



JUNIOR VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK



1549 East Cameron Bridge Road
Bozeman, MT 59718
(406) 388-9399
www.heartofthevalleyshelter.org

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Heart of the Valley Animal Shelter (HOV)! We are excited to have you join our team. This handbook contains information about the shelter's history, policies, and programs. It will serve as your guide to volunteering at HOV.

Mission Statement

The mission of Heart of the Valley Animal Shelter 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.

Volunteers are a vital component of HOV's mission. As such, volunteers are expected to be familiar with and adhere to our policies and procedures.

About Us

HOV is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that has been serving the Gallatin and Madison Valleys since 2004 – when the Humane Society of Gallatin Valley and Animal Services Center, Inc. merged. After much community support and planning, the Anderson Animal Center was constructed in 2007. HOV has contracts to serve as the stray care facility for Gallatin County, Bozeman, Belgrade, and Manhattan. HOV is an independent entity and is not affiliated with any other national agency. As an “open door shelter,” HOV accepts any homeless or surrendered cats and dogs. Animals arrive at HOV for many reasons and in every imaginable condition. No matter the circumstances, HOV accepts them.

Contact Us

Please contact us if you have questions or concerns. We want volunteering at HOV to be a rewarding experience.

Phone: (406) 388-9399

Fax: (406) 388-2877

Website: www.heartofthevalleyshelter.org

Volunteer and Education Manager

Phone: (406) 404-3068

Email: volunteer@heartofthevalleyshelter.org

Our Hours

Daily from 11:30A.M. to 5:30P.M.

Jr. Volunteer opportunities available during open hours only.

Services and Programs

HOV provides Gallatin and Madison Counties with a full range of services to enhance the lives of people and pets. HOV strives to improve the quality of life for community animals while helping control overpopulation and prevent animal cruelty. HOV offers:

- Adoptions & adoption counseling
- Animal foster care program
- Dog and cat licensing
- Maxi Park, an off-leash dog park
- Microchipping services
- Behavioral consultation and training
- Lost and found reports
- Shelter for stray cats and dogs
- SNAP Clinics (Spay/Neuter Assistance Program)
- Live trap rental
- Crate rental
- Pet food assistance for those in need
- Cremation services
- Humane education and birthday parties for community youth

Euthanasia Policy

Euthanasia is something to consider before making a commitment to volunteer at Heart of the Valley. Please **do not** consult with the staff team about euthanasia. It can be difficult for staff to discuss the circumstances behind this difficult decision. The Volunteer and Education Manager will be happy to answer any questions you have or to direct you to the person best suited to answer your questions.

All incoming animals are given a medical and behavioral evaluation. Every animal must pass both evaluations before being made available for adoption. HOV has a responsibility to the community to adopt out animals that are safe and in a manageable state of health. During their stay, animals are reevaluated regularly to ensure they remain adoptable and are maintaining a reasonable quality of life.

Euthanasia may be considered based on an animal's temperament, health assessments, and quality of life. This is a difficult decision and one that is thoroughly discussed by staff. Reasons for animal selection vary based on individual circumstance.

Program Goals

Volunteers are an integral part of the shelter and contribute greatly to our success. All volunteers should work towards these goals in their time at Heart of the Valley:

1. Increasing the quality of life for animals at HOV.
2. Maintaining the adoptability of HOV animals.
3. Serving as HOV ambassadors in the community.
4. Assisting with operational support.

Service Hours

For all volunteer activities, hours are recorded in Volgistics by signing in and out at the shelter's Volunteer Computer. This is important because an accurate log of volunteer hours allows us to apply for grants. An individual log is kept for each volunteer, and hours are calculated each month. This is used to recognize consistent volunteer service.

Advance Sign-up

All volunteers must sign up in advance for animal handling and care activities. This can be done by accessing their volunteer accounts via Volgistics. It is not necessary to sign up in advance for operational support tasks (i.e. dishes or laundry). An accurate count of volunteers allows staff to prepare for the day. Signing up in advance ensures shelter animals and volunteers have a positive experience. You may not bring friends or family along on shifts without prior authorization from the Volunteer and Education Manager.

Grievances and Injuries

If you have any issues with a staff member, customer, another volunteer, or HOV rules and regulations, please speak to the Volunteer and Education Manager.

All injuries, including any animal bites or scratches (regardless of severity) must be reported to a staff member immediately.



BECOMING A VOLUNTEER

Who can be a Volunteer?

Cat Cuddling Volunteers: 6-15

Canine Story Time Volunteers: 8+

Junior volunteers must always be accompanied by an adult volunteer.

When can I Volunteer?

Cat Cuddling: 11:30-5:30 Daily

Canine Story Time: 11:30-3:30 Daily

Commitment

Junior Volunteers commit to **2 visits per month for 6 months**.

Why do we ask for this commitment?

- Training volunteers takes a considerable amount of time. It is challenging to accommodate short term commitments due to limited staff resources.
- By upholding your commitment each month you become eligible for further training.
- It enables you to be aware of changing policies or procedures at the shelter.
- It allows you to get to know the staff, animals, and organization better which leads to a more meaningful volunteer experience.

If you decide you can no longer volunteer or would like to change your role, please inform the Volunteer and Education Manager as soon as possible.

How to Become a Volunteer

Step 1: Submit an Online Volunteer Application

10-15 minutes

Each potential volunteer must submit their own application, including Jr. volunteers and the adults volunteering with them.



Step 2: Attend a New Volunteer Orientation

60 minutes

Soon after submitting an application you will receive an email with orientation dates. Orientations take place twice per month. You must RSVP: space is limited to 30 participants. Orientation takes place in the Community Room at HOV at 1549 East Cameron Bridge Road. At orientation you will learn about the organization and available opportunities.

Step 3: Attend Volunteer Training

Training lengths vary

During training you will learn more about animal behavior and working with animals in the shelter environment. You will also review shelter policies and procedures which will ensure your safety at the shelter. **Attending training is required to become a volunteer.**

CAT CUDDLING

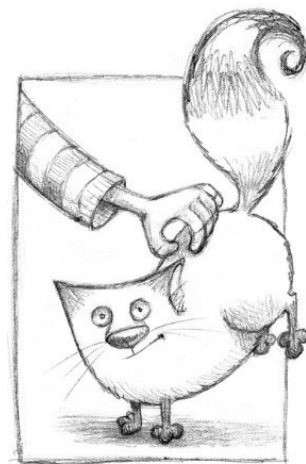
Who to Cuddle?

Volunteers are able to cuddle all cats who have the “cuddle me” symbol (right) attached to their kennels.

Because kittens are very popular with potential adopters we ask that cat cuddlers start with our older cats and then cuddle kittens. Older cats who will stay at the shelter longer benefit the most from spending time with volunteers.



Some kennels have a Gold Card on their kennel door stating “Please Check-In With a Staff Member First” – for safety reasons you must be 16 or older and take Cat Enrichment/Gold Card Training to be able to work with these cats.



Where to Cuddle?

Volunteers cuddle cats in the Feline Main Adoption Room. This room is open to interested adopters at the same time it is open to volunteers for cuddling. Because of this, it is very important that we each do our best to remain calm and quiet in Main Adopt.

For enrichment, our goal is that every adoptable cat gets a minimum of 10 minutes of cuddle time with a trained volunteer every day. Pay attention to their body language though – for some cats 10 minutes may be too much.

Please begin by cuddling cats in their kennels. There are step stools and folding ladders for you to sit on when spending time with a cat – some cats may even want to sit on your lap! This is okay as long as you are comfortable with it and the cat is relaxed (ie: not acting out towards neighboring cats). If spending time with a cat on the top row, please stand on a step ladder or stool. Please try not let cats walk on the floor. Being a public space, the floor is an excellent place for germs to travel.

There are two “Meet and Greet” rooms in the Cat Adoption room. When these two rooms aren’t being used by potential adopters, you are welcome to use this space for cats to stretch their legs. An adult must be the person to transport the cats to and from the Meet and Greet Rooms.

There are also cats in three colony rooms – don’t forget about these cats! Junior Volunteers often like to spend time with these cats as they’re often quite social and, since they are in a room, there is more room to play. Please do not take cats out of the colony room or bring additional cats into the colony room.

Before Entering A Cat’s Kennel: Learning more about a the cat!

Each cat has a kennel card on the outside of their kennel that gives volunteers valuable information.

On the kennel card you will learn:

- The gender of the cat. Girl cats have pink kennel cards, boys have blue.
- Their age
- Their name
- How long they have been at HOV.

Body Language

- Cats speak with their entire body. Their ears may say one thing and their tails another-we cannot stress enough how important it is to respond appropriately to what a cat’s body language is telling you.
- It may take time for them to open up. When meeting a cat, we recommend beginning with a “Cat Handshake” – offering a slow moving hand for the cat to sniff, then encouraging the cat to come to the front of the kennel on their own, rewarding them with a kind, soft voice and petting if they want it. Start by petting their head and neck before moving to their back. We do not recommend petting a cat’s tummy or tail.
- Encourage cats to come to the front of their kennel and to display positive behaviors. Cat’s choose distance. If a cat will not come forward or hides in a cubby, perhaps they aren’t ready to cuddle.



Recording Cuddle Time

Before cuddling it is a good idea to check the ‘Cuddle Board’ to make sure the cat has not already been cuddled that day. It’s okay if a cat is cuddled more than once per day, but your time will be of more value if you are cuddling cats who have not been cuddled yet.

When you are done cuddling, please record your service by finding the square with your cat’s name and day of the week. Then, write your initials followed by the number of minutes you cuddled that particular cat. For instance, if Luke Wigle cuddled Kali for 10 minutes on Thursday, he would write LW10 on Kali’s Thursday square.

Keeping Cats Healthy

All Cat Cuddlers must wash their hands at the start and end of their shift to prevent the spread of germs.

In order to promote healthy cats and prevent upset tummies please:

- Do not feed cats treats, additional food, or catnip.
- Give them fresh water if theirs has spilled
- Do not scoop their litter boxes. Our staff track litterbox use to help to determine the overall health of the cats. If you run across an especially stinky box, please tell a feline staff member and they will take care of it.
- Groom cats using a brush that is already in their kennel, or one from the labeled drawer on the island. Cat toys are found here as well. When finished grooming, remove all the hair and leave the comb or brush with the cat. Please **DO NOT** use the same brush or toys on cats from different kennels.



CANINE STORY TIME

Canine Storytime

Volunteers are able to read to all of the dogs in the Main Dog Adopt room.

Being in a kennel at HOV can make dogs excited, anxious, shy, or nervous. When dogs have these feelings it can make them jump and bark a lot or hide in the back of their kennels when potential adopters walk by.

As a Canine Storytime volunteer you are helping dogs relax and learn how to act when adopters are outside their kennels so they will be adopted faster. When you sit outside a dogs' kennel and read they will relax and learn that when a person is outside their kennel they should keep their paws on the floor and be calm. Dogs who are calm when people walk by their kennels will be adopted faster than a dog who is jumping and barking.

Calmly reading to shy dogs will also help them be brave so they don't hide at the back of their kennels when people walk by.

By participating in Canine Storytime you are teaching dogs valuable social skills that will help them get adopted!

Where to Read

Volunteers read to dogs in the Canine Main Adoption Room. Canine Storytime volunteers can sit on the floor in front of any dog kennel in our Main Adopt Dog Room. Because volunteers must be 16 or older to complete dog handling training Canine Storytime volunteers must sit outside a dogs kennel and may not open the kennel door.

Parents- This room is open to interested adopters at the same time it is open to volunteers for Canine Storytime. Because of this, it is very important that we each do our best to remain calm and aware of potential adopters who may want to meet the animals. Please help your Jr. Volunteer be aware of their surroundings. They may have to stop reading or move to another kennel if a potential adopter would like to meet them.

What can I read to the dogs?

Anything! Read your favorite book or a magazine! Dogs love to hear stories about anything! Forgot your book? There are books in the cupboard below the volunteer computer.

Can I read to the cats?

Of course you can! Cats love stories as much as dogs do!



IN CLOSING

Opinion and Emotion

Working with animals is often charged with emotion. Sometimes, volunteers develop a bond to a particular shelter animal and hold strong opinions about how it should be handled, cared for, or trained. Volunteers who offer opinions instead of facts do so with good intentions. Unfortunately, these opinions are frequently not to the actual benefit of the animals. Staff at HOV are experienced professionals, and are knowledgeable in best practices in animal care. It is important to defer to staff judgement, keeping in mind that our policies maximize safety for people and animals alike.

Social Media

HOV depends on strong community support and good will. Our reputation is a valuable asset. Please consider whether you could damage our reputation before you post on any site, especially if/when you identify yourself as a volunteer. Volunteers who engage in blogging or posting should be mindful that their comments, even if done off premises and while off-duty, could have an adverse effect on the shelter's mission. It is essential that privacy surrounding former, current, potential, and future owners of animals be maintained. This is outlined in the confidentiality agreement signed by volunteers during the time of application. If you are uncertain about a potential post, please consult the Volunteer and Education Manager before posting online.

Thank You

Heart of the Valley values the commitment you have made to helping animals in your community. Your energy, talent, and compassion are vital to the success of our organization. Thank you for choosing to help the homeless animals of our community!



QUIZ

1. Where do you begin and end every volunteer shift?

2. True or False: I should always wear a volunteer scrub top or apron when I volunteer at the shelter?

3. What should you do at the start and finish of your volunteer time?

4. How do you know which cats need to be cuddled?

5. Before entering a cat's kennel, how do you learn about the cat's basic information?

a. _____

6. Ideally, we would love for every cat to have at least _____ minutes of attention daily.

7. How do you introduce yourself to a cat _____

8. There are three places I can Cuddle Cats. They are:

A.) In their _____. Here, cats can sit on my _____ if I they are not acting out towards neighboring cats. I also must stand on a

_____ when cuddling cats on the top row...even if I am an adult.

B.) In the _____ rooms. Please do not bring extra cats into these rooms or take cats out of these rooms.

C.) In the M_____ and G_____ rooms. Please reserve these rooms for adoption counseling on busy days. Also, we ask that adults transport cats to and from these rooms.

9. Please DO give cats _____ if their bowl is empty or dirty.

10. Where can you find clean brushes and toys?

_____.

11. Please try not to let cats walk on the _____.

a. Why? _____

12. If a potential adopter starts asking you questions about adopting a cat or dog what do you do?

13. If you are bitten or scratched or you see this happen to someone else, it is extremely important that you tell a _____ immediately.

14. Please list three ways a cat might tell you that it needs space:

a.

b.

c.

15. Please list three ways a cat will show it wants or is enjoying your attention:

a.

b.

c.

16. If a cat's litter box has been used, do you:

a. change it b. scoop it c. tell a staff member d. do nothing

17. When a cat shows you its belly, what does that mean? How should you respond?

a. _____

19. I can read to dogs while sitting _____ their kennel in Canine Main Adopt.

20. Where can you find books if you forgot yours at home?

VOLGISTICS

1. Go to **heartofthevalleyshelter.org** and select “Volunteer” at the top of the homepage.
2. At the bottom of the page select “Sign-in.”



Current Volunteer Sign-In

You play an important role in caring for our community's homeless animals. Thank you for donating your time to this important cause.

[SIGN-IN](#)

3. Select “Click Here to Access Your Volunteer Account.”

Current Volunteers:

Please log-in via the link below to schedule and track your volunteer hours, get important news, and more.

Use your e-mail address and the password you entered on your volunteer application to log into your volunteer account:

Click Here to Access Your Volunteer Account

Questions or concerns? Please contact:

Emily Burkhardt

Volunteer and Education Manager

406-404-3068

volunteer@heartofthevalleyshelter.org

4. Login: your login name is the email you used for your volunteer application. You should have created a password when you filled out your volunteer application as well. If you cannot remember your password, contact the Volunteer and Education Manager.



Login

Enter your email address and your volunteer information center password, and then click the Go button.

Login name:

Password:

[Forget your password?](#) [Help](#)

[Need a password?](#)

Go

Volunteer information for Alex Johns

[Home](#) [Mail](#) [My Profile](#) [My Schedule](#) [My Service History](#) [Time Sheet](#) [Account](#)

Check your schedule

Post your hours

Check messages

Sign-up

Text message opt-in

Volunteer Handbook

Important information about the shelter's history, programs, policies, and volunteer opportunities.

Volunteer Advisory Group

Provide feedback to the Volunteer and Education Manager about key aspects of the volunteer program, provide a volunteers perspective on program policies and procedures, and be a sounding board for program changes. The Advisory Group will allow for more efficient communication between volunteers and shelter staff and provide greater transparency regarding shelter volunteer policies. Advisory group members will serve as advocates for their peers and assist in disseminating information to the HOV volunteer community.

[Volunteer Advisory Group Charter and App](#)

Monthly Newsletter

Read the Volunteer Newsletter for important information about volunteering at the shelter!

[October Newsletter](#)

Your Assignments

- Canine Enrichment (Assigned)
- Cat Cuddler (Assigned)
- Daily Cat Care (Assigned)
- Extended Cat Cleaning (Assigned)
- Foster (Assigned)
- MSU Internship (Assigned)
- Operational Support (Assigned)
- Outreach Volunteer (Assigned)
- SNAP (Assigned)
- Supplemental Dog Training (Assigned)
- Veterinary Clinic Support (Assigned)

Volunteer Hours Since 2012


Overall
Cumulative hours of service: 84,928
(as of yesterday)

Cat Cuddler Handbook

Important information about the Jr. Volunteer Program

Dog Talk and Safety

Have you completed New Volunteer Orientation and want to work with dogs?



If you are interested in working with dogs, go ahead and reserve your spot in Ben's next Dog Talk and Safety class - the dogs are looking forward to working with you!

My Schedule- allows you to schedule your volunteer and training time. You can also use the “Sign-Up” option.

My Service History - allows you to view your completed volunteer time. “Post Your Hours” allows you to log your time.

Time Sheet - allows you to log your volunteer time.

Account - allows you to change your password and update your account information.

Your assignments - allows you to see what volunteer opportunities you have available.

Signing Up For Training and Volunteering

1. Select "My Schedule" or "Sign-up."

Volunteer information for **Alex Johns**

Home Mail My Profile **My Schedule** My Service History Time Sheet

Check your schedule

Post your hours

Check messages

Sign-up

Text message opt-in

Volunteer Handbook
Important information about the shelter's history, programs, policies, and volunteer opportunities.

Volunteer Advisory Group
Provide feedback to the Volunteer and Education Manager about key aspects of the volunteer program, provide a volunteers perspective on program policies and procedures, and be a sounding board for program changes. The Advisory Group will allow for more efficient communication between volunteers.

Your A
Canine I
Cat Cud
Daily Ca
Extende
Foster (i
MSU Int
Operatic
Outreac
SNAP (i
Supplen
Veterina

2. Select the date you would like to attend training or volunteer.

Prev month Next month **September 2018**

Sunday Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday

2	3 8:30 a - 10:30 a Daily Cat Care	4	5 HELP WANTED	6 HELP WANTED
9 HELP WANTED	10 HELP WANTED	11 HELP WANTED	12 HELP WANTED	13 HELP WANTED
16 HELP WANTED	17 HELP WANTED	18 HELP WANTED	19 HELP WANTED	20 HELP WANTED
23 HELP WANTED	24 HELP WANTED	25 HELP WANTED	26 HELP WANTED	27 HELP WANTED

3. Select "Schedule me" for your desired training or volunteer shift.

Schedule

Canine Enrichment [Description](#)

Schedule me 10:00am to 11:30am Open
6 volunteers still needed

Schedule me 11:30am to 5:00pm Open
6 volunteers still needed

Cat Cuddler [Description](#)

Schedule me 11:30am to 12:30pm Open
2 volunteers still needed

Schedule me 12:30pm to 1:30pm Open
2 volunteers still needed

Schedule me 1:30pm to 2:30pm Open
2 volunteers still needed