

MARTINSVILLE-HENRY COUNTY
SPCA



Pawsibilities...

**Give hope
Give love
Give pawsibilities**

**Foster, adopt,
volunteer, donate**

276-638-7297

Volunteer Handbook 2018

Dear Volunteer,

Welcome to the SPCA of Martinsville/Henry County! We are so happy to have you on board!

Volunteers are such a vital part of the SPCA. With you by our side, we help us make these animals' lives better. With your help we can get our friends adopted and hopefully their new families will tell other people about the SPCA.

Our program is for individuals 16 years old and over. Volunteers under the age of 16 must be accompanied by an adult.

The SPCA could not do what it does without the help of volunteers! Although our staff is dedicated and knowledgeable, extra helping hands and hearts are necessary to the important work in which we are involved. Every activity you perform, whether directly handling the animals or not, improves the quality of their lives while at the shelter and decreases the length of their stay here.

We look forward to working with you and getting to know you! We want you to have fun with us while being safe, so if you have any questions please don't hesitate to ask one of the staff members. Welcome aboard and thank you again.

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Contact Information

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Executive Director	Nicole Harris	276.790-7734	exec@spcamhc.org
Director of Development	Catherine Gupton	276.638.7297	office@spcamhc.org
Director of Operations	Deanna McArthur	276.638.7297	info@spcamhc.org
Community Relations Mgr.	Suzy Williams	276.638.7297	spcamhc.swilliams@gmail.com

Hours of Operation

Administrative Hours: 10:00 AM – 6:00 PM Tuesday – Friday

Adoption Center Hours: 10:00 AM – 6:00 PM Tuesday – Friday
10:00 AM – 4:00 PM Saturday

Closed Sunday and Monday

Volunteer Hours: Volunteers are encouraged to schedule hours during regular Adoption Center Hours or by special request from the Community Relations Manager.

Martinsville-Henry County SPCA FACT SHEET

Mission	To serve animals and people with progressive, compassionate programs delivered by professional staff and volunteers to prevent cruelty, ensure the welfare, safety, refuge and adoption of animals; educate the public to improve the life of our community; and reduce the suffering caused by pet overpopulation.
Goals	Martinsville and Henry County will be a community where no healthy, adoptable animal will be euthanized.
Size and Cost	8,797 enclosed square feet, 2,441 square feet under roof, \$1.5 million
Funding	The Martinsville-Henry County SPCA relies entirely upon donations by individuals, corporate funding, bequests and income generated by investments of the endowment. As an independent, non-profit entity, the Martinsville-Henry County SPCA does not receive any city, state or federal government funding or any United Way funding.
Development	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The “Give Me Shelter Capital Campaign” chaired by Clyde Hooker and Katherine Boaz was launched with a goal to raise \$1.5 million dollars. 2. Over 6.5 acres was donated by Bob and Martha Clark and Wes Wells. 3. Fundraising to occupancy was less than two years.
Statistical Summary	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Martinsville-Henry County SPCA placed over 4,000 animals in 2016. 2. Approximately 200 animals are cared for daily. 3. Low cost spay/neutering program serves 2100 annually.
Features	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sixteen individual dog runs. 2. Eight puppy playpens with heated floors. 3. Free roaming kitten and cat room so visitors can view and mingle with cats in a more natural environment. 4. Dog Park including walking trail, off-leash area and agility course 5. Wellness Clinic

Martinsville-Henry County SPCA FACT SHEET (cont.)

<p>Outreach Programs</p>	<p><u>“Read to the Paw”</u> – This program began in 2002 to encourage children to improve reading skills and to learn to enjoy reading by reading aloud to pet therapy dogs and was revitalized in 2015.</p> <p><u>Summer Camp Sessions</u> – Three summer camp sessions are offered in June, July and August for children aged 6-12 to teach respect and care for animals, safety and wellness information, along with fun crafts and hands-on time with animals.</p> <p><u>Low Cost Spay/Neuter</u> – Offered to the general public and anyone on any form of public assistance including social security.</p>
<p>Public/Private Partnerships</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The SPCA has an ongoing partnership with the Animal Control offices in Martinsville and Henry County where adoptable animals are rescued from the Animal Control facilities if there is space at the SPCA. 2. Rabies Clinics – The SPCA partners with the Pet Clinic of Martinsville and Rocky Mount and Dr. Eric Lorens. 3. North Shore Animal League (NSAL) – The SPCA contracted with the NSAL in 1992 to rescue healthy puppies that have not been adopted locally. The NSAL is the largest no-kill animal rescue agency in the world. 4. The SPCA has approximately 30 independent rescue relationships.
<p>Staff</p>	<p>There are about 20 caring and knowledgeable SPCA employees.</p>

The Martinsville-Henry County SPCA Long Range Plan

The long range goal of the Martinsville-Henry County SPCA is to make Martinsville and Henry County a community where no healthy adoptable animal will be euthanized.

The Martinsville-Henry County SPCA Board meets bi-monthly with an annual retreat to strategize on how to reach our long range goal. We focus on the community as a whole as well as the successes experienced by the SPCA.

Frequently Asked Questions for Volunteers

Where do the animals at the SPCA come from?

The Martinsville-Henry County takes approximately 10% of its animals from the Martinsville and Henry County Animal Control and approximately 90% from owners who can no longer keep their pets.

Do you know how big this dog will get or how much it's going to weigh?

The majority of animals here are mixed breed and we make a "best guess" as to what the dominant breed is. Many landlords in this area have size restrictions on the pets they do allow, so we do not want to set a pet up for "growing out of" its new home and perhaps having to return to the shelter. **DO NOT GUESS AT A SIZE FOR A POTENTIAL ADOPTER!** It is not possible to tell what size an animal is going to be, recommend an adult dog (one year or over) that is finished growing, so they can see firsthand the size of the dog.

How old does an animal have to be before it can be "fixed"?

The Martinsville-Henry County SPCA endorses pediatric spay/neuter surgeries. If a puppy or kitten is at least 8 weeks old, and weighs at least 2 pounds and is a healthy weight, surgery can be performed.

Do you have any small dogs (or specific breeds)?

Remind the potential adopter that the population here changes all the time and frequent visits may be necessary to find the perfect match. Let them know that "most" of the dogs are medium to large sized and mixed breed. Smaller dogs do come in, and the adopter can be made aware of our Wish Book, which is located on the adoption desk. They can fill out a special request, and we will call if that breed comes in. **DO NOT TELL THE PUBLIC ABOUT DOGS IN THE BACK WHO ARE NOT YET AVAILABLE FOR ADOPTION!**

How long do you keep the animals before euthanasia?

The SPCA of Martinsville-Henry County is a no-kill animal shelter. We never euthanize animals to make space for other animals.

Why are some areas off limits to volunteers?

In a shelter environment, the spread of disease is a very common problem. Some areas of the shelter need to have limited access to ensure the health of the animals living there.

Why is 16 the minimum age for unsupervised volunteers?

A risk for harm to both animals and volunteers exists in a shelter environment. In order to protect our shelter residents, our volunteers, and our staff, we must establish a safe environment where younger volunteers are supervised by their own parents or guardians.

Animal Adoption Cycle

The following table provides you with an overview of what happens to an animal from the time of surrender to its successful adoption.

	Description	Details	Forms and Reports To be Completed
1	Animal surrendered	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Family surrenders 2. Individual finds lost/abandoned animal 3. Recovered from Animal Control 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Animal intake form completed online • Person bringing animal in must sign a release form to relinquish animal
2	Animal History	At the time of surrender an animal history is obtained, if possible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pet Personality Profile. The animal's history and a description of their personality is loaded onto Pet Point
2	Animal put in isolation	All animals except adult dogs are initially placed in isolation to observe health and behavior. Adult dogs (6 months and over) are available for adoption immediately.	
3	Initial physical exam completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weight • Heartworm testing on an age appropriate basis • Feline leukemia/AIDs testing on an age appropriate basis • Initial shots administered on an age appropriate basis <p>Notes: Adult dogs (6 months or older) are moved to the general population after their exam. Puppies/kittens/cats remain in isolation until they receive the 2nd round of shots.</p>	
4	Animal baths	Each evening a report will be printed listing those animals that are scheduled to get a bath the next day.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Animal bath report – after bath is given, the report should be signed, time and date stamped after animal is bathed
5	Photographs	All animals are photographed and loaded into the Pet Point system.	

Animal Adoption Cycle (cont.)

	Description	Details	Forms and Reports To be Completed
6	Spay/Neuter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If there are appointments available animals are sent to be spayed or neutered. 	
7	Ongoing care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pets are given boosters according to an age appropriate regimen, until they are adopted. • Dogs are bathed every 2 weeks. • Puppies are bathed weekly. • Cats and kittens are bathed, as necessary. • All animals are socialized as much as possible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bathing report
9	Visitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An adoption facilitator will complete an appropriate Adoption Questionnaire (cat or dog) with the client. • They will guide them to the appropriate animal based on their interview. • If the client decides to adopt, the adoption facilitator will turn the client over to a staff member to complete the adoption. 	Adoption Questionnaire for Dog or Cat
10	Adoption	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The staff member completes the adoption paperwork online and gives the client: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Shelter care insurance policy ○ Adoption Contract ○ Medical History ○ Free Health Exam certificate ○ Tag ○ Microchip 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shelter care insurance policy • Adoption Contract • Medical History

Policies and Procedures

Adoptions

The fees for adopting animals from the Martinsville-Henry County SPCA are \$100 for adult dogs, \$20 for cats and kittens, and \$160 for puppies. This includes:

- Spaying/neutering
- Vaccines appropriate for the age of the animal. Animals over 12 weeks of age, may also have received a rabies vaccine.
- Microchip identification
- Collar tag
- Testing for heartworm disease and feline leukemia/AIDS is done on an age appropriate basis.

The Martinsville-Henry County SPCA has an open adoption policy. We make every effort to ensure that each potential adopter is made to feel welcome and comfortable picking out their new pet. After filling out an application, adoption counselors will interview potential adopters to find the pet that is the perfect match for their household and lifestyle. Adoption counselors also educate potential adopters on humane ways of caring for and training their household pets.

Animal Pick-Up and Surrender

The Martinsville-Henry County SPCA does not pick up stray animals. We rely on the City and County Animal Control to perform these operations.

Pet owners should bring the following when surrendering their animals:

- Completed surrender form
- Veterinary records
- Pet medications
- Special foods or treats your pet will need
- Your pet's bed, toys, leash and other belongings from home
- Your pet's crate or carrier

Upon arrival:

- Cats will be tested for leukemia/AIDs
- Dogs over 6 months will be tested for heartworms
- A staff member will evaluate your pet's temperament
- Once screened, and if the SPCA decides to accept your pet.

Please remember that we cannot always accept your animal. We are a limited-intake facility and a re-homing organization. We will accept animals as we have space and the animals that we feel we can place into a loving home.

Pet owners should try every alternative to keep their pets or find a new home for them. Pet ownership is a lifelong commitment. Coming into a shelter will be a very traumatic experience for the pet and adds to our problem of having too many homeless animals in our community.

If a pet owner is relinquishing their pet due to behavioral issues, guide them to behavioral training information offered on our website. Our goal is to help pet owners keep their pets.

As long as an animal is healthy and friendly, we will make him available for adoption.

Spay/Neuter Program

This surgery performed on animals to prevent them from being able to reproduce. This procedure ensures a longer life in animals and prevents certain diseases and behavioral problems. This procedure is also essential to reducing the homeless and neglected animal population in Martinsville and Henry County.

Virginia law requires that all animals from private (including the SPCA) and governmental humane and animal control organizations be spayed or neutered within 30 days after the animal is old enough to have the procedure performed.

Policies and Procedures for Volunteers

Please read these policies and procedures for volunteers. The Volunteer Coordinator will be happy to discuss any policy with you.

Waiver and Release Form	A Volunteer Application must be signed and on file before you begin your volunteer work. The Volunteer Application contains the waiver and release form.
Responsibilities	Animals are to be treated kindly, gently and within established guidelines. Volunteers must support SPCA policies both inside and outside the shelter.
Alcohol and Drugs	The sale, use, possession or transfer of a controlled substance or alcohol on the SPCA premises is prohibited and illegal.
Harassment	Any form of harassment by a volunteer or staff is not permitted and will lead to disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination. If you are a victim of harassment, please report it to a supervisor immediately.
Professional Attitude	Volunteers Must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take their commitment seriously. • Keep all client data confidential, no names of clients or information are to be discussed outside our organization. • Be friendly and courteous to the public at all times. • Be neat and accurate. • Ask the staff questions if you are not sure of the absolute correct answer.
Accidents and Injuries	Any accident or injury occurring on the job must be reported to a staff member immediately. All injuries require volunteer to fill out an incident report.
Proper Dress	Volunteers should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wear comfortable clothes with freedom of movement. • No open toed shoes should be worn at the shelter (tennis shoes are probably the best choice). • No low-rider pants, short-shorts or low cut tops or cropped tops are allowed at the shelter. We want our visitors to be focused on our animals, not the appearance of our staff and volunteers. • Long pants that Do Not drag the floor are strongly suggested. • Large hoop or dangling jewelry is not advised when working with the animals.

Policies and Procedures for Volunteers (cont.)

Volunteer Personal Property	The SPCA is not responsible for loss, theft or damage of personal items.
Visitors and Personal Guests	Volunteers are discouraged from receiving personal visitors. Volunteers should instruct friends and family members to wait in the lobby or adoption center until they are off duty. Volunteers may not bring children to the shelter while on duty. Volunteers may not bring guests or friends into non-public areas at any time.
Parking	Volunteers are asked to use the parking spaces to the right of the building. Please allow the spaces closest to the entrance for shelter visitors.
Equipment	Volunteers are not allowed to use shelter equipment and supplies for personal needs. Volunteers are not allowed to use shelter computers and software (or other shelter equipment) unless given permission by staff supervisor.
Media Inquiries	All media inquiries must be referred to the Executive Director.
Unauthorized Areas	Volunteers are not permitted in any unauthorized areas without staff approval. If ever in doubt, ask a staff member before entering an area. Entering areas marked for “staff only” is prohibited and grounds for suspension or dismissal.
Adoptions	Adoptions are contingent upon the volunteer meeting the guidelines and necessary paperwork of the adoption center, and payment of all applicable fees.
Reasons for Dismissal	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Failure to adhere to the policies and procedures 2. Any abuse of animals 3. Refusal to perform tasks as requested

Volunteer Expectations

Please help us make your contribution of time and energy worthwhile by letting us know how your training and volunteer experience is going.

What We Ask of Our Volunteers

1. Take volunteering as a serious commitment. We would like volunteers to commit to a minimum of 6 hours of service a month.
2. Attend orientation.
3. Complete interview and training.
4. Be open with us concerning your needs, wishes and availability.
5. Be familiar with volunteer policies and procedures.
6. Be aware and help us help them.
7. To represent the SPCA professionally and act as an ambassador for our mission.
8. To expect change as we settle into this new environment.

What You Get in Return

1. LICKS, TAIL WAGS AND CUDDLES!
2. Knowing your hard work supports a well-respected animal shelter that serves the community and its animals.
3. Learn about animals through direct contact and educational programs.
4. Explore new career opportunities.
5. Develop new skills or polish old ones.
6. Meet others who share your interests.

Rights and Responsibilities of Volunteers

Rights

- To be treated in a professional manner – and not just free help.
- To be offered the opportunity to become a volunteer regardless of race, financial status, sex, age or disability.
- To have a meaningful and worthwhile assignment.
- To know as much as possible about the organization – policy, people and programs – and be kept informed.
- To not only participate in activities, but make activities possible, where they otherwise wouldn't if not for volunteers.
- To receive quality training, guidance and direction.
- To have proper working conditions.
- To receive promotion by means of a variety of new experiences.
- To be heard.
- To be regarded as persons with individuality, uniqueness and value.
- To receive day-to-day expression of appreciation by professionals.

Responsibilities

- To accept realistic assignments.
- To respect confidences.
- To respect professional attitudes, methods, etc.
- To follow rules and act as an ambassador of the SPCA.
- To state your limitations.
- To follow through with commitments.

On-site Volunteer Opportunities

PurrBox (PB)

Description – Provide socialization and comfort to the cats while they are here at the SPCA. Interacting with the cats in the shelter reduces their stress and helps us learn more about their personalities (to tell potential adopters). Providing interaction with a variety of people maintains a good feline disposition throughout the day.

Procedures –

1. Cuddle kittens/cats.
2. Get them to play with toys.
3. Help them to become comfortable with people.
4. Observe the animal's behavior to determine if it has any health conditions or if it has any personality traits that will help us find the appropriate home. If you notice any medical conditions alert a staff member.

Dog/Puppy Walkers (DPW)

Description – Provide socialization and comfort to the dogs and puppies while they are here at the SPCA. Interacting with the dogs in the shelter reduces their stress and helps us learn more about their personalities (to tell potential adopters). Provide basic dog training to help our friends become more social. Provide treats to dogs in order to encourage good cage presence. For some volunteers, we would like to implement a Big Brother/Big Sister program where a volunteer would be paired up with a specific dog to walk at least weekly. This will create much needed bonds between dogs and people and give the dogs something to look forward to when their Big Brother or Sister comes to visit. It is good for mental health for the dogs to experience a different environment other than just the SPCA grounds.

Special Skills – Be at least 16 years old and have the ability to interact with dogs/puppies in a soothing and fun loving manner.

Procedures –

1. Cuddle dogs/puppies.
2. Help them learn to walk on leash (16 years and older).
3. Teach them to sit.
4. Get them to exercise (toss a ball or toy).
5. Help them to become comfortable around people.
6. Observe the animal's behavior to determine if it has any health conditions or if it has any personality traits that will help us find the appropriate home for the animals.

Suds & Bubbles Volunteer (SB)

Description – Assists with washing animals, dishes and laundry.

Special Skills – Ability to be gentle and patient with animals during baths.

Procedures –

1. Review dog/puppy bathing report when you arrive. Take the next dog on the schedule and update the report with the date of the bath and your initials after you have bathed the dog/puppy.
2. Observe the animal's personality and general health and report any concerns or good stories by completing the Medical/Personality Alert Form and turn it into a staff member.
3. Take the initiative to do the laundry and wash dog bowls.

Spic and Span 1 (SS1)

Description – Help keep a clean environment for our animals and visitors. Duties include: window washing, cleaning kennels, sweeping, mopping the commons areas. Anything that will help keep our shelter in top notch condition. This is generally heavy cleaning in the animal areas.

Spic and Span 2 (SS2)

Description – Help keep a clean environment for our visitors. Duties include: window washing, sweeping, mopping the commons areas. Anything that will help keep our shelter in top notch condition. This cleaning is primarily in the lobby area, conference rooms and offices.

Office Volunteer (OV)

Description – assist with basic office duties. Including: mailings, filing adoption contracts, data entry, copying forms, etc.

Special Skills – typing, filing, organization, attention to detail, ability to work independently.

Special Projects – We are working on developing a schedule of office functions.

- Maintaining Pet Personality Profiles
- Maintaining mailing list databases
- Fundraising mailings
- Newsletter mailings

Picture Lady Assistant (PLA)

Staff Contact – Catherine Gupton

Description – hold animals or assist with posing animals for adoption photos.

Special Skills – provide calm, comfortable environment so that animals smile for the camera.

Photographer and Bio Writer –Keeps the website updated with all new animals and a small description.

Special Events (SE)

Contact – Suzy Williams

Description – Throughout the year, the SPCA holds special events and fundraisers for which one-time volunteers are needed. If you would like to participate in special events, please let us know and we will contact you when they are taking place and provide you with the necessary information to participate.

Time Commitment – varies depending on project.

Newspaper Rolling (NR)

Contact – volunteer opportunity

Description – The SPCA is always in need of old newspapers to line the animal cages. Volunteers are welcome to come roll paper at the shelter for volunteer hours.

Appendix A

Basic Animal Handling and Awareness

Basic Animal Handling and Awareness

Be Aware and Help Us Help Them

You can help us spot health problems and quickly deliver the necessary care to our animals by looking for and reporting these symptoms to our medical staff.

1. Diarrhea – can be any color from pale yellow to dark brown. May or may not contain blood.
2. Sluggishness or inactivity.
3. Vomiting.
4. Upper Respiratory/Kennel Cough – what you may hear or see:
 - a. Dogs - deep chest cough, clear, white, yellow or green nasal discharge, watery, red, runny eyes.
 - b. Cats...third eyelids up, red, watery or runny eyes, sneezing or poor appetite.
5. Hair Loss. If you suspect a skin problem, wash your hands (and all areas of your skin that have touched the animal).

If you notice any of these symptoms (or one not mentioned) a staff member immediately!

Basic Safety Tips for Dog Handling

(At home, in your neighborhood or the shelter)...from the American Humane Association

The following are basic tips in case you encounter a suspicious dog (in the shelter or anywhere else).

NEVER approach a dog:

1. You do not know.
2. That is alone, especially if the dog is behind a fence, tied up, or in a parked car.
3. That is eating, sleeping, or guarding something.

NEVER chase or tease dogs. Don't poke, hit pull or pinch a dog.

NEVER leave a baby or small child alone with a dog.

ALWAYS ask the owner's permission before petting a dog.

When approached by a strange dog:

- Do not run away.
- Do not make eye contact with the dog.
- Stand very still like a statue with your arms at your sides, or back away slowly and quietly.
- In a loud, commanding voice, tell the dog to "go away".

If you are attacked:

- Give the dog an object, such as a jacket or backpack to bite/chew.

If you fall or are knocked to the ground:

- Curl into a ball.
- Protect your face by covering your head and neck.
- Put your hands over your ears.

Human to Dog Communication (from Animalsheltering.org)

Once you are in a kennel with a dog, be aware that you are always communicating to the animal with your body, expressions, and voice.

Following are some examples of human/dog communication:

Friendly human postures include:

- ☺ Looking to the side of the dog
- ☺ Keeping your arms at your side, or extended slightly towards the dog
- ☺ Moving slowly and confidently
- ☺ Speaking to the dog in a high-pitched, reassuring tones
- ☺ A relaxed and exaggerated deep breath and exhale

Submissive human body posture includes:

- ☹ Looking to the side of the dog, or down at the ground
- ☹ Making your body appear smaller by stooping
- ☹ Keeping your hands at your sides
- ☹ Making no movement

Threatening human body posture includes:

- ☹ Directly staring into the dogs eyes
- ☹ Raised arms
- ☹ Rapid movement toward the dog
- ☹ Shouting, growling commands

Basic Safety Tips for Cat Handling (from animalsheltering.org)

Greet the cat while in the kennel setting before lifting him out. Speak to the cat in a calm and soothing manner. If the cat appears friendly, open the kennel door quietly. Slow, calm, deliberate movements are best introductions to cats.

Do not force a cat to interact with you. Cats are finicky and tolerate interaction on their own terms. Do not wake a sleeping cat. It is important that we enable our animals to get plenty of rest to sustain good behavior and health.

After greeting, lift his total body and put him up to your chest area. Place one arm under his body, while using the other to pet him and support his sides.

Do not allow cats on the floor of the shelter. This poses a disease risk to the cat, as well as, overwhelms the cat due to the amount of traffic in the area. Instead take cats to a quieter area

Most cats do not want to be placed on their backs while being held.

Different cats like to be pet in different places. Take your time with a cat, find out what he likes. The best place to start petting a cat is on his back.

Place a cat back into his kennel gently, so he does not mind being picked up next time.

If a cat gets out of your hands, you should move slowly to pick him up. His temperament can change easily if he feels threatened. Always ask a staff person if you need extra support.

Understanding Human to Cat Communication

When visiting with a cat, be aware that you are communicating to the animal with your body, expressions, and voice.

Friendly human gestures include:

- ☺ Speaking in soothing tones
- ☺ Blinking eyes slowly while looking at the cat
- ☺ Moving slowly and confidently
- ☺ Rubbing fingers together or on a soft surface to create a scratching sound
- ☺ A relaxed and exaggerated deep breath

Threatening human gestures include:

- ☹ Frenzied, abrupt movements
- ☹ Loud, boisterous voices
- ☹ Rough petting, handling

Maintaining the Cat Room

Client perception is everything! If the Cat Room is unkempt, smells badly, has ungroomed, dull coated animals and unsmiling volunteers and staff, our clients will think that we have unfriendly, ill, uncared for animals.

If the cat room is clean, smells good, has happy groomed animals, and friendly, helpful volunteers and staff, our clients will know we have friendly, healthy, happy animals.

While visiting the cats, please participate in the following daily tasks to support our staff and to provide a clean, safe environment for the cats:

1. Spot clean litter pans. This reduces odor in the cat room, promotes use of litter pans and demonstrates to our clients that our animals are loved and cared for.
2. Refresh water bowls. Cats like cool, clean water.
3. Distribute beds and toys. Kittens enjoy a stimulating collection of toys.
4. Keep the cat room floor clear of debris. Cats often spill their food cups. By keeping the floor clean, we prevent clients, volunteers and staff from slipping, as well as demonstrating that our animals are well cared for.
5. Report any signs of illness or behavior alteration to a staff member. Early symptoms of depression or illness are important to overall diagnosis.
6. Groom cats/kittens.

Things To Remember

1. It is extremely important to understand that our hands, clothing and shoes are the greatest threat to animals in our shelter. Always wash your hands thoroughly and use hand sanitizer if you are moving from animal to animal. Holding an animal against your clothing can spread disease to the next animal you hold. Wrapping an animal in a towel and changing towels between each will offer protection. Should you be required to go into an isolation ward, be sure to stand in the foot bath prior to leaving the room. Animals are very susceptible to illness in a kennel environment. Even though they receive inoculations when they enter the SPCA, often this is the only inoculation they have ever received and it takes time to build up their immune systems.
2. Make sure to use the techniques you are taught for opening kennels and handling the animals.
3. When returning an animal to his cage, make sure the door is securely closed. Improperly closing doors can result in serious injury, possibly death, to one of the animals.
4. Do not handle an animal with which you are not comfortable. Animals sense hesitation and fear and act upon it.
5. If you witness anyone mistreating an animal (staff or another volunteer) report it to a staff supervisor **immediately!**
6. If a cage is marked **DO NOT OPEN**, please do **NOT** open it. This means that the animal is quarantined for health issues and if they are accidentally released others are in danger.