



Heart of the Valley  
Animal Shelter



## **Volunteer Manual**

1549 East Cameron Bridge Road

Bozeman, Montana 59718

(406) 388-9399

[www.heartofthevalleyshelter.org](http://www.heartofthevalleyshelter.org)

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## **Welcome to the volunteer team at the Heart of the Valley!**

When you become a volunteer at Heart of the Valley, you also become an ambassador for the organization and its mission. The following pages will discuss the policies and procedures for volunteering at the shelter, but we also aim to provide you with an educational experience – so that when someone in the community asks you about the shelter, you are equipped with the information you need to help educate the public and encourage volunteerism.

While there are many reasons that people decide to volunteer at the Heart of the Valley, there are two main reasons for the program itself:

- To enhance the quality of life of the animals at the shelter.
- To make each animal more “adoptable” as a result of its interaction with volunteers.

### **Mission Statement**

**The mission of Heart of the Valley Inc. is to compassionately shelter the lost and surrendered pets of Gallatin and Madison valleys, and to enhance the lives of people and companion animals through pet adoption and education.**

A core part of the mission of Heart of the Valley is facilitating the adoptions of quality companion animals to members of the public. In order to accomplish this, each animal that comes through the doors into the shelter, whether brought by their owners, by Animal Control officials, or as a stray, is given an extensive medical and behavioral evaluation by HOV staff to determine the adoptability of an animal.

Heart of the Valley operates a “no kill” animal shelter. This is often a confusing term for those outside the sheltering world, and simply means that we do not euthanize animals for space or length of stay. “Adoptable” animals are sheltered here for as long as it takes to find them new lifetime homes. “Adoptable” animals will receive another medical and behavioral evaluation if they extend the stay of six months. Animals that are deemed to be “un-adoptable” for medical or behavioral issues, are humanely euthanized.

All animals that you will come in contact with as a volunteer are considered medically and behaviorally adoptable, and have been vaccinated against the following:

Dogs: Distemper, coronavirus, hepatitis, parvovirus, parainfluenza, bordatella, and rabies.

Cats: Rhinotracheitis, Calici, panleukopenia, and rabies.

Additionally, they have all been micro-chipped and spayed or neutered. As a precaution due to the number of animals volunteers come in contact with at the shelter, it is strongly recommended that you also keep your own animals fully vaccinated.

## **History**

The Humane Society of Gallatin Valley (HSGV), a group of concerned citizens incorporated in 1973, built a shelter on top of an old city landfill on Rouse Avenue in 1975. This shelter was largely built by volunteers, and the land was leased from the City of Bozeman for \$1 per year. During the first years of the shelter on Rouse, the executive director also acted as the caretaker and lived in an apartment that later became the cat adoption room. In 1987, after Pierce Trailers donated a trailer to the shelter, the ED/caretaker moved into the trailer, allowing the cats to be moved out of the dog adoption facilities and into an area of their own.

The original shelter quickly became over-crowded and was expanded with two additional trailers and outdoor kennels for most of the dogs and many of the cats. HSGV also held contracts with the City of Bozeman, Gallatin County and West Yellowstone to receive lost, stray and impounded animals. The guiding principles of HSGV included a no-kill policy, open door admissions and compassionate care of all animals that came into the facility.

In March of 2004, the memberships of HSGV and Animal Services Center Inc. voted to merge together to create a new organization called the Heart of the Valley Humane Society (now Heart of the Valley Inc.). Soon after the merger, Heart of the Valley (HOV) began to seriously consider its options for a new facility. By this time, the shelter on Rouse was inadequate and beyond repair and refurbishing.

Realizing that they could no longer effectively serve the rapidly growing Gallatin County, and surrounding region of Ennis and West Yellowstone, HOV's board of directors began a campaign to raise \$4 million to build a new shelter and \$1 million for endowment. The new shelter was to be built on 58 acres on Cameron Bridge Road.

By October of 2007, the funds to build the new building had been raised, and HOV had moved into the new facility on budget and on time. The 19,850 square-foot shelter has indoor housing for all the animals as well as state-of-the-art technology for keeping the facility clean and disease free. It includes an adoption center, a veterinary clinic, administrative offices and a community room for meetings and public outreach programs.

This new shelter brings not only cleaner, more humane conditions for the pets who will make this their temporary home, but it also represents an educational animal haven for the entire community. This shelter will be a place of refuge for the homeless animals of the community – and for people who want to hang out with the animals!

## **Programs and Services**

**Lost & Found:** Lost or found a stray dog or cat and don't know what to do? HOV serves as a clearinghouse for citizens who have either lost or found a stray dog or cat.

**Impound:** Was your animal picked up by an Animal Control Officer and you are wondering where it is? HOV provides impoundment for all animals seized by officers of the City of Bozeman, Gallatin County, or City of West Yellowstone.

**Strays:** Was your animal picked up by a neighbor or Good Samaritan and taken to the shelter? HOV serves as a holding facility for any stray or abandoned animals found by citizens.

**Owner Surrender:** Need to surrender your cat or dog because you can no longer care for it? HOV accepts all cats and dogs surrendered by citizens. Please check out our "Need to Surrender" page before making a decision.

**Adoption:** Looking to adopt a new dog or cat as a companion? HOV is an adoption center for companion animals with a satellite adoption center at PetsMart. All animals are vaccinated for rabies and other customary diseases, spayed or neutered, wormed, micro chipped, and cats are tested for Feline Leukemia and Feline Infectious Virus. We have a 30-day adoption fee return for any adoption that is not working out for whatever reason.

**License Sale:** Need a Bozeman city license for your cat or dog companion? HOV sells Bozeman city licensing for your dog or cat. You just need a proof of Rabies vaccination for the animal being licensed.

**Microchipping:** Need your animal microchipped? HOV's Veterinarian staff offers microchipping to your animals for a reasonable price.

**Food Assistance:** Having troubles making ends meet and need help with pet food? HOV and the Gallatin Valley Food Bank provide free pet food and supplies to low-income families from supplies donated by local merchants and citizens. Supplies are available during HOV's business hours.

**Cremation:** HOV provides for cremation of your companion's remains, either private cremation with ashes back to the owner or communal cremation with no ashes back. Simply bring the deceased pet to HOV.

**Feral Traps:** Want to control those wild cats hanging around your house or barn? HOV rents live traps to assist in control of feral cat colonies. When resources are available, HOV also will sterilize your feral cats and allow you to release them in the same location where you trapped them. Please inquire about our SNAP option.

**SNAP Feral Clinic:** A monthly Spay and Neuter Clinic aimed towards the sterilization of feral cat colonies.

**Pet Resources:** Need information or assistance with pet issues or being the best pet parent? HOV has staff available to answer questions or make referrals, a library of educational books and videos, and links to education and training websites.

**Education Programs:** Putting together an educational program and want participants to learn about animals? HOV offers a full spectrum of humane education opportunities for all ages. Teaching responsibility and compassion can only help make this a better world for people and animals. We offer shelter tours and classroom presentations to teach children about responsible pet care, safety around animals, and the role of the animal shelter in the community.

**Seminars and Educational Courses:** Are you looking for an opportunity to educate yourself, friends, or family members in animal care, behavior or health? HOV offers a variety of seminars and educational courses for every interest, just check out our website for an updated schedule of courses.

**Volunteer:** Looking for an opportunity to volunteer and help animals? Volunteers are invaluable at HOV. Volunteers help as dog walkers, cat companions, foster homes, animal bank collectors, office assistants, special event participants and more. Their contribution of time enhances the lives of shelter animals and enables more funds to go directly to animal care.

## **Shelter Hours**

**Open 7 days a week - 11:30am-5:30pm**

**Telephone:** (406) 388-9399

**Fax:** (406) 388-2877

**Website:** [www.heartofthevalleyshelter.org](http://www.heartofthevalleyshelter.org)

## **Administrative Staff**

**Front Desk-Intakes/adoptions: Amanda Davidson & Megan Flamm ext. 0**

**Office Manager: Mary Wilhelm**  
accounting@heartofthevalleyshelter.org ext. 106

**Veterinarian: Dr. Crista DeJoia**  
crista@heartofthevalleyshelter.org ext. 108

**Executive Director: Traci Weller**  
traci@heartofthevalleyshelter.org ext. 102

**Medical Coordinator: Lorri Nielsen ext. 109**

**Assistant Operations Director: Angela Sandoval**  
angela@heartofthevalleyshelter.org ext. 103

**Canine Supervisor: Beth Harper**  
canine@heartofthevalleyshelter.org ext. 110

**Volunteer & Education Manager: Kari Chiochi**  
volunteer@heartofthevalleyshelter.org ext. 105

**Feline Supervisor: Kelly Haniuk**  
feline@heartofthevalleyshelter.org ext. 111

**Development Director: Kathryn Hohmann**  
kathryn@heartofthevalleyshelter.org ext. 106

**Development Associate: Jessica Groseth**  
jess@heartofthevalleyshelter.org ext.112

**Canine Evaluator & Consultant: Ben Donoghue**  
behaviorist@heartofthevalleyshelter.org ext. 122

## **Adoption Policies:**

Heart of the Valley, Inc. (HOV) strives, through quality customer service, education, and counseling to place all animals in our care in suitable, responsible, quality human/animal relationships. We seek adopters having the ability and desire to fill each animal's needs based on the animal's individual personality and condition. We also seek to match an animal to an adopter based on the adopter's needs and circumstances.

- All persons interested in adopting an animal will, at all times, receive the highest level of service and respect from the staff and volunteers of HOV.
- The goal of each interaction with a potential adopter will be to make an adoption, not turn one down. Even if the adopter, the adopter's circumstances, or the particular animal chosen by the adopter does not appear to be ideal for a successful adoption, the staff will strive to offer counseling, education, and necessary help to aid in the success of the adoption rather than decline the adoption.
- Adoptions will take place in a comfortable, welcoming, minimally stressful environment for the adopter and animal.
- Each potential adopter will be treated as an individual. Effort will be made to determine and respect the adopter's individual knowledge and experience.
- Specific organization guidelines for adoption will be kept to a minimum as they can be seen as inflexible barriers to adoption. Rather, emphasis will be placed on education and counseling.

However the following guidelines for adoption must be adhered to:

- Adopters must be at least 18 years of age.
  - Adoptions will not be made to anyone suspected of being under the influence of drugs, alcohol, or any other mind-altering substance.
  - Adoptions to anyone renting a residence must be approved by their landlord prior to release of the animal.
- Adoption staff will focus on making a successful adoption by establishing a relationship with each adopter and emphasizing the organization's information resources. This is an attempt to make the adopter comfortable seeking post-adoption information or help from staff to resolve problems or abate concerns that may occur after the adoption.
  - If, after counseling, the Adoption Counselor determines the potential adopter would not be able to provide a good quality of life for the animal, the Assistant Operations Director or Operations Director should be contacted. The Assistant Operations Director or Operations Director will evaluate the need for either further counseling or can, in extreme cases, make the decision not to adopt to the person due to the fact that the quality of life for the animal is not being taken into account. If possible and appropriate, the person will be directed to another animal.

### **Euthanasia - Why is it necessary?**

Euthanasia is probably the most difficult subject to understand at the shelter. Most people would rather not even think about it when considering working at the shelter. Yet it is a very real part of working at a shelter, and therefore,

something we want to address directly.

Animals brought into the shelter are cared for in the most humane manner possible, with food, shelter and most importantly, many people to give them the care and attention they need. In many cases, the time spent at the shelter is the best time of their lives. Some of these animals have never known a loving voice or a caressing hand. They come in shaking from fear and cower in a corner. Usually by day 2-3 they are looking for that gentle hand that has been touching them for the past couple of days and then the tail will begin to wag.

**What does the term “euthanasia” mean? “A good death”.**

### **Why do you have to euthanize animals?**

A core part of the mission of Heart of the Valley is facilitating the adoptions of quality companion animals to members of the public. In order to accomplish this, each animal that comes through the doors into the shelter is given an extensive medical and behavioral evaluation by HOV staff to determine the adoptability of an animal. HOV's medical and behavioral evaluations are for the well being of our community and the animal. We will not adopt out animals that may be a threat to people and/or other animals in our community. To ensure the best quality of life for an animal we will not adopt out animals that may have medical issues in which we do not have the resources to maintain or resolve.

### **What are some common reasons for surrendering animals to HOV?**

- He won't listen to me.
- I can't housebreak him.
- I'm moving.
- My landlord said no pets.
- I have too many animals.
- My wife/husband is allergic to her.
- He tears up the house.
- I don't have any time for the animal.
- He doesn't get along with other dogs.
- The kids won't take care of him.
- I can't afford to take care of him.
- We got a divorce.
- He barks all the time.
- Just don't want him anymore.

### **Who decides which animals are to be euthanized?**

A committee that includes the Operations Director, Canine Behavioral Consultant, staff Veterinarian, and Canine Supervisor makes the final decision for canine euthanasia. A committee that includes the Operations Director, Feline

Supervisor, and staff Veterinarian will make the final decision for feline euthanasia. All members of the committee will read all pertinent documents in the animal's file prior to making a determination and only following extensive discussion. The animals will be deemed: adoptable, adoptable with special needs, unadoptable, or grey area. If the animal is deemed to be in the grey area, HOV staff members will create a lesson plan for that particular animal. Focus will be aimed at resolving the issue at hand and another evaluation will be conducted at a later time.

### **How are animals euthanized?**

Euthanasia is done by injection. There are usually two euthanasia technicians. One is a holder and comforts the animal, while the other administers a tranquilizer. The pain to the animal is minimal (like a vaccination injection) and he feels a slight pin prick and then falls into a deep sleep (the same injections that are given to sedate prior to surgery). The lethal injection is then administered and death occurs in seconds.

### **Doesn't it bother the staff to have to euthanize animals?**

Anyone who works in an animal shelter is a special kind of person. They are the type of person who loves animals, and are, in fact, usually owners of several pets of their own. This, of course, makes it all the more difficult to euthanize any animal. All final decisions at the HOV are done with the upmost respect for the animal.

### **Dress Code:**

Wear clothes that can get dirty or furry. Wear closed toed shoes with soles that will not slide on the concrete. Dangling jewelry is likely to become snagged and can be a hazard (may also be damaged or broken).

\*You must wear a nametag stating that you are a volunteer.

### **Personal Belongings:**

HOV is not responsible for lost or stolen items. We recommend that you lock any unnecessary clothing items, bags, purses, etc. in your vehicle.

### **Signing In:**

All volunteers need to record their hours each shift on the clipboard located in the Volunteer and Education Managers office. Nametags are located on the corkboard in the Volunteer and Education Managers office. Please wear a nametag at all times.

## **Training:**

Before beginning your wonderful journey with the fuzzy and furry, you must attend a general Volunteer Orientation, which is scheduled as needed. During this orientation, each volunteer will receive a copy of this volunteer manual and a volunteer application. The basic orientation class will last approximately 1 hour. During this orientation, you will be instructed on all shelter information needed to be a volunteer and given a brief tour of our shelter.

## **Visitors and Personal Guests:**

Unless your friend(s) are trained HOV volunteers, volunteers cannot bring friends along on their shifts to “help out.” If you do have a friend or family member wanting to get involved please have them contact the Volunteer and Education Manager so we can get them started.

## **Grievances:**

If you have any problems with a staff member, another volunteer, or the Heart of the Valley’s rules and regulations, please speak to the Volunteer Manager.

## **Alcohol and drug policy:**

Any volunteer under the influence of alcohol or drugs will not be permitted on the property.

## **Injuries:**

In the case of accidents that result in injury including bites and scratches, regardless of how insignificant the injury may appear, must be reported to a supervisor and/or Volunteer Manager immediately. Such reports are necessary to comply with laws. A report must be filled out and signed by both the volunteer and supervisor.

## **Sexual and Other Unlawful Harassment:**

The Heart of the Valley Animal Shelter is committed to providing an environment that is free from all forms of discrimination and conduct that can be considered harassing, coercive, or disruptive, including sexual harassment. Actions, words, jokes or comments based on an individual’s sex, race, color, national origin, age, religion, disability, or any other legally protected characteristic will not be tolerated.

If you experience or witness sexual or other unlawful harassment in the workplace, it should be reported to your supervisor immediately. If the supervisor is unavailable or you believe it would be inappropriate to contact that

person, you should immediately contact the Executive Director. You can raise concerns and make reports without fear of reprisal and retaliation. All allegations of sexual harassment will be quickly and discreetly investigated.

### **Staff Only Areas:**

All staff-only areas are clearly marked and often locked. Volunteers are not allowed in any staff-only areas.

### **Volunteer Opportunities**

**Cat Companion:** Work directly with our adoptable felines to ensure the best quality of life and increases the chances of HOV's felines finding their forever homes. Help our cats feel less lonely and more enriched by simply playing, brushing, and helping improve behavior problems.

**Dog Walker:** Work directly with our adoptable canines to ensure the best quality of life and increase the chances of HOV's canines finding their forever homes. Help our canines feel less lonely and more enriched by simply playing, walking, and helping improve behavior problems.

**Foster Parent:** Provide temporary, in-home care for friendly kittens, puppies, cats, and dogs in need until they can be placed for adoption.

**Groomer:** Groom our adoptable canines and felines to ensure the best quality of life and increases the chances of our animals finding their forever homes.

**Fundraising Events:** Have fun and help us raise money for our shelter animals by performing a variety of tasks and assignments for HOV's Woofstock, Santa Paws, Dog Ball, etc.

**Humane Education:** Performing class presentations and staffing community outreach tables throughout Gallatin County.

**Office Assistant:** Work on daily office assignments or data entry.

**Animal Photographer:** Producing eye-catching photographs of our adoptable animals and uploading them on the computer and website.

**Donations Pick Up:** Transport donated items to the animals shelter from designated locations.

**Home Team:** Performing off-site adoption counseling for HOV's adoptable felines.

**Alpha Dog Trainer:** Work with our adoptable canines from adoption room 2 that may have challenging behavioral and training lesson plans.

**Alpha Cat Trainer:** Work with our adoptable felines that may have challenging behavioral lesson plans and train our felines to walk on a leash and learn tricks.

## **Volunteer Code of Ethics**

As a volunteer representing the Heart of the Valley Animal Shelter, your conduct and interaction with staff, other volunteers and the public is expected to always be professional and courteous. By volunteering, you are making a commitment to staff and animals to carry out, to the best of your abilities, the tasks you have pledged to perform.

The volunteer code of ethics clarifies the expectations and principles for the Heart of the Valley Animal Shelter. Should a volunteer display unprofessional, dishonest or disrespectful behavior or exhibit a lack of self-discipline, the volunteer will be asked to leave the premises. Such behavior could be grounds for termination of volunteer status.

## **Volunteer Pledge**

As a Heart of the Valley Animal Shelter volunteer, I pledge to:

### **Respect**

- Respect others even though I may not agree with them
- Display courtesy, sensitivity, consideration and compassion for people and animals
- Use good judgment in recognizing the scope of authority of staff members

### **Safety**

- Keep safety at the forefront of all volunteer activities
- Follow the rules presented to me in training
- Respect and use equipment and supplies as they are intended
- Report all injuries immediately to a staff person

### **Quality**

- Perform all tasks to the best of my ability
- Ask for help when needed
- Recognize training is essential to maintain safe shelter practices

### **Self Discipline**

- Recognize my limitations and those of others
- Set boundaries for myself-know my limits with the animals and other activities
- Hold myself accountable for the commitments I undertake

### **Communication**

- Recognize I communicate both verbally and non-verbally
- Listen to the needs of others
- Advise shelter personnel of relevant information regarding the animals and my involvement at the shelter

### **Commitment**

- Recognize that commitment comes from within
- Respect that people and animals count on me to honor my commitments
- Work together with staff and other volunteers to meet HOV's goals

### **Welfare**

- Value my role in the maintenance and growth of the organization
- Strive to promote a positive environment
- Respect and support all people and animals