THE ANTI-CRUELTY SOCIETY

A Commitment to Caring *Since 1899*

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CAT ADOPTS VOLUNTEER MANUAL

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Cat Adoption Program!

As a volunteer in the Cat Adoption room, you will help cats find placement in homes with people who are dedicated to their long-term care. Working alongside Society staff, you will help us find loving families for our feline residents.

Program Objective

The purpose of the Cat Adopts program is to assist guests in the process of selecting and meeting adoptable cats. By providing the best possible customer service to our visitors, Cat Adopts volunteers help forge connections that will last a lifetime.

In addition to assisting adopters, Cat Adopts volunteers also help to tend to cats who are in the adoption rooms using shelter-wide enrichment techniques. Enrichment provides daily care and experiences that help prevent or relieve some of the stress, boredom, frustration and related behavioral deterioration that a cat may experience upon confinement in a shelter environment.

Additionally, positive behaviors (which are attractive to adopters) will be learned and maintained as each cat receives appropriate guidance and reinforcement. Unwanted behaviors that tend to deter adopters will diminish as the cats learn alternative behaviors and are given less opportunity to practice undesirable behaviors. It is our expectation that these efforts, if implemented consistently, will result in enhanced well-being, more successful adoptions and shorter stays for our cats.

Cat Adopts Duties:

1) Work with the Public
2) Educate Visitors
3) Assist with the Adoption Process
4) Provide Care & Enrichment

Cat Adopts Training Requirements

Our volunteer training curriculum has been designed to provide incoming helpers with the knowledge and skills you'll need to make the most of your experience.

Volunteers receive a Volunteer Training Tracker to help guide you through each of the steps below. A sample of the sheet can be found in the appendix. Volunteers need to bring this sheet with them to each step. Once training is completed, please turn the Volunteer Training Tracker in to the Volunteer services department so we can activate your volunteer profile, issue your ID badge and welcome kit.

1) Virtual Volunteer Orientation: Volunteers are asked to watch our Virtual Volunteer Orientation and take a quiz to test your knowledge of the Society's services, programs, and philosophies.

2) Animal Handling Training: Once you successfully completed your Virtual Volunteer Orientation you received an invite to attend Animal Handling Training. This lecture-based training prepared you with knowledge about basic animal body language, handling philosophies, safety, and more. Be sure to bring a copy of your Training Tracker (see Volunteer Handbook) to each step of your training.

3) Program Training: At your training session you'll learn everything you need to fulfill your goals within your program. Prior to attending your training you should have reviewed this manual, re-read the Volunteer Handbook, and watched the following videos:

- Required Video: Body Language & Behavior - Cats
- Optional Videos:
  - Cat Enrichment
  - Zoonotic Diseases
  - Ectoparasites
  - Safety Training

At the end of the session you will be asked to schedule your final step in training, your solo session. Volunteers are required to complete their solo session within a month of attending Program Training.

4) Solo Session: Your volunteer solo session is an opportunity for you to come in on your own to give your program a test run. Utilizing the program checklist at the end of this manual, you'll come in on your own without a trainer to work in your program for the first time. At the end of your session you will need to turn in your Training Tracker to the Volunteer Services department. Once your tracker is received, you will receive a voucher to obtain your Volunteer Welcome Kit, which includes your apron, program button, volunteer t-shirt, and program supplies, from the front desk. The Volunteer Services department will also activate your volunteer profile and add you to the newsletter list.

CAT ADOPTS VOLUNTEER POLICIES

Importance of Following Procedure and Policy

As a volunteer it is important to follow all procedures and policies. These have been compiled from the knowledge and experiences of other Anti-Cruelty Society volunteers and staff. They have been created in an effort to protect the animals and people who interact with them. Adhering to these procedures will assist you with your volunteer responsibilities.

If at any time you have any questions, issues or concerns, please bring them to the attention of the Volunteer Services Department. Failure to follow volunteer guidelines may result in immediate dismissal from your program.

Safety Guidelines

For your safety, the safety of other cats and visitors, please do not perform care duties you have not received instruction for via an Anti-Cruelty Society staff member. Never stick your whole arm or hand through the kennel. Remember to follow all other volunteer guidelines (such as dress code) for safety when interacting with the animals.

If you have cats of your own at home, be sure that they are current on all of their vaccinations before you begin to volunteer with our feline population. Illnesses such as Distemper are rare in our shelter environment, but when they do appear, can be lethal to kittens and unvaccinated cats. To protect your own pets, they should be up-to-date on their vaccines.

Reading Animal Information: All volunteers who work hands-on with animals are required to review any and all kennel notes prior to making physical contact with the pet. Whether a temporary sign, kennel card or behavior report, it is vital for volunteers to learn as much as possible about each animal before handling them directly. Failure to review this information may result in injury to the volunteer, animal, staff or a visitor. Volunteers who repeatedly fail to review an animal's information prior to handling may be dismissed from their volunteer program.

Bites and Scratches: If at any time you or a visitor is bitten or scratched it must be reported immediately to a manager on duty. Animals who bite and draw blood must undergo a 10 day rabies quarantine on-site per the Illinois Department of Agriculture. Animals who bite are typically reassessed after the rabies quarantine to ensure their continued adoptability.

Hygiene: Practicing good hygiene not only prevents the transmission of illness between animals, it also keeps the human handlers safe. Please follow these guidelines to ensure good hygiene:

- Wash your hands before and after each animal encounter.
- In addition to hand-washing, utilize hand sanitizer when it is available.
- Hand-washing is also required if you come into contact with a fomite (i.e. any object that may potentially be carrying a germ), feces, blood, body fluids, secretions, excretions, exudates or articles contaminated by these substances.
- Wash hands before eating, drinking or smoking; after using the restroom; after cleaning animal cages or animal-care areas; and whenever hands are visibly soiled.
- Staff will properly disinfect toys and brushes, but volunteers are responsible for placing them in the sink in the Cat Adopts kitchen directly after use. Do not allow cats to share toys that have been used by other cats and not disinfected.

Animal Sickness: To ensure the safety and protection of all animals in the shelter requires continual observation of their health and temperament. If an animal shows any sign of illness (such as sneezing, vomiting, discharge from the nose or eyes, runny or bloody stool or urine, or unusual behavior), it is important to notify a shelter staff member.

Our Training Philosophy

The Anti-Cruelty Society believes that cats and dogs can be easily trained to do basic behaviors without the use of force or domination. Positive reinforcement is the best tool for building a foundation of mutual trust, respect, and an understanding that will remain throughout each pet's life. A heavy hand is never necessary in having a well-trained pet. To read more about positive reinforcement and why this training philosophy has been proven most effective when training animals, visit the Volunteer Resources page of our website. Volunteers who employ a training philosophy at odds with positive reinforcement may be asked to resign from their volunteer program.

An Open Door for Animals

The Anti-Cruelty Society is an open-admission (or "open door") humane society. We will never turn an animal away that comes to us – no matter what their condition, age, breed or species. Many of these animals are healthy, good natured pets who go up for adoption. There are, however, animals that come to our shelter sick, severely injured, too aggressive or behaviorally unsound to be placed for adoption. Sometimes these animals can be rehabilitated, but sometimes they cannot. In this case, euthanasia is the most humane alternative. As with limited-admission shelters, we do not euthanize animals for space or time limits. Limited admission, or "no-kill" shelters, select which animals they will accept and reject the rest. The Anti-Cruelty Society believes that no animal in need should ever be turned away. For this reason

the Society has made an informed decision not to associate itself with the term “no-kill” as it can be deceiving and cause confusion.

Emotional Considerations
Working with animals can become emotionally exhausting at times. Whether seeing a pet sit in their cage for an elongated stay, or parting with an animal upon their adoption, there are many emotional considerations to keep in mind when volunteering in an animal shelter.

Whether you feel overwhelmed by an animal’s adoption return, or a recent relinquishment, it’s important to focus on the positives and what you can personally do to make an impact in each animal’s life. Whether they are here for a short period of time, are transferred out to one of our partners, or euthanized, you have a unique opportunity to care for that pet during your volunteer visit.

If you should ever find yourself struggling to cope with the emotional aspects of volunteering, please contact our Volunteer Department for additional resources and assistance.
Euthanasia
The majority of the euthanasia performed occurs to animals undergoing tests and evaluations by the clinic and staff, prior to placement in the adoption rooms.

Sometimes cats and dogs who have been placed in the Adoption room undergo reevaluation for health and temperament, and may be deemed unadoptable. In these circumstances The Anti-Cruelty Society exhausts the following options when appropriate before euthanizing an animal:

- Medical treatment and placement in our rehabilitation suite.
- Relocation to foster home for the treatment of an illness and/or socialization.
- Placement with a rescue organization if available

If these options are not feasible, the shelter may decide to euthanize the animal in question. With this in mind, please note that there is no time limit on any animal that is up for adoption and that as long as they remain healthy and psychologically sound, they will remain in the Adoption Room until an appropriate placement is made.

Please show consideration to the shelter staff who are directly involved with the making of these difficult decisions. If you should ever have a question regarding our Euthanasia Policy, or a specific decision that was made, please speak with a Shelter Manager or contact the Volunteer Services Department.

GETTING STARTED

When You Can Volunteer
The Anti-Cruelty Society is open to the public 7 days a week for adoptions:
- Monday-Friday: 12:00 pm – 7:00 pm. Last adoption processed at 6:30pm
- Saturday & Sunday: 12:00 pm - 5:00 pm. Last adoption processed at 4:30pm

- The Anti-Cruelty Society is open to the public for the receiving of animals seven days a week from 10:00 am - 6:00 pm.

- Cat Adopts volunteers should be scheduling their shifts during open adoption hours.

Holidays: There are no adoptions on major holidays, but volunteers are encouraged to work with the animals on days where we are closed to the public.

Where You Can Volunteer

Cat Adopts volunteers will spend the majority of their time working with cats within the Cat Adoption Room and Charlotte's Cat Corner.

Before you Volunteer:

Cat Adopts volunteers are required to pre-schedule their upcoming volunteer shifts using the online scheduler tool on the www.myvolunteerpage.com website. This enables other volunteers to better schedule their shifts around the shelter to meet shelter animals' needs and help staff prioritize daily assignments. A program trainer will explain the process for scheduling a volunteer shift.

When You Arrive

Upon arrival volunteers should sign in at the front desk. This allows staff to know, at a glance, who has arrived for their shift.

After signing in head to the Volunteer Office to store your personal belongings in one of the provided lockers. You will need to bring your own lock. Collect whatever supplies you may need, included treats, clickers and an apron. If it is your first visit also grab your volunteer ID badge off the bulletin board. Following your shift you should take it home with you.

Before Concluding Your Shift: Notify staff and other volunteers in Cat Adopts that you are leaving. This way personnel knows how many people are currently in the room and that you are no longer available to assist them with the cats.

Then head back to the volunteer office and place your soiled apron in the hamper so that staff can have it washed and disinfected. Please make sure apron pockets have been emptied. Log your hours in your Volunteer Profile using the provided computer. Gather up your belongings and remove your lock from the locker.

Working with Anti-Cruelty Society Staff and Other Volunteers

When you enter the Cat Adoption room, introduce yourself as a volunteer to the staff members and other volunteers in the space. Anti-Cruelty Society staff members are in the room to tend to the cats and assist the public. Please reach out to them should you have any questions about procedure, an animal or a general inquiry.

At times, when the Cat Adoption room is well 'staffed' by volunteers, paid employees may be reassigned to other areas of the building. If you should be left alone in the Cat Adopts room, and do not feel comfortable going solo, please let the front desk know and they will call for additional room coverage.

Here is a glimpse of the typical Cat Adopts room schedule:

Daily:

- 8am-8:30am: Staff feeds cats breakfast
- 9am-12pm: Cat Care volunteers socialize and train cats; Staff perform morning cleaning
- 12pm: Adoption Center opens to visitors

- 1:30pm-2pm: Staff feed cats dinner
- 4pm- 7:30pm: Staff spot cleans cats (actual start time varies, usually takes about 1 hour)

Monday-Friday:
- 6:30pm: Staff takes final adoption application
- 7:30pm: Managers perform final checks
- 7:45pm: Building shuts down to staff and volunteers

Saturday-Sunday:
- 4:30pm: Staff takes final adoption application
- 7:30pm: Managers perform final checks
- 7:45pm: Building shuts down to staff and volunteers

Volunteer Mentors: Experienced volunteers wear a yellow badge signifying that they are volunteer mentors. These volunteers are here to answer questions or assist new volunteers. You can check a mentor's schedule on the Volunteer Scheduler on the Anti-Cruelty website. Volunteer Mentors also check-in as available on the "Sign-In" sheet at the front desk during their shifts. Feel free to reach out these experienced volunteers should you need assistance.

CAT ADOPTS RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Work with the Public

In order to properly help the animals we should always provide the best possible customer service to Adopts Room visitors. These are the people who may be adopting one of our felines – and we should treat them accordingly!

Welcome Visitors: Walking into the Cat Adoption room can be an overwhelming and intimidating experience to visitors. As a Cat Adopts volunteer your focus should be on assisting guests throughout their visit to the adoption room in a way that makes them feel comfortable and at ease.

The simplest way to build an inviting atmosphere is with a smile. Greet each visitor entering the Cat Adopts room in your own style, but don't forget that body language and facial mannerisms are vital to setting the tone. Even as the room capacity fills it is important to acknowledge the presence of a new guest – and sometimes at peak hours – the only way to do that may be with a smile and eye contact.

Share Etiquette: When visitors enter the Cat Adopts room unaccompanied by a Volunteer Guide, review the following etiquette with them:
- **Only staff and volunteers can remove an animal from their kennel**. For the visitor and animal's safety, only staff and volunteers should pull an animal from its cage. If there is an animal the visitor/s would like to meet, remove the pet on their behalf.
- **Animals should not meet.** Explain to guests that when handling an animal out of its kennel, they should not allow for them to physically come in contact with any other animal. You may elaborate on this by saying that it exposes the animals to stress, potential illness, and may make them defensive.
- **Children should not be left unattended:** Children under the age of 18 should remain supervised by their guardians at all times and should not be left unattended with an animal in their care.

Impart Additional Information:

- Introduce adopters to our Adoption Match Program, outlined below.
- Point out the signs in the Cat Adoption room that list the adoption fee is and what is included with the adopted animal.
- Indicate a quick way to tell the sex of the cat:
    - Female - Red band around the cat's neck.
    - Male - Blue band around the cat's neck.
- Demonstrate how to read the kennel card but ask that it not be removed from the holder.
- Offer to answer any questions the visitor may have.

Adoption Requirements:

- At least 18 years of age
- Consent from all members of the household
- Driver's license or state ID
- Appropriate adoption match
- Adoption fee: $60 adults; $85 kittens; $90 for 2 adults; $125 for 2 kittens

What's Included:

- Spay/neuter surgery
- 24 PetWatch Microchip
- Vaccinations
- Complete health screening
- Collar and cardboard carrier
- 30 day pet insurance trial
- Custom engraved ID tag

Additional Notes Concerning Visitors:

- Visitors should not give food or treats to animals.
- Under no circumstances are cat carriers, or other containers that could hold a cat, allowed in the room.
    - These carriers may introduce germs to the environment and/or may be used to steal a cat or kitten.
    - Politely ask visitors to leave all such containers at the customer service desk.
    - Be aware that large winter coats can also be used to steal a kitten.
- It is a good practice to advise visitors to keep their bags and valuables with them at all times.
    - While we are not responsible for any lost or stolen articles, a little extra vigilance on the part of the volunteer may avert an unpleasant experience.
    - There is a lost and found area at the customer service desk.

2. Educate Visitors

Adoption of a cat from The Anti-Cruelty Society to a good home is only one type of success. Another can be attained through the education of a visitor whether or not they leave with a newly adopted pet.

Numerous cats that are brought into The Anti-Cruelty Society and other shelters are from people who did not know about the level of commitment and responsibility of cat ownership. Explaining the commitment

involved with the adoption of a cat or kitten may help some people reconsider any notion that this may be a casual or short-term undertaking. This includes the patience of training, expense of feeding and veterinary care and providing the love, attention, exercise, and socialization a cat requires.

While one of The Anti-Cruelty Society's goals may be to find a home for every adoptable cat in the shelter, it is paramount that the cats go to good homes committed to the proper raising and care of a kitty, rather than getting as many cats out of the shelter as possible. It's about quality not quantity.

- All visitors should clearly understand the time and expense commitment involved with cat ownership.
- Informing visitors of the responsibilities and expense of pet ownership may result in their rethinking what may have been an impulse activity.
- Visitors should know that all cats will require annual veterinary visits and vaccinations, and that kittens under the age of 6 months will need more frequent visits due to booster vaccines.
- If a person does leave the shelter without adopting cat, it should not be viewed as a failure. Rather, you have provided a valuable experience to the visitor and have given the cat an opportunity for a permanent adoption in a more suitable household.

Adoption Match Program: The Adoption Match Program is a tool designed to increase successful adoptions while helping personnel make the best match between adopters and pets. Through this program cats are categorized by Novice, Intermediate, or Special. These categories will help you connect visitors with a pet that best meets their experience, knowledge, and expectations.

The category in which an individual animal is placed is determined after a behavior screening has been given. Only staff from the Animal Behavior & Intake department have clearance to designate an animal's category. Volunteers and staff are welcome to nominate animals for a changed stage as rehabilitation and enrichment programs impact an animal's personality. These requests should be submitted in writing and given to a member of the Animal Behavior & Intake (AB&I) team or to the Volunteer Services Department.

This program is not meant to be used as a screening tool to filter out adopters. Instead – it helps personnel make the most appropriate suggestions for each individual looking to meet a pet. Too often visitors fall in love with an animal that is not appropriate for their lifestyle, and are later denied in the adoption screening process. With this program adopters connect with the animal best suited for them from the onset – limiting future heartbreak when they apply for an animal that is not appropriate for their lifestyle.

> **Novice Cat** = a cat (probably adult) who will likely integrate quickly and easily into household; has no known or discernable behavior issues; will not require a specific training and/or exercise regime; probably okay for first-time cat owner; probably okay for home with children and/or other animals
>
> Example: 3+ -yr old cat who enjoys being handled and has no/little negative reaction OR has a positive reaction to other animals
>
> **Intermediate Cat** = a cat or kitten who has displayed some degree of activity or behavior training need; may not be suitable for first-time or timid cat owners; probably okay in home with older,

considerate children; probably okay in home with other pets who are "cat savvy"; has shown no/little negative reaction OR a positive reaction to other animals

Example: an active kitten who climbs and is easily excited; an adult cat who occasionally is over-stimulated;

Special Cat = a cat or kitten who has exhibited behavior or has a medical condition that is above the abilities of the average cat owner to handle; will require an experienced owner; probably not recommended for home with children; will need to consider if individual cat is appropriate for home with other animals; a cat who has been at ACS for an extended amount of time

Example: a kitten/cat who play bites with some consistency and pressure; a cat who is too afraid to visit outside of its cage; a cat with physical impairment/chronic medical needs

Selecting a good match: When assisting in cat selection, volunteers should use the Adoption Match Cards which are attached to each animal's kennel to help make the most appropriate connection between the animal and the adopters.

A suggested sample of questions to ask adopters before selecting a cat:

- **Are there children at home?** If yes, what are their ages and experience with handling animals?
- **Are there other pets at home**? If so, what kind and of what age? Have they ever interacted with cats?
- **Who is the cat for?** Is it for a family of six with teenage children or for a household with other pets?
- **Who will be the main caretaker of the animal?** Will it be a joint family effort or is it for their live-in grandparent?
- **What are they looking for in a cat?** Someone who is laid back and will cuddle all day or an active energetic kitten to keep their adolescent cat at home company?
- **What is their past animal ownership experience?** Have they had cats before? What were their past pet ownership experiences like?
- **What do they know about caring for a kitten or cat?** If they haven't owned a pet find out if they've researched general care and costs of a kitten or cat.
- **How much time will they have for daily socialization?**
- **Ask them to describe their lifestyle.** Do they travel a lot, work 10 hour shifts or have frequent visitors over to their home?

The information you gather from the adopters will help you to make the best possible recommendation for their lifestyle. Explain to adopters that the Adoption Match Program was developed with their interest in mind. We want them to enjoy the cat ownership experience and not come home and feel overwhelmed.

Additional things to consider when matching up cats and adopters:

- What are the breed characteristics of a particular cat?
- What size and age of a cat would be best suited for this person?
- Physical and grooming considerations:
    - Coat
    - Care
    - Grooming requirements
    - Shedding
- How will the cat behave inside?

- How long will a cat be home alone?
- Does the cat meow excessively?
- How easy is the cat to train?
- What type and amount of food is recommended?
- What specific health predispositions does the cat and/or breed have?

As a volunteer, it is not your responsibility to approve or deny anyone!

- You should never talk someone *into* adopting a cat – or a *particular* cat.
- You should make a person aware of the characteristics, personality traits, and evaluation results of a specific cat – information that can be obtained by reading the animal's kennel card.

3. Assist with the Adoption Process

In addition to welcoming and educating visitors Cat Adopts volunteers assist in introduction of cats to potential adopters and starting out the application process for those interested in bringing a kitty home.

Introducing the cat to the visitor

- Be sure to equip the guest for success by reviewing any behavior and handling information found on the kennel cards ***before*** handing them over.
- There is no specified time a visitor is required to spend with a cat before applying for adoption. Therefore, advise the potential adopters to spend as much time as they feel necessary with the kitty to make their decision.
- If the visitor has a cat at home, speak with them about their current pet. Let them know, in advance, that it may take several weeks of gradual introduction for their current kitty and a new cat to acclimate.

Transferring the Cat to the Visitor and Monitoring the Visit

Once you have removed the cat from its cage (see specific cat handling instructions below), sit down on one of the benches with the cat on your lap and invite the visitor to sit near you.

When the cat appears to be calm, you can direct the cat to move from your lap to the visitor's lap, always maintaining control over the cat. Stay with the visitor, observe the temperament of the cat and assess the displayed confidence and ability of the visitor to control the cat. Tell the visitor he or she is responsible for the safety of the cat they are holding and review with the visitor the following guidelines for interacting with the cat:

- The visitor should securely, yet gently, contain and/or hold the cat to be sure it does not run loose in the Adoption Room.
- The cat can walk on the visiting bench, as well as on the window ledge, but should not be allowed on the floor.
    - The volunteer should be sure to clean off the bench or window ledge with soap water after such use.
- The visitor should remain seated with the cat at all times. Guests should not be standing or carrying cats around the room.
- Volunteers can use their discretion whether a child is able to hold a cat and should be monitored closely while holding the cat. Be certain the adult visitor remains with the child.
- Caution the visitor to be careful about being scratched or bitten. Tell the visitor that if they sense the cat is getting irritable, fussy or hard to control, they should immediately call a volunteer or a staff member to have the cat returned to the cage.

- If you have any doubt about the visitor's ability to control the cat, do not transfer the cat to the visitor. If the visitor is insists on meeting the cat, connect them with a staff member.
- Disinfect the bench or window ledge with disinfectant after each meet and greet.

Visitors should also be instructed not to pass the animal on to visitors outside their party and not to touch other cats while playing with this cat. **If you suspect that a cat may be getting over stimulated, place the cat back in the cage with care.**

As time permits, you should spend as much time as possible with the visitor, discussing any information that is available about the cat. Review and inform the visitor about any noted medical conditions, including dental problems, obesity, ear mites, neuter/spay requirements and procedures and behavior problems such as play biting.

Remember that it is important not to present yourself as an expert on the cat's personality since you will have observed the cat for a relatively short period of time in a stressful environment. Also keep in mind that when the kennel card states that the cat is good with other animals or good with children, the former owner, not Society staff, provided that information.

Prepping the Adoption Form: After spending time with their selected cat, a visitor may decide to complete an adoption form on that particular animal. To help the counselors efficiently process these forms, follow these steps:

1. Gather the following materials:
   - Kennel Card
   - Service Ticket
   - Clip Board & Pencil
   - Adoption Pending Slip
   - Adoption Form
   - Supplementary forms (PFP)
2. Fill out the "FOR STAFF" part of adoption form:
   - Animal ID # = On kennel card, begins with "A"
   - Age = Found under the animal's sex
   - Room = Where the animal is housed
   - Attendant = Your Initials
   - Service # = Number on service ticket
   - Do not fill in any more information on form!
3. Fill out Adoption Tally sheet:
   - Mark "cat" on the clipboard next to the corresponding service number
   - If you have reservations about the adopter, right "see me" and your name on that line.
4. Fill out Adoption Pending Slip with:
   - Date and Time
   - Animal ID Number
   - Service Ticket #
   - Agent Number/Initials: Your Initials
5. Ask adopter to complete BOTH sides of form in detail. The more info they provide, the better!
6. Direct adopter to the Adoption Waiting Area. Explain that when a counselor is available their service number will be called. Wish them luck.

7. **Important!** Place the Kennel Card and Adoption Pending Slip back in the animal's kennel card holder

Preliminary Screening: While volunteers do not perform the actual screening of the prospective adopter, they should advise the visitor of the adoption process and the basic requirements for approval.

- In addition to the basic qualifications concerning age, landlord approval, and the standard adoption requirements, there are other Society policy considerations, which may result in the adoption being delayed or denied. These additional qualifications are at the discretion of the adoption screening staff.
- The Anti-Cruelty Society expects all adult members of the household to be present or reachable by phone to confirm that there is unanimous agreement about the specific adoption. We do not promote pets as gifts or family surprises.

Adopting More Than One Cat: Adopters may adopt two or more cats in one visit. Please connect the adopter with a staff member if they are looking to add cats from separate kennels to their household. The adoption fee for a second cat is discounted to half-price.

Congratulate Adopters: One of the most gratifying moments for a Cat Adopts volunteer is finding out that an adoption has been approved. Follow up with approved applicants with which you worked and congratulate them on their adoption. Answer any additional questions they may have an encourage them to visit the Anti-Cruelty Society store to pick up any essentials they may need for the trip home.

4. Provide Care & Enrichment

If you are volunteering during a time when it is not very busy in the Cat Adoption room, and you have already connected with existing visitors, consider providing the cats with added enrichment. Though this is the primary function of Cat Care volunteers, the more people that can assist, the happier the cats become, and the faster they're adopted – so it's all connected! Note that volunteers should note remove cats from kennels during days of high visitor volumes for enrichment as this may cause undue stress.

1) **Tend to basic physiological needs:** Check to see that each cat in the adoption room has each of the following:

    - **Fresh Water**: When refilling water bowls be careful not to touch the kennel bars with the can tip. Filling the dish too high may cause water to spill, so only fill it up half-way.
    - **Bedding:** Each cat should have a brightly colored fleece bed. These blankets are handmade by Busy Fingers volunteers. Extra blankets can be found in the Cat Adopts kitchen or in the laundry room
    - **Plastic Riser:** Each cat should have a place to perch and/or hide. If not available in the Cat Adopts kitchen, ask a staff member for their current storage location.
    - **Toys:** Each cat should have at least one toy in their kennel to provide mental stimulation.

If a cat is missing one or more of the above items, and you are unsure of where to find something, ask a staff member.

Note that volunteers should not be prepping empty cages for cat transfers as this is a procedure that is delegated to staff only. If a staff member asks you to prep a cage, politely decline and explain that this is not a procedure you have been trained to complete.

Social Eaters: Some of the cats who are in Cat Adopts may have waning appetites. These are cats who are stressed and do not eat when alone. To identify a social eater, look into kennels to see who has not touched their food. Then, follow the classical conditioning steps as outlined below to socialize these cats in-cage to encourage them to eat.

If there is a cat whose meal you would like to supplement - please ask for clearance from an attending staff member before giving additional wet food. We monitor eating very closely and by circumventing the process without pre-approval you may be actually harming the cat unintentionally. If in doubt - ask a manager.

Nail Trimming: Volunteers should make it daily practice to touch and handle cat's paws. This will desensitize them to being touched – making nail trimmings much easier for volunteers, staff, and future adopters. Please use your best judgment when considering whether or not to trim a cat's nails. Many cats find this to be an invasive process – so it's important to only clip claws as needed and for cats whose temperaments will allow it.

Only trim nails when it is quiet and calm in the adoption room as cats can become easily stressed during times of high activity, making it difficult to trim. Many cats become aggravated when receiving a 'mani/pedi' which can result in them being less receptive to meet and greets with adopters. If you do not feel comfortable trimming a particular cat, but see that it is needed, notify another volunteer or staff member for assistance.

2) **Relieve stress and boredom:** Help keep cats' minds and bodies stimulated.

- **Activities***:* Choose and implement an activity out of the Enrichment Menu, found at the bottom of this manual.
- **Toys***:* Grab a wand, or some other kind of interactive toy, and give a kitty a one-on-one play session either inside or outside of their kennel.
- **Brushing Session:** When brushing or combing most cats you should move your tool in the same direction as the hair growth. When the cat has long hair they need to be "back brushed." To do this, brush with the hair, then against the hair, and then back with the hair. This way you can brush out mats and make sure they don't have tangles. Always remove the hair from the tools you've used and place them in the Cat Adopts kitchen sink for staff to properly disinfect.

3) **Teach Etiquette:** Help cats attract adopters by teaching basic manners.

Kibble Runs: Create positive associations between the cat and their kennel by grabbing a pouch of treats or kibble and popping pieces into each kennel. Do not speak to the cats, or solicit any response. Kibble runs are an easy way to classically condition cats into becoming comfortable with people walking by their kennels. Just pop in a few treats, and move forward to the next kennel.

Using Treats: Treats can be a great motivator for shelter cats. Please follow the guidelines below to ensure you are utilizing them appropriately.

- **Keep them tiny.** You do not need to insert a big glob of food in your cat's mouth for them to be rewarded! The smaller the treat, the quicker they associate their actions with the reward.
- **Moist, soft treats are best** because they are more flavorful and the cat can eat them quicker, thereby associating the reward with the behavior.

- **Timing is critical**. You need to get the treat into their mouth within 1-2 seconds of them doing a behavior for them to understand the reward is for that behavior.
- **The food must be rewarding to the cat.** Don't use food the cat doesn't like, or that isn't "special" to the cat when working in a high distraction area. If the cat has problems with diarrhea, you can use some of the cat's kibble as a treat.

Document Activities: In an effort to ensure that the felines in Cat Adopts are receiving regular socialization and enrichment we've created a simple tracking system to monitor volunteer efforts. The Cat Socialization Tracker is attached to a clipboard and can be found in the Cat Adopts kitchen. Volunteers should refer to this sheet when performing additional cat socialization. Volunteers should mark the time and their initials on the line of each cat they socialize.

PROFILES & HANDLING

Before Handling a Cat

Prior to engaging with any cat volunteers will need to learn more about the animal so as to best set yourself and the cat up for success. **Volunteers are required to review each of the following items before removing a cat from their kennel.** Failure to do so may result in a volunteer's removal from the Cat Adopts program.

Read their Kennel Card: The kennel card is the most important document for each cat as it contains all health, temperament, and behavior information for the animal. Note the cat's name, gender, age and other helpful information that is provided prior to taking them out for a visitor or for socialization.

Volunteers should not write on the kennel cards. If at any point you do not understand, cannot read, or have forgotten what a notation or symbol means – ask a shelter staff member.

Review Behavior Notes: In addition to their kennel card, some cats may have a more extended behavior report available. Volunteers are required to read these reports **before** removing them from their kennel. These screenings are performed by a shelter Animal Behavior and Intake staff member in an attempt to provide handlers with more information regarding each cat's personality and temperament.

Review Additional Kennel Signage: In addition to the kennel card and behavior reports, volunteers should remain aware of additional notes in the kennel card holder. Do not remove a cat from the kennel if any of the following signs are present:

- **"Waiting for Test Results" -** which means the cat cannot be removed from the cage, shown or adopted until the results of the heartworm test are recorded by the clinic.
- **"Adoption Pending"** – A person is in the midst of the adoption process and is awaiting approval
- **"I'm Adopted"** – This cat is going home with someone and the adoption has been approved
- **"I am not available for adoption at this time"** – various health or behavioral issues may be the reason for this sign, or the cat may be sent to a breed rescue organization.
- **"Hold for BSR"-** This cat will be specifically held for the behavior department so that a behavior assessment could be performed.

Basic Handling Policies

It is the responsibility of each individual cat handler to positively reward and reinforce desired behaviors and to actively manage the cat and his environment in a way that prevents undesirable behavior.

Focus Your Attention: Volunteers should remain attentive to the cat with which they are interacting. Watch for signs of agitation, even if they seem subtle or something to dismiss. Cats will always signal you if they are uncomfortable or done with socializing. Forcing a cat to interact beyond their threshold can result in injury to the handler.Your visual and physical focus should be directed toward the cat at all times.

Keep Cats Safe: Cats from separate kennels should not have physical contact with one another at any time. This is to prevent the spread of germs and a potential fight. Cats should also be kept off the Cat Adopts floor to keep them from contracting an illness or becoming loose. Once a cat is out of their kennel they should be placed on a bench with a visitor or volunteer. They should not be held and paraded around the room as this may cause anxiety for other cats in the space.

Removing Cats from their kennels: Volunteer should follow the guidelines below when removing a cat from their kennel.

1. **Approach** the kennel talking to the cat in a calm and friendly voice.
2. **Wait** for the cat to show the tiniest sign of desirable behavior, then immediately reward them by opening the cage and putting in treats.
    - Desirable behaviors include approaching, making calm eye contact, rubbing against the cage door, sniffing at the hand, or soliciting affection or attention.
3. **Watch** the cat closely for any signs of arousal or stress and stop working immediately if they spit, growl, or swat.
    - If the cat is displaying a friendly, calm demeanor, move onto the next step.
    - Give over-aroused cats at least an hour to settle before attempting to remove them again. If an adopter is interested in only that particular cat, call upon a staff member for assistance.
4. **Lift** the cat out of the cage, supporting the cat's body, keeping the cat's head away from your face.
5. **Sit down** in designated space with the cat.
    - Volunteers should not walk around the room holding the cat.

Showing Shy Cats: There is bound to be a time when a visitor would like to spend time with a cat that is not yet comfortable leaving its cage. In this case, there are several things that you can ask the visitor to do to make the cat more comfortable.

- The visitor should turn sideways and stand or crouch by the cage. Being sideways ensures that the visitor will not end up leaning into the cage which could overwhelm the cat.
- The visitor may extend their hand toward the cat, but should stop two or three inches away. This is an invitation to the cat and will let you know if the cat is interested in meeting the person or not.
- If the cat leans forward to sniff and doesn't move away, it is likely fine for the person to gently pet the top of the cat's head, scratch its chin or softly rub its cheek.
    - If the cat enjoys this, the visitor can pull his/her hand back an few inches to attempt to lure the cat forward for more attention.
    - If the cat comes forward or becomes more active in the cage, the visitor should spend another minute petting and talking to the cat. You may then attempt to remove the cat so they can visit on a bench. If the cat isn't prepared for this, the visitor may continue to pet the cat while it is in its cage.

- If the cat retreats, they shouldn't reach farther back to pet the cat, but wiggle their fingers and encourage the cat to return to the front of the cage for more attention.
    - Explain signs the visitor should be watching for that indicate the cat is becoming over-stimulated and that they should stop petting.
- If the cat does not accept the invitation for attention, show the visitor how to entice the cat to play using a straw, pipe cleaner or pencil (move it slowly back and forth on or under the paper or blanket a few inches away from the cat.
    - If the cat watches it but doesn't paw at it, move the item up the wall of the cage or across the top of the cat's hiding box if it is under one).
    - You may give the visitor a wand toy to use, but caution them to begin with the stick end and not the toy end. Again, if the cat seems to be interested but isn't playing, they can offer the toy end (a Cat Charmer is often the most successful toy) but they should move it as above and not flick or throw the toy at the cat.
- Treats may also be used to encourage the cat to come forward for attention.
    - If possible, break the treat into two or three pieces. Offer a piece to the cat. If he eats it, offer another piece and then create a trail of treats from the cat toward the front of the cage. After the cat eats a few treats, the visitor may again extend an invitation for petting.

Please do not allow a visitor to remove a shy cat on his or her own and do not succumb to pressure from a visitor to remove a shy cat that is not ready to come out of its cage. Forcing a cat in this situation will only make it more fearful and more difficult for the visitor and future visitors.

Managing Inappropriate Behavior

Any incident of undesirable behavior (such as over-arousal, scratching, mouthiness) should be *immediately*, yet calmly, interrupted and redirected to a desired behavior. If at any time a cat's behavior prevents you from handling him safely and in a behaviorally beneficial way, please return the cat to his kennel right away or ask someone for assistance if needed. We do not want cats to have an opportunity to practice unsuitable behavior that is beyond our ability to handle or control. Any behaviors of concern, or significant positive/negative changes, should quickly be brought to the attention of a shelter lead, AB&I and/or shelter manager.

ADDITIONAL POLICIES & PROGRAMS

Additional Adoption Locations

In an effort to help more animals find loving forever homes, we have partnered with a few local organizations that also promote adoption. Due to these partnerships, some of the animals that people see on our adoption page may not be available in The Anti-Cruelty Society's Adoption Facility but at a partner location. Each animal's location is stated in their profile.

The following is a list of our current partners or additional adoption locations:

Paradise 4 Paws: (Midway): 5262 South Kolmar Ave., Chicago, IL 60632

Lambs Farm: 14245 W. Rockland Road, Libertyville, IL 60048

Everyday Adoption Center (EAC): Offering dog and cat adoptions inside the PetSmart at 1101 S. Canal St., Chicago, IL 60607

Additional PetSmarts: We offer cat adoptions at the Brickyard, Evanston, Wrigleyville, Six Corners, Skokie, and South Lincoln Park stores.

Special Adoption Programs

Pets for Seniors: The goal of this program is to match senior citizens with pets that are appropriate for their lifestyle, bringing them both love and companionship for life. All cats who are 1 year of age or older have their fee waived for adopters who are 60 years of age and older. The Anti-Cruelty Society is then reimbursed by the program sponsors.

Aged to Perfection: Aged to Perfection Program also encourages the adoption of adult pets, but there are no age restrictions for the adopters. Adopters taking home cats over the age of 7 years old are eligible for the adoption fee to be returned if the adoption is still successful after 90 days. The adopters must request the fee to be returned.

Pets for Patriots: The Pets For Patriots program matches dogs and cats under specific guidelines with military service members who are looking to adopt a forever companion. Adopters through this program will receive 10% off of their adoption fee.

Guidelines For Pets For Patriots Program:

- The adopter must be part of the US military, which includes the National Guard
- The adopter can be in any stage of their military career (active, reserve, retired).
- The adopter should present a letter from the Pets For Patriots program at the time of adoption.
- The animals that are eligible to be adopted through this program must be:
  - 2+ years of age
  - For dogs: Weigh 40+ pounds at the time of adoption no matter what the age.
  - Any animal that is disabled or otherwise limited in its physical abilities due to injury, prior abuse or neglect, or birth defect – or that has a medical condition requiring ongoing vigilance, medication or special treatment; regardless of age.

"For the Love of Abe" Scholarship: This special fee-waiving adoption program highlights those cats who have been with us the longest, are advanced in years or have a special need. Sponsored by a private family who is passionate about helping needy pets, the current "For the Love of Abe" recipient will have a special card on their kennel marking their status. Please tell adopters about these special pets!

CONCLUSION

On behalf of the staff and animals of The Anti-Cruelty Society we would like to thank you for taking the time to train in this vital program.

As a Cat Adopts volunteer you are key to helping visitors in the Cat Adopts room find loving feline companions. By facilitating the matches and meetings between our cats and potential adopters – you are helping to find forever homes for these animals in need. Your assistance will also guarantee that guests coming to the shelter will feel welcomed and leave with a positive impression of our organization – whether they adopt or not.

If at any time you have any questions about the Cat Adopts Program, or anything else regarding your volunteer experience, please do not hesitate to contact the Volunteer Services Department.

Remember that you are always welcome, and encouraged, to cross train into additional programs once you've logged an initial 25 hours.

Thank you again and we hope you enjoy your time volunteering with The Anti-Cruelty Society!

APPENDIX

Frequently Asked Questions:

Are the animals at The Anti-Cruelty Society healthy?

- All animals are examined by a veterinarian at the shelter and are tested before being admitted into an adoption room.
- Volunteers should be aware, however, that there are incubation periods for certain diseases (such as Upper Respiratory Infection and Kennel Cough) so it is possible that an animal may have caught something and is not yet showing signs.
- If an animal is adopted and begins showing signs of illness within 15 days, the owner can contact the clinic to make a veterinary appointment.
- Anti-Cruelty recommends that adopters take their new companions to their own veterinarians for a full examination as soon as possible after adoption to establish a new relationship.

Have the animals had their shots?

- When animals come into the shelter, they are treated as if they have never been vaccinated before and are given the initial vaccinations for rabies and distemper.
- After an animal is adopted, the new owner will need to take them to their own vet to get one or more rounds of booster shots.
- After these initial booster shots the owner will be responsible for keeping the animal up-to-date on its vaccinations. This involves having them vaccinated once a year.

Do the animals have worms?

- All animals are given de-worming medicine when they arrive at the shelter. This medicine kills most common types of intestinal parasites but, when the new owner takes their animal to their own veterinarian for a full examination, the vet should check to make sure the cat does not have additional parasites.

How long do the cats and kittens stay in the Adoption Room before they are euthanized?

- There is no "time limit" for animals in the Adoption Rooms. Once they are placed in this room, they stay here until they are adopted, unless they get sick or their temperament changes.

Can you "reserve" this cat or kitten for me until tomorrow/for an hour/for any period of time?

- No. ACS does not place animals "on hold."

Why are some cats placed in Charlotte's Cat Corner? What is the criteria for cats to live in one of the rooms?

- Charlotte's Cat Corner residents are cats who are compatible living with other cats, have been at the Society for at least a month, and at times, have been sick and recovered from Upper Respiratory Infection. These are cats who have been in the shelter longer than most and it's our way of making their stay more comfortable.

Why do you bring animals in from out of state? Aren't there enough animals in Chicago to help out?

- Areas like Appalachia, the south and southwest have incredibly high euthanasia rates for puppies and adolescent dogs. The Anti-Cruelty Society, and several other local groups, started working together

with smaller rescues to transfer dogs from these over-populated areas up to Chicago. Our metropolis is in a unique situation in that we don't have as many puppies coming into shelters, which is a huge victory! But the demand for young animals continues to grow. In an effort to advocate for animal adoption, we have partnered with these groups so we can grow the humane movement. By continuing to provide puppies through adoption facilities, we are thwarting the efforts of puppy-mills by re-directing their customers to adopt, not shop.

What happens if things don't work out and I need to bring the animal back?

- The Adoption Guarantee Program is a concept that helps to address adoptions that are not a good fit. Adopters can return a pet within 30 days and have their adoption fee refunded. Satisfaction Guaranteed supports our philosophy of guest services and successful pet matching. It works to instill potential adopters with an increased confidence in our process and to reinforce our open door policy.

Special Kennel Insert Cards
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Cat Adopts Checklist

- ☐ Introduce yourself as a Cat Adopts volunteer to personnel in the Cat Adopts and/or CCC room.
- ☐ Look to see if there are any adopters looking for assistance.

During Slow periods:

- ☐ Do a “kibble run” or distribute toys around the room.

Check to see if each cat has the following:

- ☐ Fresh Water
- ☐ Bedding
- ☐ A shoe box or riser
- ☐ Toys

Identify cats who need help with the following:

- ☐ Eating
- ☐ Grooming
- ☐ Nail Trimming

Before concluding volunteer activities perform the following:

- ☐ Disinfect all tools used during your visit
- ☐ Notify personnel that you are concluding your volunteering
- ☐ Log your volunteer hours on a Volunteer Office computer

Cat Enrichment Menu

The following activities have been designed and compiled to provide added enrichment to a shelter cat's stay. Variety is the spice of life – so do not perform the same activities each time. In addition, limit each activity between 5 and 10 minutes.

Pre-Dinner

Spa Session: Earmark cats who may need a grooming session and gather the appropriate tools. Slowly approach the cat in the kennel, petting it softly before introducing the brush. Touch the brush to the cats back, while petting, and observe the reaction. If the cat allows, gently brush their fur. Stay alert and watch for any changes in body language. Be sure to disinfect the brush after use.

Dinner Ware: Some cats may have sensitive whiskers which rub up against paper bowl walls while eating – discouraging them from finishing a meal. Tear the corners and fold the sides of some bowls down to help kitties with sensitive whiskers eat.

Appetizers

Fish Sticks: Dab a small amount of food onto the end of a straw or Popsicle stick and place it through the front of the kennel, luring the cat. This will help to encourage cats to come to the front of the cage.

Main Course

Dinner Party: Walk around the room and check to see which of the cats have not eaten. To help social eaters, slowly open the kennel door and talk to them softly. Next, begin to gently pet them, slowly moving the food bowl in their direction. Try stirring the food up to release the aroma. Never force feed a cat – only coax them into voluntary consumption.

Wand Flambé: Grab a wand toy to have a playtime session with cats who play rough. Slowly insert the wand and allow each cat to sniff. Then begin to wave the wand back and forth to engage with the kitty. Do not use the wand again until it has been properly sanitized.

Dessert

Milk & Cookies Grab a handful of milk rings and treats for a quick playtime and snack session. Lure the kitty to the front of the cage by offering them a treat, praising them softly when they accept. Then, introduce them to the milk tab toy, sliding it back and forth between you and the kitty, until the cat engages on their own. Milk rings can be left in the kennel.

Wine Tasting: Grab a wine cork for a game of in-kennel soccer with a cat. Insert the cork into the kennel, moving other toys or dishes over to the side, and roll the cork back and forth between the cat. Watch the kitty's reaction – if they are getting over-stimulated, remove yourself from the equation and let them play alone. Corks can be left in the kennel.

Vanilla Milkshake: Grab some straws and move them around the interior walls of a cat's kennel. The sight and sound will encourage them to grab at the straw and not your fingers. Straws can be left in the cat's kennel after your play session.