away. No-Kill shelters are limited admission shelters which means that they choose which animals to take in. Limited admission shelters do not take sick, injured, old, ill tempered or difficult to adopt animals. They only take in animals that they believe will be easy to adopt out. WHS has a number of successful programs in place which are geared towards reducing both the relinquishment of pets and euthanasia. We do our best to find homes for all the animals that come through our doors, but unfortunately that is not always possible. The staff at WHS is very proud to do their best for every animal that enters the shelter without discrimination.

Animals may be euthanized at WHS because they are sick or injured. While their medical condition may be treatable, it may not be financially realistic for us to do so, or the animal's prognosis may be poor. What is treatable for an animal living at home with its owner may not be treatable when the animal is living in a stressful shelter environment. Placing these animals in temporary foster homes for treatment is an option we utilize whenever appropriate.

Animals may be euthanized because they possess behaviors that make them poor candidates for adoption. WHS has a responsibility not only to the animals, but also to the people who will be adopting these animals and the people who share a community with them. We cannot in good conscience adopt out animals that are potentially dangerous, or who have severe problems adapting to change. Our staff is well trained in animal behavior – while a volunteer may feel that an animal is “fine”, our staff may see something that a non-professional could miss.

Sadly, animals are sometimes euthanized because space is tight. The reason WHS and shelters in general exist is that there are too many animals and not enough homes. We do not have a time limit for our animals, but there may be times when we are housing an abundance of a particular type of animal, and we don't have any other options. At that time the animal in the shelter that is deemed the least likely to be adopted (due to age, temperament, illness and other factors) is the animal that will be chosen for euthanasia.

It is very difficult emotionally for our staff to have to make a decision to euthanize any animal, and then to have to perform the procedure. Euthanasia is not taken lightly and it can raise the stress level of the employees a great deal. Volunteers are asked to respect these employees. We recognize that you may not always understand the reasons as to why an animal was euthanized, but it is highly inappropriate to confront the kennel or customer service staff and make their jobs even more difficult by questioning them or challenging them on a euthanasia decision. You are to consult with the Volunteer Manager, Shelter Manager or Executive Director only. Likewise, if you are unsure what has happened to a pet you've gotten to know here, you are not to ask the kennel or reception staff. Reason being, if there was an unhappy ending to that animal's story, we can't expect the employees to relive the event for each curious volunteer. It's far too stressful. Please see your Volunteer Manager and you will be given an honest answer and will have the opportunity to discuss your feelings and any concerns you might have.

We also ask that you be very careful and use discretion when discussing your feelings about a particular sad ending with other volunteers. Dwelling on the negative isn't good for anyone's morale and often leads to the spread of inaccurate information as the story gets retold down the line. You will hear of sad endings, but never lose sight of the happy endings. They far outnumber the sad ones. Employees and volunteers should focus on their successes and be proud that what they're doing is ensuring more pets are finding their forever homes.

## **Programs and Services**

**Safe Pets** – WHS provides a safe place for animals whose owners are fleeing domestic violence situations. Pets may stay at WHS at no cost to the owner as long as they are working with local domestic violence services or shelters.

**Pet Adoption** – Our adoption counselors are well trained to help match our guests with a compatible pet companion.

**SNAP Program** – Our **S**pay-**N**euter **A**ssistance **P**rogram sterilizes animals from low-income households in our area. Pets receive sterilization, shots, microchips and flea treatment at a reduced cost to their owners.

**Humane Education** – Our humane education department officiates community programs for kids of all ages. These programs include the Dog Day Afternoon reading program and the Kendall Kids classroom program.

**Lost and Found Pet Program**– WHS maintains a database of lost and found pets, reuniting hundreds of lost pets with their owners every year. Stray pets are housed at the shelter until they are reclaimed by their owners, or adopted into a new home if no owner is found.

**Animal Control** – Provides rescue to domestic pets or wildlife who are lost or in distress in Whatcom County, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

**Foster Program** – Foster caregivers assist animals who are too ill, too young, or lack the social skills they need to be put up for adoption. Caregivers open their hearts and homes to these animals until they are ready to be placed up for adoption at the shelter.

**Owner Request Services** – Our trained and caring staff provides low cost euthanasia services upon request of the owner for old or ailing pets. WHS also provides off-site cremation services at an extra cost.

**Pet Food Bank** – Provides pet food to the pets of low-income residents in need. When available, WHS also distributes food to community centers in Whatcom County.

**Interactive Website** – ([www.whatcomhumane.org](http://www.whatcomhumane.org)) where visitors can view animals available for adoption, download dog license applications, find information on off-leash dog areas in Bellingham and learn how to humanely deal with native wildlife.

**Rescue Network** – WHS has working relationships with other animal welfare organizations including the Seattle Humane Society, PAWS, Seattle Purebred Dog Rescue and many others. WHS will transfer animals to these organizations whenever possible to allow those animals a better chance of being adopted or to give them access to needed services.

**Veterinary Clinic** – WHS’ veterinary clinic provides medical services to all pets in our care. Adoptable animals are sterilized, microchipped, vaccinated, blood tested, treated for fleas and given wellness examinations before they are adopted.

## **Volunteer Program Requirements**

### **Ages for Volunteering**

- All volunteers must be 16+ years of age at the shelter.
- Only ages 18+ may volunteer in Dog TLC, the veterinary clinic and at the wildlife center.

### **Time Commitment**

WHS asks for a time commitment of 2 hours per week (may be more depending on position) for 6 months. Most volunteer positions are flexible, but some require scheduled hours.

### **Community Service**

WHS does not accept volunteers for community service hours at this time.

### **Student Volunteers**

Students age 16+ are welcome to volunteer at WHS. However, staff members at WHS cannot act as community advisors for students looking to fulfill school requirements.

### **Steps to Becoming a Volunteer**

- Review the dates of the next available Information Sessions available on our website
- RSVP and attend an Information Session (~2 hours)
- Complete a Volunteer Application
- Attend in-shelter training as required for each volunteer position (~2-4 hours)
- Demonstrate your commitment to the program by volunteering regularly

## **Volunteer Opportunities**

The following is a list of volunteer positions available at WHS. Please review each description and decide which one fits your interests and abilities best. Some volunteers choose to spend their time in multiple positions, but new volunteers are asked to train and remain in one position for at least 3 months before exploring others.

#### **Cat TLC Volunteer**

**Qualifications:** Must be at least 16 years of age or in a Junior Partner Up team. Completion of Volunteer Information Session and Cat TLC training.

**Duties:** You will provide socialization and exercise to shelter cats and kittens, groom the cats, spot clean kennels and change litter pans and provide the cats with toys and blankets.

#### **Dog TLC/Walker Volunteer**

**Qualifications:** Must be at least 18 years of age. Dog TLC/Walker positions are not open to Junior Volunteers. Completion of Volunteer Information Session and Dog TLC training. Training is divided into 2 two-hour sessions.

**Duties:** You will provide shelter dogs with mental and physical stimulation and basic behavior training, walk shelter dogs and socialize puppies, spot clean kennels and clean up dog waste when walking dogs, do minor grooming and bathing, and provide dogs with toys and fresh blankets.

### **Bunny Brigade/Rat Pack Volunteer**

**Qualifications:** Must be at least 16 years of age or in a Partner Up team. Completion of Volunteer Information Session and Small Animal Handling classes.

**Duties:** You will socialize and play with rats, mice, gerbils, guinea pigs and rabbits, spot clean kennels and cages, perform minor grooming, take rabbits to the outdoor rabbit exercise pen and attend to the rabbit's safety while in the pen.

### **Maintenance Assistant**

**Qualifications:** Must be at least 16 years of age or in a Partner Up team. Completion of Volunteer Information Session. You must also be knowledgeable about the maintenance services you wish to provide. All that is required is a willingness to get a little dirty.

**Duties:** Gardening, landscaping, laundry, cleaning, painting, carpentry, plumbing and electrical projects at the WHS facilities.

### **Clerical / Development Volunteer**

**Qualifications:** Must be at least 16 years of age. Completion of Volunteer Information Session and additional training as needed by WHS staff or volunteers.

**Duties:** Assist fun and friendly Humane Society staff with important day to day operations including typing, stuffing envelopes, collating materials, making phone calls, working with photo files, photocopying, filing, data entry, doing mailings and other clerical duties.

### **Veterinary Clinic Assistant**

**Qualifications:** Must be at least 18 years of age. Completion of Volunteer Information Session and on-the-job training by veterinary clinic staff. Vet Clinic Assistants are asked to commit to a weekly schedule.

**Duties:** You will help prepare animals for surgery, observe animals as they emerge from anesthesia, prepare injections, sterilize surgical instruments and equipment, assist with treatments and administer medications.

### **Animal Photography Team**

**Qualifications:** Must be 16 years of age. Completion of Volunteer Information Session. Photography Teams work in groups of two and must have their own camera equipment.

**Duties:** You will take high-quality digital photographs of adoptable animals. Photographers may also be asked to help with WHS Special Events.

### **Foster Care Provider**

**Qualifications:** Primary caregiver for the foster animal must be at least 18 years of age. Be willing to take animals that may be orphaned, very young, sick, injured, or have behavioral/socialization issues into their homes. Own their home or have permission from their landlord. Be financially able to purchase necessities such as food and litter as needed.

**Training:** Completion of Volunteer Information Session. One on one meeting with the Foster Care Manager. Other education and training as required.

**Duties:** You will provide a nurturing, compassionate, and comfortable environment in your home for foster animals, provide all elements of care for foster animals including feeding, cleaning, grooming, medicating, and socializing (petting, holding, etc.), ensure safety and care of foster animals and transport foster animals to and from the shelter for medical treatments, check-ups, and to be shown for adoption.

### **Special Events/Fundraising Volunteer**

**Qualifications:** Must be at least 16 years of age or part of a Junior Partner Up team. Completion of Volunteer Information Session.



**Duties:** You will assist with planning and implementation of WHS fundraising and special events and participate in assigned projects and tasks such as solicitations of sponsorship and vendor donations, invitation mailing and event planning and coordination.

### **Farm Animal Friend Volunteer**

WHS provides housing and care for farm animals at a 10 acre off-site barn facility located in Everson.

**Qualifications:** Farm Animal Friend Volunteers must be at least 18 years of age or 16 years of age in a Partner Up team. Must have prior experience working with horses and other livestock. Completion of Volunteer Information Session and Farm Animal training. Farm volunteers will be assigned to a volunteer team of at least two volunteers. Teams must work at the barn together at all times. For safety reasons, volunteers will not be allowed to volunteer alone.

**Duties:** You will provide cleaning, care and socialization for a variety of livestock including, but not limited to; horses, pigs, goats, sheep, chickens and cows. You will clean barn stalls and outdoor animal enclosures, groom horses and other livestock, feed the animals and exercise and socialize the animals which **does not include riding**. Very experienced volunteers may do ground work with the horses.

### **Wildlife Care Assistant**

Volunteers will spend much of their time cleaning & preparing cages, doing laundry and dishes, sweeping, mopping and assisting staff with special cleaning projects. In the spring and summer duties may also include hand-feeding nestling and juvenile songbirds, preparing baby bird food, monitoring the health of the birds and keeping all nesting materials clean.

Experienced volunteers are given the opportunity to learn more advanced animal handling and medical skills.

**Dates Available:** Year Round

**Shifts:** May 1 – September 30: 8:00 am–12:00 pm, 4:00 pm–8:00 pm  
October 1 – April 30: 9:00 am-12:00 pm, 2:00 pm-5:00 pm  
Volunteers are scheduled to work the same shift every week.

### **Wildlife Transport Team**

Sometimes people who find injured wildlife are unable to bring the animals to WHS Wildlife Services. Therefore, we need to go out and pick up the animals and transport them back to the center. Part of this duty includes capturing the animal and putting it securely in a transport carrier. (Gas mileage cannot be reimbursed but is tax deductible if proper records are kept.) There are also certain patients that must be transferred to other wildlife centers due to lack of room and resources. It is essential that these patients get to the other wildlife in a timely and safe manner. This volunteer opportunity would consist of committing to being “on – call” if a transfer patient arrives; then coming to the Wildlife Center to pick – up the animal who will be already contained. (Gas mileage cannot be reimbursed but is tax deductible if proper records are kept.)

**Dates Available:** Year Round

**Shifts:** As needed. Volunteers are asked to commit to one shift per week. Transports may or may not be needed on your scheduled day(s).

### **Wildlife Facility Caretaker**

Duties include painting, building and repairing caging units, clearing brush, cleaning and maintenance of wildlife facilities, minor plumbing & electrical work, and mowing the lawn in the summer months.

**Dates Available:** Year Round

**Shift:** Flexible. Volunteers will be asked to commit to one four hour shift per week. Volunteers are scheduled to work the same shift every week.

## **Volunteer Hours**

You are welcome to come in and volunteer anytime that staff are at the facility (times listed below). Please note that the hours for volunteering are different from the hours that we are open to the public.

Wednesday–Saturday staff is in the shelter from 6 am – 6 pm\*.

Sunday and Monday staff is in the shelter from 7 am – 5 pm\*.

Tuesday & major holidays staff is in the shelter from 8:30 am – 5 pm\*.

If you come in for TLC when we are closed to the public, please ring the doorbell located to the left of the front door. A staff member will be happy to let you in. Be patient, however, as the shelter is generally short staffed during these hours. You may also ask for a backdoor code.

**\*Always make sure dogs are in their kennels half an hour before the staff leaves.**

## **Volunteer Policies and Procedures**

### **Dress Code**

#### Proper footwear

Floors are often wet and slippery so shoes with good traction are a must. Your feet also need to be protected from animal waste, cleaning chemicals and disinfectants.

Tennis shoes or work style boots with low heeled, non-slip soles are recommended. Open toed shoes, clogs, slip-ons, or sandals are not permitted.

#### Clothing

While here, you are a shelter representative, so you should always have a tidy appearance. Please only wear comfortable items that can also be easily washed. Long pants are required to protect you from chemicals, bites and scratches even in the summer. Torn or frayed clothing, and potentially offensive graphics or logos are not permitted.

You will purchase a volunteer t-shirt at the time of your training and you should wear this t-shirt each time that you volunteer. This t-shirt will help staff and the public to identify you as a volunteer when you are working with animals. All clothing should be laundered between visits to the shelter. This reduces the spread of viruses and disease.

#### Jewelry

Please limit jewelry while volunteering. Large or dangling jewelry can get caught on cages, and in claws or fur, potentially injuring you or the animals. Jewelry is especially hazardous to animals that are attracted to it, like cats and birds, who could easily remove and ingest it.

#### Name tags

Volunteers must wear a name tag at all times. This ensures that staff and the public recognize you as a volunteer and helps us get to know you. You will be given a name tag at your scheduled training date. If you misplace your name tag or it becomes damaged and unreadable you may request a new one from the Volunteer Manager.

## **Parking and Entry**

We ask that volunteers not take front row parking spots, but rather leave these for our guests whenever possible. Of course allowances are made for those with disabilities. Please either park in the front parking lot closest to the street or in the back gravel parking lot by the dog runs.

## **Personal Belongings**

It is recommended that anything of value to you be left at home. Lockers are available in the Volunteer Services room. Please bring your own lock if you choose to use them. Coats can be left in the volunteer area, but please don't wear your favorite or most expensive. WHS cannot guarantee the safety of your personal items. Members of the public as well as volunteers are not always supervised while in the shelter and it is a very rare occurrence, but unfortunately, items have been stolen in the past.

## **Smoking**

For the health and comfort of all guests, staff, volunteers, and pets, smoking is not permitted anywhere on the premises.

## **Logging Your Volunteer Time**

Volunteers must sign-in on the computer in the Volunteer Services area at the start of each shift. Signing-in is required to ensure that you are covered under our state workers comp insurance. We also need to know who has been in the building, and when, for health and safety reasons. Your hours are also an indication to the Volunteer Manager that you are remaining active in the program. We add up your individual volunteer time each month, and record monthly as well as quarterly totals for all volunteers combined. We care about the time each of you generously devotes to WHS, and we need these hours to report for grants and other fundraising opportunities.

## **Communication**

Almost all communication in the volunteer program is done via e-mail. Due to the large number of volunteers, phone calls are not possible and sending mail via the postal service is too expensive. Volunteer newsletters, notices, updates, and other important information about the volunteer program will be e-mailed. If you do not have a computer at home consider setting up a web e-mail address (hotmail, gmail, yahoo, etc.) that you can check at your local library. Most libraries now offer free internet usage. If this is not an option for you please check in frequently with the Volunteer Manager when you come in for your shift to ensure that you aren't missing any important communications.

The Volunteer Manager's contact info is on the front of this handbook. You should receive a response to your e-mail or voice mail message within 2-3 days. If you have an urgent need or concern that cannot wait, please see any shelter manager.

## **Prohibited Conduct**

While volunteering you are expected to conduct yourself in a manner which respects our guests, staff and other volunteers. If you fail to follow the policies and guidelines outlined in this handbook or other training classes you attend you will be counseled again in our

policies. However, repeated deviation from protocol, a consistently poor/insubordinate attitude or exhibiting any of the behaviors listed below as prohibited conduct will likely result in immediate termination of your volunteer privileges.

The following is a list of conduct that is prohibited while you are volunteering for WHS in any capacity:

- Mistreatment of animals, including rough handling, shouting and use of corrective based training techniques (pinch collars, choke chains, “pop and jerk” method)
- Intimidation or harassment of staff, volunteers or members of the public
- Possession of firearms or weapons on WHS property (including off site events)
- Consumption, possession or being under the influence of illegal substances, non-prescribed pharmaceutical drugs, or alcohol during your volunteer shift
- Use of abusive, profane, inappropriate or threatening language
- Theft of property or funds

We value our volunteers and consider them a huge asset, so we want to ensure your experiences with staff and other volunteers at WHS are pleasant. Please inform the Volunteer Manager or another manager on duty if anything occurs that makes you feel unsafe or uncomfortable.

## **Customer Service Expectations**

Volunteers are considered shelter ambassadors just like paid staff, so how you conduct yourself while in view of the public is very important. Be friendly. Smile. Say hello. Ask a guest if they need assistance and help direct them to the appropriate staff member. Your appearance and the way you treat our guests will affect the reputation of WHS in the community. If WHS is perceived as an ineffective or hostile organization, the animals will suffer for it.

Please leave adoption counseling and advice to our experienced staff and trained volunteers. The staff has access to each pet’s extensive behavior and medical profile. While you may have the best of intentions, your personal opinion may not serve in the best interest of an adopter or the pet. Circumstances that make a potential adopter an inappropriate match for an animal are not always evident to volunteers. Our adoption counselors go through extensive training in order to identify the right home for the right animal.

Be mindful of the privacy of our guests. Refrain from joining in on conversations staff are having with them. Many of these conversations are of a very private or sensitive nature.

## **Safety and Health Guidelines**

### **Practicing Safety around Animals**

The animals that our volunteers handle are animals that the staff have evaluated and consider good candidates for adoption. The shelter environment can be stressful for many animals; therefore behaviors cannot always be predicted.

For the safety of pets and people, handling of animals is strictly prohibited until you have attended training sessions for your specific volunteer duties. This includes putting fingers or arms into cages and kennels. If you discover a loose animal, NEVER reach out and grab it. If possible, close any doors in the immediate area and alert a staff member, who will safely retrieve the animal.

Remember that all animals must be kept separate unless approved by a staff member. Keeping animals separate reduces the spread of disease, and not all animals at WHS are friendly towards other animals, especially under times of stress. If you witness a fight, DO NOT attempt to break it up. Fights often sound worse than they really are, and trained staff members are the only ones who should intervene.

### **Bringing your own pet to the shelter while volunteering is not permitted.**

Even when every precaution is taken, accidents can happen. While very rare, bites and scratches do occur. Cleaning any injury is important to avoid infection. You must report any bite, scratch, or other injury to a staff member immediately, no matter how small or insignificant it may seem. Medical history is uncertain on many of the animals here. Additionally, state law requires that most pets be quarantined temporarily after biting.

**If you are bitten by a cat notify the shelter staff immediately.** Cat bites have a high likelihood of infection. Because of previous experience, WHS asks that you see a doctor within a few hours of a cat bite to ensure that no infection is present. Report the injury to the Volunteer Manager who will give you all the information about our State L&I insurance so you can provide it to the doctor's clinic.

### **Children and Guests**

Children who are not active volunteers cannot accompany a parent/adult while they are volunteering. Guests are also not permitted to accompany volunteers while they are performing their volunteer duties. Please invite your friends and family to attend an upcoming volunteer Information Session session. If you have a friend or family member in town feel free to reschedule your volunteer shift for a time when it won't conflict with your plans. If someone will be picking you up or dropping you off for your shift please meet them in the front lobby. They won't be permitted to search the shelter to find you.

### **Off-Limit Areas**

For the safety of the animals and volunteers, volunteers are not permitted in the stray kennel areas. These areas are marked with signs alerting you that these are staff only areas. Housed in these areas are stray animals, animals under bite quarantine, sick animals, animals being held under our safe pet program, or new arrivals that have not yet been evaluated for adoption. The temperaments of these animals have not yet been evaluated. Dangerous animals are frequently housed in the stray kennels. Just walking past these animals can cause them great distress and be very dangerous. **Do not enter these areas, even if you see other volunteers doing so.**

The euthanasia room and the dog & cat receiving areas are also off limits to volunteers, as is the veterinary clinic. Surgeries, treatments, and evaluations are being done in these rooms all throughout the day. Some of the animals are afraid or uncooperative which can make things difficult for the staff. Respecting their work space keeps everyone safe.

### **Hygiene**

Please wash or disinfect your hands after handling each animal and before handling the next one. Washing your hands will help eliminate the risk of becoming ill yourself, and also help prevent the spread of disease and germs throughout the shelter. Hands can be washed in the restrooms, break room, or animal kitchens. Wall dispensers with disinfectant gel can be found in the kennel areas and get acquainted rooms. Please ask a staff member to refill the wall dispensers when they run out.

## Exposure to Infectious Disease

While volunteering at WHS you may be exposed to infectious disease. Usually these diseases will be contagious only to other animals. However, some diseases can spread from animal to human. WHS will notify you if we have reason to believe that you were exposed to a disease that could affect humans while you were at the facility. Please take extra precautions to launder your clothes and wash your hands. Notify the Volunteer Manager immediately if you develop symptoms. If you develop symptoms of an infection do not return to volunteer until you have completely healed. You may re-expose animals, other volunteers and staff members who have otherwise been cleared from infection.

## Social Networking Policy

WHS volunteers who engage in blogging and social networking should be mindful that their postings, even if done off premises, could have an adverse affect on WHS's legitimate business interests and the privacy interests of its employees, donors and others. For example, the information posted could be considered WHS proprietary or confidential information, or place WHS or its donors or employees in a bad light. In addition, some readers may view you as a *de facto* spokesperson for WHS. To reduce the likelihood that your personal blogging or social networking will have an adverse affect on WHS and the clients we serve, we require that you observe the following guidelines:

1. Do not engage in blogging using company property or WHS resources. This means that WHS's property, including but not limited to Internet access, computer hardware and software, may not be used by a volunteer for blogging without the express written consent of the Executive Director.
2. Your blogging is subject to this Blogging Policy and the policies contained in WHS's Employee or Volunteer Handbook, including but not limited to the policies related to confidentiality and employee/volunteer conduct, even when done during off-duty or non-volunteer time.
3. If your blogging includes any information related to WHS, and even if you are blogging anonymously, you are required to do as follows:
  - a. Make it clear to your readers that the views are yours alone and that they do not reflect the views of WHS by stating, for example, "*The views expressed in this blog [of blog posting] are my own. They have not been reviewed or approved by WHS.*" [Another option: "*The views expressed on this website/blog are mine alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of WHS.*"]
  - b. Do not discredit, disparage or defame the mission or services of WHS, its staff, affiliates, supporters, or partners.
  - c. Do not use WHS's logo, trademark, or proprietary graphics, photographs of WHS's premises, employees, or rescued animals (other than those available for adoption and posted on WHS's website as such).
4. Being disrespectful of fellow volunteers or WHS staff may expose a blogger to defamation lawsuit and much unwanted publicity. You are also more likely to resolve WHS related complaints by speaking directly with the WHS Volunteer Manager than by posting complaints in a blog. If you nonetheless decide to post complaints or criticism, avoid doing so in a way that is defamatory or damaging to WHS or any of its employees or volunteers or be prepared to face possible consequences.

These policies apply even if your blogging is anonymous or under a pseudonym. If you do engage in such blogging, you should be aware that in appropriate circumstances WHS will take steps to determine your identity. If WHS determines that it is necessary or advisable to ensure compliance with law or protect the interests of WHS or those of its clients, WHS may require in its sole and absolute discretion that you temporarily confine your blogging to matters unrelated to WHS.

Please remember, WHS has spent substantial time and resources building its reputation and good will. These are valuable and important assets. Before you make any posting in a blog that identifies yourself as a volunteer of WHS, or that identifies WHS, please consider whether what you are posting could affect WHS and whether you might be damaging WHS's reputation. If you are uncertain, you should consult the Volunteer Manager or the Executive Director before making the posting.

## **Thank you**

Thank you for your generous service to the animals in our care. We couldn't do what we do without you. If you have any questions or concerns about the content of this handbook, please contact the Volunteer Manager.