

# VOLUNTEER NEWSLETTER

February 2009



A Commitment to Caring *Since 1899*

## 2008 Volunteer Department Year in Review

The following are some highlights from the past year:

- A total of 507 volunteers donated **25,625** hours of their time to ACS
- Average per person: 50 hours in 2008
- 20% of the volunteers donated more than 60 hours (the recommended amount)
- Most hours logged by a volunteer in 2008: 1,595 (second place: 1,238 hours)
- 219 new volunteers were trained
- 6 month new volunteer retention rate: ~35%
- 103 volunteers fostered 526 animals in 2008 (C=445, D=81)

*Congratulations and thank you volunteers for the myriad of ways you contribute to the shelter and the animals!*

Moving forward, I would like to start collecting more detailed data showing the contributions volunteers make around the shelter. For example, in the Patient Care Program, how many patients are visited each day by volunteers? In Dog Adopts, how many dogs are walked and socialized each day? Likewise, how many cat adoption applications are processed by volunteers? My goal in capturing these types of data is to further exemplify the impact volunteers have on our shelter beyond the simple (but also important) hours donated. So, look for more details to come about this topic, and please let me know if anyone has comments or ideas to share, I'd love to hear them.

## Cross-training Celebration Month at ACS!

Dog Adopts too busy on the weekends? Have a desire to work with rabbits? How about helping to socialize cats? *March is the official cross-training celebration month at ACS*, so if you have ever thought about participating in another program, now is the time to do so. Volunteers are *strongly* encouraged to be trained in multiple programs, please contact Darlene if you are interested in exploring additional volunteer opportunities around the shelter.

### Save the Date:

- **March 7:** ACS 110th Birthday Party
- **April 19-25:** Volunteer Appreciation Week
- **May 2:** Bark in the Park
- **June 25:** Canine Cruise
- **July 19:** Let's Pet Together
- **August 1:** Dog Wash
- **September 12:** Rummage Sale
- **October 15 or 16:** It's Raining Cats and Dogs
- **Nov 1-7:** Animal Shelter Appreciation Week
- **December 13:** Animal Messiah

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“Faced with what seems like an impossible task, a group of folks will do well to remember the African proverb: *When spider webs unite they can tie up a lion.*”

—Johnnetta B. Cole

#### ACS Book Club

February 18, 5pm in the conference room (157 W. Grand building). *The New Yorkers* by Cathleen Schine

#### Cell phone recycling program

ACS is now accepting cell phones (and all related accessories) to be recycled and turned into cash for the shelter! You can drop off any old cell phones to the front shelter and clinic desks, or drop them at Darlene's office. In the very near future, we will also be recycling printer cartridges. Watch your email and the newsletter for more updates on the way the ACS Green Team is encouraging more environmentally positive sheltering habits.

## Employee Spotlight: Elliott Serrano

### How long have you been working at ACS?

Cumulatively, I've been working here for about 18 years. I say 'cumulatively' because I started in '88, left for about 3 years to run another shelter, then came back to ACS. I've been back about 3 years now.

### What is a typical workday like for you around the shelter?

My day can take many forms, none of them typical. If I'm scheduled to visit a school or community group on that particular day, I'll usually spend it in a classroom talking to students about animals and the topics we cover in our humane education programs. Those days can be fairly long and sometimes involve a lot of travel. On days when I'm in the office, I'm working on developing programs, creating games, handling phone inquiries, preparing for my next presentation or working on the ACS web site and YouTube Channel. I also assist with graphic design for various projects like the programs for special events or banners for the ACS web site.

### What is the best part of your job? The most challenging?

The best part is when I'm working with a group of young folks and they get really enthusiastic about animals. If I succeed in inspiring youth to treat animals with respect, and then translate that respect to their fellow man, I've done my job. The most challenging part is finding ways to connect with these kids. There is so much information being thrown at them every day that its easy for them to shut you out. And kids can spot insincerity from a mile away.

### How do volunteers impact the work you do?

The volunteers who help with the web site's adoption photo gallery are my best friends! If not for their dedication, I could easily find myself spending my entire day trying to take photos for the web site and falling desperately behind on all my other duties. Arlene, Ann, Nancy, Chris and all the other Petfinder volunteers have earned a place in Heaven in my opinion!

### What do you like to do when you are not working at ACS?

I actually spend much of my spare time writing for the Chicago Red Eye and writing comic books. I have a blog on the RedEye web site called 'Geek To Me' and have just finished writing a series for Dynamite Entertainment called 'Xena/Army of Darkness' which features the Lucy Lawless character from the television show. I also wrote an issue of the 'Army of Darkness' comic, #18, which should be coming out in March or April. The 'AOD' comics are based on a series of movies that I really enjoy, so it was a lot of fun to write them! My dream job, though, would be to write a story for the current STAR WARS comic! If anyone knows someone with Lucasfilm, we need to talk!



Elliott presenting a humane education lecture at ACS

### If you could change anything about the shelter, what would it be?

Well, since I'm such a fan of comic books and superheroes, I'd like everyone who works at ACS to have the super power of their choice! But you can't have the power of flight, because I called it already!



Elliott with a group of summer camp students