



## VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

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### **Mission Statement:**

"We strive to further the cause of responsible animal adoption and ownership through education and public awareness. Our objective is to actively promote kindness and provide spay/neutering, food, shelter and medical care to abandoned/orphaned animals, to eliminate animal cruelty and neglect of all animals through the lifelong commitment of people to their pets and nature."

## **WELCOME**

Welcome to Pet Connection Programs, Inc. Volunteer Program. Being a volunteer is extremely rewarding, educational, exciting, and fun. You can have a huge impact on the lives of these homeless animals.

Cleaning up a neglected animal, giving them a meal, a blanket and a pat on the head will touch your heart and bring you back for more. It is so rewarding to see how the animals respond immediately to the love they receive while they are at the shelter. In many cases this is the first time someone has really cared for them.

The number of volunteers and the many ways to volunteer has grown tremendously over the years as our program has grown. Because of the volunteer program dogs & cats are socialized every day; dogs learn basic obedience training; cats and dogs have their photos posted on the Petfinder Web site; sick, injured or abused dogs and cats recuperate and most importantly, dogs and cats lives that would otherwise be euthanized are saved.

### **Statement from our President and founder:**

*“Thank you for volunteering your time to Pet Connection. Every year we save hundreds of animals. Animals who despite the horrible circumstances that they came from, trust us to help them, and have so much unconditional love and joy to give.*

*We could not save them without the help of volunteers like you. No matter what you do here: walk dogs, groom cats, clean the shelter, help with events or mailings, you are making a difference in their lives. And you are also making a difference in the lives of the individuals who adopt these animals as part of their families.*

*Thank you from me, and especially from the animals, who have no voices, but through whose eyes we see how appreciative they are of all you do. “*

*Sincerely,*

*Julie Garvey, President & founder*

## **Volunteering with Pet Connection**

The time and energy contributed by volunteers will help keep these programs functioning. Since your support as a volunteer is so extremely important, your decision to participate must be made with the full understanding of the commitment and responsibility it demands.

This manual has been prepared for you as a reference guide. It contains information regarding our policies and procedures as well as tools for dealing with the public. Please read it carefully so you will be well equipped to answer questions knowledgeably and provide quality care to the animals at the shelter.

Thank you for giving your time and energy to the animals at Pet Connection Programs Inc. We hope the time you spend here will be as rewarding to you as it is to the animals you help.

## **HISTORY AND GOALS** of Pet Connection Programs, Inc

Pet Connections is a private non-for-profit, 501c3 organization. Started in 1984 by Julie Garvey, agency President, Director, and Founder. The primary goal of the agency is to help pregnant and special care animals and promote public awareness.

## **BUSINESS HOURS/PHONE NUMBERS**

Phone Number: 652-0192

Due to being a maternity we do not have hours always email us and wait for an answer

The mother animals need the downtime to nurse their young.

Please check signage, website, and weekly emails for updates.

If you have not received an email in over a week /your email is not working try calling or emailing us

## **VOLUNTEER POLICIES AND GUIDELINES**

PCPI relies on its volunteers to be dependable and effective during their volunteer hours. By meeting these commitments, the program operates smoothly, and the maximum benefit is derived for the animals.

### **Time Commitment and Attendance**

We ask that you commit to a minimum of 5 hours a month.

All hours worked must be recorded on the volunteer hours recording sheet ("sign-in sheet") located at the adoption desk or at the event.

### **Dress Code**

We suggest you wear jeans or casual pants and non-skid rubber-soled shoes. Clothing will may become wet or dirty, depending on your duties. When working with the public, casual, tasteful dress is recommended. It is also advisable not to wear dangling jewelry when working around the animals.

We do have Pet Connection T-Shirt – ask for one

Please use proper hygiene to prevent the possibility of spreading disease to your own pets at home. Some people may prefer to wear a specific pair of shoes when working at the shelter and change them when they arrive at their homes. Always wash your hands.

### **Conduct**

As a representative of Pet Connection, it is important you be familiar with its policies and procedures. When dealing with customers, you must always be polite, courteous, and helpful. You also however must remember that the animals are our number one priority, and we serve them, not the public, so if you ever have concerns about a potential adopter, please bring them to the concern of Julie or a shelter staff member.

### **Prevention**

All injuries or accidents that occur while volunteering at Pet Connection or on its premises must be reported immediately. Please report all unsafe conditions to Julie or a staff member. In addition, please do not use equipment or work with animals unless you have asked permission.

### **Off-limit Areas**

Certain areas of the shelter are off-limits to volunteers, unless specifically authorized to enter. These include whelping boxes, sick rooms – always ask permission to enter anywhere

### **Privacy**

Any information pertaining to Pet Connection records and adoptions which you may become privileged to (including names, addresses, phone numbers, etc.) is confidential and may not be discussed with others. Your personal information (name, address, phone number) may not be disclosed, and will not be provided to anyone unless specifically authorized by you.

## Adoptions

Volunteers may adopt animals from the shelter provided they complete the same application process as members of the public and are approved. Shelter animals are **never** put on hold or put aside for anyone.

## DISEASE AND PREVENTION

If a shelter animal shows any of the following symptoms, immediately notify a staff member

Diarrhea.

Vomiting.

Ocular (eye) discharge.

Nasal discharge.

Sneezing or coughing

Anorexia (loss of appetite)

Lethargy (lack of energy)

Dehydration

Abnormal gait or muscle control

Excessive salivation

Bleeding

## Shelter Etiquette 101

One of the first things you notice when you arrive at Pet Connection is that there are animals everywhere. Here are a few pointers that will keep you and the animals safe and happy.

- I. Entering the Shelter- **Always assess the situation before opening the door!**  
You will be approached by many dogs (pack). Please respond in the following way:
  - a) do not make a fuss of the animals
  - b) do not show favoritism to any one animal
  - c) do not give treats in groups
  - d) do not push the animal off you or chastise them
  - e) simply walk through the area
- II. You will see many cats in the entry way. Some are not socialized, or feral cats (wild). Although some may approach you, do not attempt to pick them up.
- III. **Be careful** when driving into or out of the parking lot. Many of the cats will nest on or under your car, especially in cooler weather. Check first before pulling out, drive slowly they will move.
- IV. **Puppy handling:** Socialization is good for the puppies, but sometimes the puppies are not to be handled due to health issues, or recent surgery. Never touch another litter unless you ask.
- V. **Bad Doggie behavior!** Barking, whining, excessive rubbing against you are all behaviors that we do not want to encourage. Rewarding this behavior by calming talk (oh, baby it's ok," or other attention getting means (bad attention is still attention) is not the reinforcement that we want to give the dogs). Correct with a sharp "no" and ignore.
- VI. **Dog fights.** They happen. Often, they are caused by something we do, or when we don't recognize the warning signs in the pack. If you get caught in a dogfight, NEVER try and separate the dogs. Throw water on them or get help. Don't ever panic & scream.
- VII. **Nursing dogs and new moms.** Their behavior can be unpredictable Even a docile dog can change behavior when feeling her babies are threatened. Be aware and give the moms space
- VIII. **Always keep the doors closed! Double check that they are closed**

## **Please listen to shelter staff!**

Shelter staff are experienced and knowledgeable about the animals and the shelter. Volunteers should understand that staff have a job to do and are the supervisors of the volunteers while they are here at the shelter. Please respect their position and listen and follow their advice and requests. You must take dog-walking lessons with our trainer before you can walk dogs

## **Dog walking rules**

- Only shelter staff can remove a dog from the kennel
- Always maintain control of the dog. Do not allow the dogs to pull you.
- Remember to disinfect your hands with anti-bacterial gel before handling another animal
- Be aware that some dogs may pull. If you can't handle the dog, don't walk the dog
- You must be 18 years old and up to volunteer
- Please listen to shelter staff and obey all off limits signs
- Keep the dog you are walking away from other dogs or cats
- Any concerns should be communicated to the shelter staff - like aggressive behavior
- **Do not bring your friends, relatives etc...**
- **They must fill out an application & sign a waiver first**

## **General Questions and Answers:**

As a volunteer you should have some general knowledge about the shelter and adoption procedures in case you are asked. Here is a guide:

### **1. What are the adoption rules?**

Adoptions are first come first served. Interested individuals complete an application online by emailing us. Adoption hours are appointment only. Approved Staff will review the application, interview

The applicant and determine if the adoption is suitable. People with other pets at home are encouraged to bring their animals for a "meet and greet". We do not take reservations or deposits on animals, and we reserve the right to refuse any adoption for any reason

### **2. What are the fees?**

Adult dogs are \$ 90.00, puppies are \$ 180.00, kittens and cats are \$ 50.00 (unless stated otherwise) All adoptions include required vaccines (rabies and distemper), flea treatment if needed, micro-chipping, spay or neutering, pet food, a certificate for one wellness vet visit

### **3. Do the animals have to be spayed or neutered?**

Absolutely. All animals must be spayed or neutered

### **4. Do we adopt out of town?**

No. We want to be sure that our animals are vetted at our vet if needed/ no more than 45 minutes away from shelter

### **5. What makes us different from other shelters?**

We are a non-profit that relies totally on individual donations. We are a specialty shelter that works with maternity animals. Our animals live on site and are socialized with other animals and people from the moment they arrive. We offer lots of TLC and really take the time to make sure that the home our animals will call theirs, will be theirs forever.

### **6. How old do puppies and kittens must be before they are adopted out?**

9-10 weeks kittens, 8-9 weeks for puppies -depending on their size

### **7. Have these animals been abused?**

Some, but not all. If we know that an animal has certain behavioral issues, we will work with the dog here and ensure that he/she is placed in a suitable home. That is why we are so careful about adoptions

**8. How can I do more, or how can other people help?** Sign up for events, spread the word about our shelter, hold donation drives, or donate financially. There are many ways to help, and we need all the help we can get!

**9. Now that I am a volunteer can I bring anyone with me that has not attended an orientation? Sorry, everyone must take an orientation and sign a waiver**

**Once again, thank you for volunteering and we appreciate all that you do  
for the shelter, and the animals!**

**VOLUNTEER WAIVER RELEASE FORM**

**I \_\_\_\_\_, agree to accept a position as volunteer worker for Pet Connection Programs Inc (PCPI), and in doing so I agree to comply with all the policies, rules, and regulations contained in the is handbook, or which may be established in future by Pet Connection Programs Inc. I understand that failure to do so may result in termination as a volunteer.**

**I acknowledge that my services are provided on a voluntary basis, without any pay or compensation of any kind and without liability of any nature on behalf of PCPI, all services to be performed by me at my own risk.**

**I recognize that in handling animals and performing other volunteer tasks, there exists a risk of injury including physical harm caused by animals. I agree to hold harmless PCPI from any damages or injuries that may be sustained by me in connection with my volunteer services at PCPI.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature of Volunteer (parent if for a minor)**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

# Volunteer Application

**Note: Children under the age of 18 cannot volunteer**

**even with an adult/guardian**

**Also, we do not accept community service volunteers,**

**only permanent volunteers**

Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*Thank you for your interest in volunteering at Pet Connection. Before you begin as a volunteer with our organization, we want to know more about you to ensure that we effectively match your skills and experiences with our organization's needs, and that your time is put to good use here. We are glad that you are here and look forward to your assistance.*

(PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell #: \_\_\_\_\_ Work #: \_\_\_\_\_

Best Number to be reached on \_\_\_\_\_

We require volunteers to be at least 18 years of age. Are you 18 years of age or older? \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Contact Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

How did you hear about the Pet Connection? \_\_\_\_\_

Why do you want to volunteer here? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

We ask for a commitment of at least 1-2 regularly scheduled hours a week for volunteers.

This ensures proper staffing, as we rely heavily on volunteers. **Can you commit to this?** \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have a valid drivers license? **YES** \_\_\_\_\_ **NO** \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, would you be willing to use your vehicle to transport goods to events (Ex. Raffle Baskets, Baked Goods, Totes...) **YES** \_\_\_\_\_ **NO** \_\_\_\_\_

Are you volunteering for an internship, graduation requirement, community service, self interest or other?

\_\_\_\_\_

**Please provide the hours you want to volunteer:**

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
From :	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
To:	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

**Special Events Only:** We know that there are people who want to volunteer but cannot commit to a regular schedule. Are you only interested in working on special events and being emailed if needed? (fundraisers, baking, grounds projects, mall events) \_\_\_\_\_

**Current Employment**

\_\_\_ I am currently employed full time.      \_\_\_ I am currently employed part time.

\_\_\_ I am not working at the present time.      \_\_\_ I am retired.

I am currently a student at: \_\_\_\_\_

Current or most recent employer (if applicable):

Organization: \_\_\_\_\_ Dates employed: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

**Do you have any pets? and what are they?** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Are they spayed/neutered?**

**If not why not?**

What skills and experience do you bring to the Pet Connection?

Have you had any formal training or education experience in animal, pet, or vet field? If yes, please describe:

**Volunteer Experience:**

Have you ever volunteered before? \_\_\_\_ YES \_\_\_\_ NO

If YES, please provide the following information, starting with your most recent experience:

1) Name of organization: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_

How long did you volunteer there? FROM \_\_\_\_\_ TO \_\_\_\_\_

2) Name of organization: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_

How long did you volunteer there? FROM \_\_\_\_\_ TO \_\_\_\_\_

## Volunteer Placement

Even if you are familiar with some areas of our work at Pet Connection Programs, Inc, please take a minute to review our volunteer opportunities listed below. Please check any responsibilities you feel suited to help with. These and other opportunities can be discussed further with the volunteer coordinator so that we can find a position that is meaningful to you and helpful to our work.

- Fundraisers/Events
- Administrative (stuffing envelopes, mailings, etc.)
- Working with cats (playing, socializing, grooming)
- Obedience Training with dogs and puppies (must have experience)
- Cleaning up after cats and/or dogs
- Transporting animals to and from vet
- Walking dogs / socializing pups
- Cleaning the shelter (washing floors, dishes from food, blankets, cages, etc)
- Taking care of grounds (Cutting grass, weeding, assist in special projects)
- Grooming dogs (trimming nails, baths, etc)
- Baking items for bake sales
- Taking photos at events and of animals at shelter
- Organization of supply rooms and goods
- Making Raffle Baskets at the shelter
  
- Helping with putting together Doggy Bags or Cat Bags at the shelter

I hereby attest that the above information is true to the best of my knowledge. I understand that the information I have given is subject to verification. I hereby authorize Pet Connection Programs, Inc to contact my references prior to or during my volunteer activity.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Volunteer Coordinator

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

***Thank you again for the time you took to fill out this application. We are committed 24/7/365 to caring for animals that are abandoned/orphaned, and to educate the public through responsible adoption. All information is kept strictly confidential for your privacy. You will be contacted weekly by email on what is needed each week We and the animals, look forward to having you as a member of Pet Connection!***