



# THE ANTI-CRUELTY SOCIETY

A Commitment to Caring *Since 1899*

## Volunteer Department

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Special Project: Dog Rehab

## Introduction

### Welcome to the Dog Rehab Project!

As a member of the Dog Rehab team you will have the opportunity to help dogs who are sick with kennel cough to retain their best qualities while providing them with much needed socialization.

Working closely with our Animal Behavior & Intake staff and Clinic Rehab team, Dog Rehab volunteers engage with pre-selected canines to help ensure their ongoing social, emotional, mental, behavioral, and physical well-being.

### Dog Rehab Volunteer Responsibilities:

- 1) Identify dogs who have been pre-selected for socialization.
- 2) Tend to each dog's physical needs.
- 3) Provide dogs with one-on-one enrichment
- 4) Document activities and notes on each dog interaction.

### Training Requirements

- 1) Volunteer Orientation
- 2) Animal [Body Language Videos](#)
- 3) Review of Volunteer Handbook & Program Manuals
- 4) Formal training and experience in a Level 1 dog program
- 5) Demonstrated aptitude with dog handling and enrichment

### Safety Guidelines

Always read the kennel card and additional notes before interacting with ANY resident animal. Remember to follow all other volunteer guidelines (such as dress code) for safety when interacting with the animals.

For your safety, the safety of the dogs, please do not perform care duties you have not received instruction for via an Anti-Cruelty Society staff member or volunteer mentor.

If you have dogs of your own at home, be sure that they are current on all of their vaccinations before you begin to volunteer with our the sick dog population.

For the safety of other dogs in the building, dogs in the Rehab center cannot be walked outside of the Rehab room, as doing so will spread the virus to healthy dogs.

### Dog Bites

If at any time you are bitten by a dog it should 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.

**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.

**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 working directly with the animals.

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.

Dog Rehab volunteers should also note that not all of the dogs who are housed in the Rehab Room may become available for adoption through the Society. We are an "open-admission" facility, which means that every companion animal in need of shelter and care is welcome here. We offer all animals refuge, regardless of whether we believe that animal is adoptable. We are dedicated to preventing animal suffering and cruelty and to providing quality care for every animal.

While this means that thousands of pets will make their way through our doors and into permanent adoptive homes this year, it also means that some will not. Some dogs may require additional medical or behavioral treatment, which may result in transfer to another organization or, if unavailable, euthanasia.

For this reason volunteers need to take extra consideration in their involvement in this project before participating. The emotional weight of working in these spaces is much greater than that of the adoption rooms and we want everyone to know this in advance.

Euthanasia is an emotional and heart-wrenching process for those involved. It's a decision no staff member wants to make or carry out. For this reason, volunteers must respect decisions as they are made. Failure to do so may result in a volunteer's removal from the project, or a discontinuation of the Dog Rehab socialization effort.

**Working Alongside Staff**

Volunteers should note that staff have priority access to the Dog Rehab room at any given time. If you are working in a space where a staff person is cleaning or feeding, please give them a wide berth and respect their space.

The Animal Behavior & Training team will be the main point of contact for volunteers participating in this effort. They will work alongside volunteers to help those dogs who are abnormally stressed by the shelter environment. Volunteers are welcome to reach out to this staff team directly should they want to ask a question or make an observation. Their contact info can be found at the end of this manual.

## Getting Started

Once you have completed the required training for the Dog Rehab effort, your volunteer profile will be updated with your new qualifications and you will be ready to begin!

### When You Can Volunteer

Dog Rehab volunteers may be in the shelter 7 days a week between 8:00 am and 7:00 pm. Priority times of socialization are 8am-10am and 1pm-7pm. Volunteers may come in during other times but should note that the rooms may be being cleaned during this time which will make proper socialization difficult

### Where You Can Volunteer

Dog Rehab volunteers will spend their time working with dogs who are currently housed in the Dog Rehab room (sometimes called Iso).

### Working with Anti-Cruelty Society Staff and Other Volunteers

When you enter Dog Rehab, introduce yourself as a special project volunteer to the personnel in the room. Let them know you will be helping dogs who have been nominated for socialization by the Animal Behavior & Training team.

Anti-Cruelty Society staff members are in the room to tend to the dogs, feed and clean. Please ask a staff member for assistance before taking on any responsibilities that are not outlined in this manual.

### When You Arrive

#### 1) Sign in at the front desk

#### 2) Store personal items

- Store your belongings in the provided lockers within the Volunteer Office. Be sure to bring your own lock – these are not provided.

#### 3) Collect supplies

- Collect supplies you may need for your program like hand sanitizer, toys and treats. Supplies and enrichment materials can be found in the Holding rooms and Volunteer Office. If there is something you need but cannot find, please contact a member of the Animal Behavior & Training team or the Volunteer Department.
- Grab a volunteer apron.
- Locate your ID Badge.

**4) After locating your badge and supplies you are ready to begin.** Once prepared, go directly to the Dog Rehab area and introduce yourself to staff who are also assigned to that space.

### Before Leaving

#### 1) Disinfect and replace supplies

- Be sure discard disposable toys (like kibble-filled toilet paper tubs) , place grooming supplies and reusable toys in the Dog Rehab kitchen sink and put away any special foods you may have used.

#### 2) Store badge and apron

- Head back to the volunteer office and put away your ID Badge, taking off the clothing clop, and place the apron in the hamper. Please make sure apron pockets have been emptied.

#### 3) Log your hours

- Using a volunteer computer, open a browser window and go to the following website: [www.myvolunteerpage.com](http://www.myvolunteerpage.com).
- It is important that all hours volunteered are entered. Volunteer hours are tracked and reported monthly and annually.
- You are also welcome to log your volunteer hours from home.

## Dog Rehab Socialization Responsibilities

### Procedural Notes

Working in the Rehab room is a different experience, and because there's a unique animal population present, there are several protocols that each volunteer must keep in mind during each visit:

- Volunteers should only work in the Rehab area **after** interacting with healthy dogs, and not vice versa. Under no circumstance should a volunteer work with a sick dog and then interact with a healthy dog afterwards.
- Volunteers should work with each dog in-kennel and should not remove dogs from the room.
- Reinforcing the positive adoptable behaviors of individual dogs with treats is welcome and encouraged. Please remember to use treats in moderation and only when appropriate.
- Each dog with an orange sheet will have suggested exercises and actions that have been prescribed by the AB&I team. These are designed for each individual dog and will help in making your socialization more effective.
- Volunteers will need to record their detailed observations and interactions with each dog on their corresponding orange sheet in the upper right hand corner.
- Note that the AB&I team may be adding your notes into the dog's official Pet Point profile. For this reason, it is important to be descriptive rather than diagnostic. I.e. instead of writing "Squeekers was scared today," write "Squeekers was at the back of his kennel and pulled away when I tried to pet him."

- Supplies and enrichment materials can be found in the Rehab room and Volunteer Office. If there is something you need but cannot find, please connect with a Rehab or Volunteer Services staff member.
- Suggestions for socialization may include: In-kennel clicker training, gentle massage, brushing, reading the dog a book or a simple petting session.
- You're not alone in your efforts! AB&T and Rehab staff may spray Bliss Miss on cages, add Rescue Remedy to water bowls, will assist dogs in eating and/or do other socialization as needed. Reach out to staff should you need help or have questions about a specific dog.

**1) Identify dogs who have been pre-selected for socialization.**

Volunteers should only be socializing with dogs who fall into the two categories listed below. Dogs who are not staff-nominated may have questionable temperaments or may be undergoing special medical treatment. For your safety, and the safety of other dogs, do not touch or handle these un-listed canines.

**Orange Slip Dogs**

Animal Behavior & Training staff perform "rounds" in the Rehab room once a day to note and monitor the behavior of each animal. During rounds staff observe a dog's eating habits, body language and general demeanor. Summaries of their findings are sent to all directors, managers, and veterinarians each day, who then disseminate the information to the appropriate staff.

During these sessions AB&T staff identify animals requiring extra assistance and nominate them for volunteer work by filling out an orange slip. These forms are then placed in the animal's kennel card holder.

Each orange slip has suggested exercises and actions that have been prescribed by the AB&T team. These are designed for each individual dog and will help in making your socialization more effective.

I am being monitored for:

- Fearful/non-aggressive beh.**
- Not eating**
- Not urinating**
- Not defecating**
- Handling issues**

**Date begin:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date end:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Agent #/initials** \_\_\_\_\_

### **Dogs Awaiting Adoption Transfer**

After working with dogs who have been nominated with orange slips by staff, volunteers are also welcome to socialize with dogs awaiting transfer to the Dog Adoption room **except** those who also have “Waiting for Test Results” signs.

Volunteers will know which dogs are awaiting this move as they will have “transfer to adopts” signs posted on their kennel.

Note that only dogs who are in the Adoption room are available for visitor introductions. Under no circumstance should volunteers be bringing dogs down from the Rehab room to Adopts.

### **2) Tend to each dog’s physical needs.**

**Helping dogs eat:** Some of the dogs who are in the Holding Rooms may be so stressed that they are not eating – which can lead to devastating health consequences. One of the main goals for Dog Rehab volunteers is to ensure that each dog is taking in some kind of food. Alternative foods can be obtained by asking rehab staff.

If you find a dog with a specific food preference, please note it on the orange sheet and tell a rehab staff member.

**Grooming:** If there is a staff note or request for a dog to be groomed, gather the appropriate supplies from the Clean & Preen room or the Volunteer Office. If a dog is fractious, do not attempt to groom them. All grooming should be contained to the dog’s kennel and volunteers should remain aware of their subject’s body language at all times.

Used grooming tools should be placed in the Dog Rehab sink for staff to disinfect. Do not bring used tools out from the room unless they have already been cleaned.

**Bedding and Water:** Check that each kennel is stocked well with blankets or towels and that each water dish is full. When refilling water bowls be careful not to touch the kennel bars with the can tip. Clean bedding and towels are located in the laundry room. Soiled towels should be placed in the hamper in the Dog Rehab area.

### **3) Provide dogs with one-on-one enrichment.**

**Activities:** Below is a list of activities that staff and volunteers perform with dogs in the Dog Adoption room. These same games and interactions can be performed in the Rehab Room, when appropriate.

**Toys:** Check that every dog has a toy in their kennel and distribute as necessary. Toys that are worn or damaged should be discarded. Toys can be found in the Volunteer Office or laundry area. Dirty toys should be placed in the Dog Rehab sink for staff to disinfect.

**Read a Book:** Help dogs who are stressed in their kennels relax by sitting outside their cage and reading to them. Here's a quick breakdown of how this is done:

- Pick a good book. (Children's books are wonderful. So are romance novels. )
- Grab a stool/milk crate and place it near the dog's kennel (best to be at one side or the other of the kennel).
- Sit, offering a sideway presentation.
- Don't directly face the dog or their kennel.
- Introduce yourself to the dog.
- Read for about 5 – 10 minutes only.
- Take your leave.
- Move on to the next dog.

**Clicker Training:** Grab a clicker, a treat pouch and kibble. Wait for a positive behavior, such as eye contact, quiet, sitting, and other attentiveness. Identify, click (or mark with 'yes') and reward desirable behavior with a piece of food. Ignore undesirable behavior. Do not make a verbal request for a specific position, call the dog, or lure them into position. Just wait until they offer a better behavior. Be sure to treat after every click. Also – remember that a clicker is NOT an attention getter. If used this way the effectiveness will diminish.

Enrichment Menu: Implement an activity from the Enrichment Menu, found at the end of this handbook.

### **Socialization Supplies**

Remember to utilize a variety of supplies such as toys, brushes, and straws located in the volunteer office for your socialization time with the dog. These supplies can be found in the white Dog Program cabinets against the back wall.

- If any of the supplies are running low, please notify the Volunteer Services Department.
- Supplies must be disinfected or discarded after each use (that is, between dogs) unless you are leaving the toy with the dog in their kennel. Leave used toys in the Dog Rehab sink for staff to disinfect.
- When using treats, they should be given in small amounts and used to create a relationship with the dog and to reward social behavior. If a dog responds positively to the treats, you should make a note of the type on the orange sheet. This will help the next volunteer know exactly when and what type of treats the dog was given.

### **4) Document activities and notes on each dog interaction.**

Volunteers should record their objective behavior observations on each dog's orange slip before concluding their volunteer session. These slips are checked daily by staff and provide important insights into the well-being of each dog.

Note that the AB&T team may be adding your Log entries into the dog's official Pet Point profile. For this reason, it is important to be descriptive rather than diagnostic. I.e. instead of writing "Squeekers was scared today," write "Squeekers was at the back of his kennel and pulled away when I tried to pet him."

If you should note any behaviors that may jeopardize the safety of any personnel, please bring them to the attention of a staff member immediately.

## Dog Profiles & Handling

The following procedures are the standards for all staff and volunteers working with dogs and should be followed at all times. Consistency is key.

### Kennel Cards

The kennel card is the most important document for each dog, as it contains all health, temperament, and behavior information for an animal. If at any point you do not understand, cannot read, or have forgotten what a notation or symbol means – ask a shelter staff member.

Volunteers should not write on the kennel cards.

### Kennel Signage

In addition to the kennel card, you should remain aware of the dog's physical condition and attitude, as well as additional notes in the kennel card holder.

### Addressing Problem Behaviors:

Interrupt and redirect any undesired behaviors. For example, offer a toy to dog who is play biting. Feel free to ask questions of the room staff or Animal Behavior & Training team if you are unsure of how to interact with an animal or if you have concerns about an animal's behavior.

### Hygiene

Hygiene is a vital aspect of your responsibilities as a Dog Rehab volunteer.

- Volunteers are required to wash their hands before and after each dog encounter.
- Use the sink and wash area in the Dog Rehab room to wash hands between animals.
- In addition, hand-washing is required if a volunteer comes in 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.
- Disinfect any surface or tool that has come into contact with a dog after each use. For assistance disinfecting, ask a staff member for a quick demonstration of the current method being utilized.

## Conclusion

On behalf of the animals and staff - thank you in advance for the time and energy you will be giving to our Holding Room dogs!

Your efforts will help sick dogs recover from their illness at a much faster rate! The Dog Rehab environment is incredibly stressful for the dogs, and every little thing we can do to help them adjust will relieve some of this stress. No doubt, human interaction is the best medicine for some of these dogs, and even just hearing a calm, soothing, kind voice will help a dog open up and become well again.

As a group of elite volunteers, we appreciate your efforts to work with these dogs on a regular basis and hope you understand that the progress you make with the dogs—no matter how small—goes a long way for both the dog and its eventual adopter.



### Dog Enrichment Menu

**COOKIE RUNS (CLASSICAL CONDITIONING):** help dogs develop more positive feelings about being in kennel by tossing a tasty, high-value treat (cheese, freeze-dried liver, hot dog) as you walk by; especially useful for nervous, scared, shy and shut down dogs; 5-10 minutes per room, per session

**FOOD DISPENSING TOYS/PUZZLES:** any object or container with food inside; the dog must interact with and manipulate the object to get the food out; food can be hidden in a variety of objects/containers: rubber Kongs, Kong Wobblers and other puzzles, paper bags, cardboard food boxes, cardboard paper towel/TP rolls, papier mache treat balls, braided ropes, crumpled up paper, etc. TIPS: use a small amount of kibble and pea-sized treats; monitor for safety and clean up as much possible; be creative and share any new ideas; time depends on activity

**SCENT ENRICHMENT:** any opportunity for dogs to exercise their sense of smell is beneficial; use diluted extract sprays to mist in rooms, on kennel walls, braided ropes or other washable toys. Use ONLY sprays made from food-safe cooking extracts on items with which dogs will have direct contact. Household scent sprays, linen sprays, air fresheners, etc. should only be used to mist the air in the room; 5-15 minutes

**HANDLING:** regular handling work should be done to help condition a dog to tolerate (and enjoy) handling from various people; expose dog only to a level of handling that he is able to comfortably tolerate, rewarding each touch with a tiny piece of food; gradually increase the intensity or duration of the touch if the dog easily tolerated the previous touch; reward after every touch, no matter how small; slow down and decrease the intensity if the dog is showing any signs of resistance or stress; DO NOT continue to expose dogs to handling (or any situations) in which they are experiencing ongoing stress; 10-15 minutes

**IMPULSE CONTROL EXERCISES:** You can help a dog vastly improve his impulse control by requiring that he say 'please' for anything that he wants.

Exercises include: waiting until given permission to take toy, treat from hand or food bowl, eye contact, clicking/rewarding for brief (and eventually, sustained) calm behavior in kennel, desensitizing/rewarding for calm behavior in the presence of triggers like leashes, passing dogs, or manipulating kennel latch, etc.

If a dog does not respond to your re-direction and becomes overly mouthy or jumpy, it's time to discontinue socialization. By allowing a dog who is "acting out" to continue their inappropriate behavior we may actually be doing them unintentional harm.

By helping a dog learn to consistently control their own impulses (and then holding them accountable for doing so at all times), you can help curb a lot of jumpy, mouthy, hyper, over-reactive behavior which can discourage adopters.

**Key Contacts**



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