



VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK



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

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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.

HOV does not euthanize for space or length of stay.

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.

Volunteer opportunities between 8:00A.M. and 6:00P.M.

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. **Animals are never euthanized at HOV for length of stay or space.**

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.



BECOMING A VOLUNTEER

Who can be a Volunteer?

Adult Volunteers: 16+ **Junior Volunteers:** 6-15

Junior volunteers must always be accompanied by an adult volunteer.

Short-term participants: contact the Volunteer and Education Manager.

Commitment

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

Adult Volunteers (PAW Program) commit to **4 hours per month.**

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

Heart of the Valley offers flexible opportunities. Often, you can determine the hours you work and in what capacity. No matter your skill set- whether you desire hands-on activities with our animals, prefer to provide clerical support, or wish to assist with our events and education programs in the community- there is a place for you.

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. If you are 16 or older, include a valid email.

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.**

The PAW Program

This program was created to provide volunteers 16 and up with skills and knowledge pertaining to basic shelter operations, animal care, training, and enrichment. All volunteers start at PAW I. Volunteer opportunities at the PAW I level are available daily and are key to maintaining efficient shelter operations and high standards of animal care.



PAW I: First 8 Hours of Service

During your first 8 hours you will take basic animal handling training and learn about shelter operations. After PAW I, additional training and opportunities are available at each level as you advance.



PAW II: After 8 hours



PAW III: After 24 hours



PAW IV: After 48 hours

Volunteers PAW II and up who exhibit leadership and participate in multiple volunteer duties and trainings will be considered for the Volunteer Ambassadors program.



PROGRAM OVERVIEW

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. An accurate log of volunteer hours allows us to promote volunteers accordingly. An individual log is kept for each volunteer, and all volunteers are required to sign in and out for each shift. 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, or another volunteer, please speak to the Volunteer and Education Manager. Direct questions about HOV rules and regulations 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.

What should I wear when volunteering?

- Clothing that can get dirty
- Non-slip, closed-toe shoes
- **Do not** wear long hoop earrings

Termination Policy

Volunteers may choose or be asked to discontinue their service. We take reasonable steps to work with volunteers on issues that may arise. However, you may be dismissed for unsatisfactory performance or misconduct such as insubordination, being under the influence of alcohol or drugs, theft of property, misuse of equipment or materials, abuse or mistreatment of others, and failure to abide by our policies and procedures. Dismissals may be implemented with or without notice.

Hygiene and Safety

If your immune system is compromised, you are pregnant or may become pregnant, or you live with an individual that is at greater risk of becoming ill, consult with a physician before you begin volunteering.

Many diseases are spread from animal to animal or human to human. Some diseases are spread from animals to humans. It is important that you keep your vaccinations, as well as your pet's vaccinations, up-to-date while volunteering at HOV. Further safety tips:

- Wash hands between animals, prior to eating or smoking, after using the bathroom and before going home.
- Avoid handling any animal that appears ill.
- Wear gloves, especially before contact with vomit or excrement.
- Do not engage with new animals brought in by the public or staff.
- If walking on wet, slippery floors, slow down and take shorter steps to avoid falling.
- Toys, bedding, and clothing can transfer disease - do not share these items among animals.
- Do not enter "staff only" areas.
- Always read an animal's kennel signs before handling it.
- If a member of the public is opening kennels, inform staff.
- If you cannot safely handle an object alone, get help.

Most importantly, know your limits: do not feel as if you have to work with every animal at HOV. If you feel unsafe do not work with an animal. Due to changing conditions at the shelter, animals may react differently from day to day. Inform staff of any concerning animal behavior you witness in order to protect potential adopters and other volunteers from injury.



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!

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
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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

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Your A
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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