

Gastineau Humane Society



Volunteer Orientation Booklet

*Read this orientation handbook before deciding to fill out your volunteer application. This handbook will give you the basic knowledge you need to get started on volunteering with the Gastineau Humane Society.

The Gastineau Humane Society's Mission

Dedicated to the promotion of animal welfare and prevention of animal cruelty and suffering

A Brief History of the Gastineau Humane Society

The Gastineau Humane Society (GHS) first opened its door in 1963. Staffed by volunteers, the original shelter was located under the Juneau-Douglas Bridge in a small space donated by the city and stocked with air kennels. As Juneau grew, so did the number of unwanted pets. By the mid 1970's, the original space was inadequate to handle the number of animals it was receiving. A local couple, concerned with the cramped conditions in the make shift building, donated land and volunteers set to work raising money to build a more permanent shelter. Climate and substandard building materials took their toll on the first shelter. Volunteers came to the rescue again and raised money to build the existing shelter in the mid 1980's. The shelter has 45 dog runs, two cat rooms (rooms designed specifically to hold cats in a common area so they do not have to be kenneled), two cat meet and greet rooms (where you can get to know an individual cat) and one dog meet and greet room (where you can spend time with one of the dogs). Additionally, we have quarantine areas for animals who have recently arrived and have not had a medical check-up, an isolation ward for sick animals, medical kennels for animals who are recovering from surgery or serious injury and a clinic that cares for all GHS animals.

Animals from all over Southeast Alaska have received a second chance at life at the Gastineau Humane Society. The professional staff and dedicated volunteers provide care and love to animals 365 days a year.

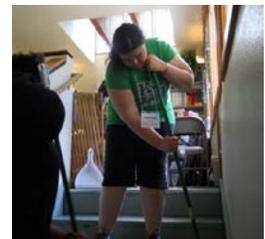
Volunteer Program Purpose

The volunteer program exists within the Gastineau Humane Society to help elevate the work associated with maintaining a loving, healthy and humane life for the animals in shelter and in the public that are cared for by GHS.

Ages Limits for Volunteer Jobs

- Volunteers must be 7 years or older to sign up for volunteering;
***Must volunteer with someone who is 18 years or older.**
- 7 years-13 years old may sign up to be a Junior GHS Volunteer.
***Must volunteer with someone who is 18 years or older.**
- 14 years-18 years may sign up for Dog Walking, Cat Socializing or Kennel Assistant.
***May volunteer independently with parental/guardian consent.**
- Volunteers over 18 years of age do not have age limitations for volunteering.

** A certain # of hours for volunteering is not guaranteed to any volunteer. The GHS Volunteer Program is designed to help the Gastineau Humane Society and not to accommodate with fulfilling required hours.



Goals of GHS Volunteer Program:

- To provide a framework of policies, procedures and standards for the recruitment, training, evaluation and recognition of GHS volunteers.
- To provide an orientation and training to volunteers to ensure that each person has adequate knowledge and skills to make positive experiences for our animals and volunteers alike.
- To provide volunteers a means to support GHS and its animals in the way they feel most comfortable, through direct services (exercising dogs and socializing cats) or indirect services (fundraising and sanitation).
- To increase community and individual awareness of animal issues, such as overpopulation and responsible pet ownership, by forming and maintaining a large group of volunteers committed to the common goals of GHS.

Objectives & Expectations of Volunteers:

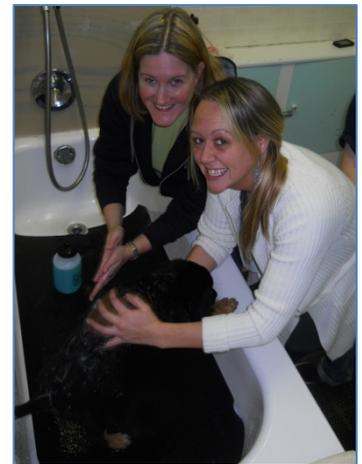
- To develop a knowledge of the humane and ethical treatment of animals.
- To directly or indirectly help with the care and socialization of animals.
- To help create a positive attitude toward the necessity of spaying and neutering through education services and public relations.
- To abide by the policies and procedures of GHS thereby presenting a positive image of GHS to the public.
- To support GHS programs and services.

Volunteers Can Expect:

- To be treated fairly with consideration and respect by employees of GHS and to be given appreciation and encouragement of their volunteer work.
- To have the opportunity to share ideas, thoughts and suggestions openly and honestly with the Volunteer Coordinator.
- To participate in orientations and on the job training to gain knowledge of GHS programs, services and the care and welfare of animals.

Volunteer Code of Conduct

- Show genuine interest in the vision & mission of GHS.
- Be present and on time for commitments made. The animals, staff and other volunteers rely on you to honor your scheduled shift times.
- Maintain a neat and clean appearance.
- Familiarize yourself with and adhere to GHS policies and procedures.
- Accept supervision and training and ask clarifying questions about that which you do not understand.
- Demonstrate loyalty and respect for GHS programs, services, and staff.
- Familiarize yourself with the literature in the shelter so you can give appropriate information to the public if they ask you questions.
- Bring any concerns to the attention of the Volunteer Coordinator.
- Relate observed animal behavior to the GHS staff.
- Be sympathetic to the animals and fellow animal lovers at GHS.
- Clean up after yourself and keep work areas tidy.
- Refrain from sharing negative opinions about any animals at GHS.
- Respect the confidentiality of employee, client, and pet owner information.
- Do not talk to the public on behalf of GHS staff unless given verbal or written consent.
- Do not remove any animals from the shelter without expressed permission of a GHS supervisor.
- Do not bring your pet to the shelter during volunteering unless given permission by a GHS supervisor.
- Do not advocate to the public for animals at GHS that are not available for adoption.
- Do not go into restricted areas unless you have been asked to do so by a GHS staff member.



Policies & Procedures

Volunteer Qualifications:

Volunteers must be at least 14 years of age to work without parental supervision, must enjoy working with and show a genuine concern for the welfare of animals, and have a willingness to work hard, get dirty, and pitch in wherever help is needed if physically able. Volunteers must have the ability to meet assignments promptly, reliably and with flexibility. Volunteers who work in direct contact with animals must exhibit a willingness to learn about animals and how to properly interact with them.

The ideal volunteer is self motivated, mature, sensitive, dependable and a team player.

Volunteer Requirements:

Volunteers must complete a basic orientation session before reporting to their first shelter assignment or shelter sponsored event. Volunteers must be able to perform the tasks they have signed up for. Volunteers should check with their doctor if they have any health questions or concerns related to volunteering and working with animals.

Background Checks

All volunteers will undergo a background check. Individuals with a history on any form of abuse, assault, harassment, or violence; sexual or non sexual will not be allowed to volunteer.

Hours of Operation:

Although there is staff in the shelter to care for the animals every day, we are a privately run shelter and therefore open only during the following hours:

Monday-Friday 9:30am-5:30pm Saturday 9:30am-5:00pm

***All volunteer hours take place during these hours and will be pre-scheduled.**

Visiting hours for the public to see the animals available for adoption:

Monday-Friday 2:00pm-5:30pm & Saturday 1:00pm-5:00pm

Time Commitment and Scheduling:

Volunteer commitments are essential to our success whether walking dogs at the shelter or volunteering at an event. Once you have agreed and committed to a task or shelter sponsored event, we count on you to be there. If you are unable to show up for the shift or event, please contact the shelter as soon as possible.

Volunteer Hours

The Volunteer Program for the Gastineau Humane Society is designed to help GHS and provide community outreach. Therefore, while help is welcomed, and often needed, we cannot guarantee any specific number of hours requested by applicants, and will schedule volunteers based on the shelter's needs and availability.

Sign In & Out:

It is very important for all volunteers to sign in and out for their volunteering. This is helpful for record keeping, scheduling, as well as the volunteer having a record of the # of hours they have donated.

Taking a Break:

Volunteers may take breaks during volunteer shifts after informing the volunteer coordinator and signing out if required.

Dress Code at the Shelter:

For volunteer safety, the following items may not be worn while volunteering; **shorts, slip-on shoes (flip-flops, clogs, etc.) or open-toe shoes.** We strongly recommend that volunteers do not wear hoop earrings and long necklaces as these can cause injury to you or the animal that you are handling.

Storage of Personal Items

Please only bring the items you need for your volunteering. GHS is not responsible for lost or stolen personal items.

Cell Phone Use:

Cell phone use must be limited to emergencies only. This includes calls and text messaging. Volunteers are not of assistance to the shelter staff and animals if they are preoccupied with their personal electronic devices. Please ask for a break if you need/want to spend time on your phone.

Earbuds/Headphones

For everyone's safety, volunteers may only wear one ear bud/headphone and keep the other free to hear the people and animals in your surroundings.

Volunteers Taking Photos:

Volunteers may take photos in the shelter only after given permission from the Volunteer Coordinator or a GHS supervisor.

Confidentiality

Any personal information about staff, volunteers, clients, and pet owners, including names, addresses, phone numbers, etc., is confidential and should never be discussed with anyone other than GHS staff.

Professional Conduct:

When interacting with customers, staff and fellow volunteers, volunteers should be *kind, well-mannered, and helpful*. GHS is committed to a safe and friendly work environment.

Harassment:

GHS maintains its policy forbidding and disciplining any form of harassment to GHS visitors, volunteers, and staff members. It is the responsibility of the volunteer to report any possible harassment they encounter or experience to the volunteer coordinator or a GHS supervisor.

Animal Handling:

Only handle animals that you have been given permission and training to handle. When handling any animal, use the least amount of restraint necessary and treat them with respect and care at all times.

Reporting an Accident or Incident:

All animal- and non-animal related accidents, injuries, illnesses and near misses must be reported to the volunteer coordinator immediately.

Drug and Alcohol Use

Volunteers may not report to volunteering tasks under the influence of alcohol, marijuana, or illegal drugs. Volunteers need to be educated on the effects of their prescription/non-prescription medications and how it may impair their ability to perform volunteer work safely.

Smoking

To protect the animals, staff, and volunteers, smoking is not allowed in/at the shelter or during out of shelter volunteer duties including dog walks.

Misappropriation of Supplies

Removal of shelter property without the expressed permission of the volunteer coordinator is not allowed.

Conflict Resolution and Communication

GHS operates under an open door policy. Please address all conflicts, concerns and questions to the Volunteer Coordinator and we will help you resolve any issues that may arise.

Resignation:

If you will not be able to continue your volunteer activities, please advise the volunteer coordinator so they can adjust the volunteer schedule. Feedback on your experience as a GHS Volunteer is encouraged.

Safe Animal Handling

Every volunteer in the shelter will be exposed to cats, dogs, and other animals they may have to handle at some point. It is important that you know how to handle them safely and humanely.

DOG HANDLING & CARE

While some of the dogs that come to our shelter will be happy-go-lucky and easy to manage, some will not. Some may be terrified by their new surroundings, in pain from injuries or illness, or have trauma related to previous human encounters. All of these issues can cause a dog to react negatively towards a person or other animal. Many times their reaction to you cannot be known until you actually place your hands on the dog. We ask that you approach every dog with caution and be aware that a dog's reaction to you can change in an instant.

Approaching Dogs

Dog bites do happen. As a volunteer in an animal shelter, you are at risk of being bitten. Volunteers should take every precaution to avoid and prevent dog bites. Here are some precautions to use:

- Approach dogs slowly, calmly, and use a soothing voice, looking at them but not in their eyes.
 - Try not to tower over the dog or use a high pitched tone with new dogs.
- Ask or call for help if you feel you are at risk.
- Keep in mind that some dogs give no signs of aggression before they bite.
- If a dog is giving "unwelcoming" signals (stiff body or trembling, cowering, head low, a hard stare or wide eyes, growling, lunging, showing teeth, etc.) immediately stop what you are doing and back away.
- Do NOT turn your back on an angry dog; back away from them slowly instead.
- Keep all dogs on a leash or confined to their dog kennel.
- Whenever possible, do not walk dogs past each other if you are unsure of their reactions to other dogs on leash.
- If you think a dog is going to bite, try to put something between you and the dog, such as a chair, fence, or even a jacket.
- Should a dogfight start while you are handling a dog, if possible and safe, try to separate the dogs by pulling with the leash. NEVER get between fighting dogs or try to physically stop a fight. Go and get help from one of the shelter staff immediately.

DOG WALKING

Hours Needed:

Monday-Friday 9:30AM-2PM

Saturday 9:30AM-1PM

Preparation:

- Volunteers must have a valid driver's license on file before taking a dog on a walk.
- A GHS staff member will get an adoption dog ready for you to walk.
- All dogs must go out on leash, with a collar and tags, a head halter if the dog pulls, and an "Adopt Me" vest if not pending adoption yet.
- Grab dog waste bags before walks and dispose of them in designated containers after use.

During the Walk:

- Volunteers may take dogs on "away walks" to a trail or park, or they may walk dogs on the sidewalk starting from the shelter and walking either towards the Dept. of Transportation or Fred Meyer's.
- Do not allow dogs to eat, drink or roll on anything from the ground.
- ALWAYS keep the dog's leash and collar on them during walks.
- Please be courteous to private homes and properties by keeping the dog out of yards and driveways.
- Encourage good behaviors when out on walks by:
 - Keeping the dog at a heeling length
 - Having the dog sit at cross walks and when encountering other dogs.
 - Dogs should not be encouraged or allowed to bite their leashes, even during play, as this may lead to dog-on-human bites and is destructive to the leash.

CAT HANDLING & CARE

While some of the cats that come to our shelter will be very friendly and easy to manage, some will not. Some may be terrified by their new surroundings, in pain from injuries or illness, or have trauma related to previous human encounters. All of these issues can cause a cat to react negatively towards a person or other animal. Many times their reaction to you cannot be known until you actually place your hands on the cat or in its area. We ask that you approach every cat with caution and be aware that a cat's reaction, just like a dog, can change in an instant.

Approaching Cats

Cat bites and scratches do happen. As a volunteer in an animal shelter, you are at risk of being bitten or scratched.

Volunteers should take every precaution to avoid and prevent cat bites and scratches. Here are some precautions to use:

- Do not attempt to handle a cat that has shown any aggression or fear such hissing, swatting, biting, tail-twitching, or its ears lying flat back.
- Report any bites or scratches immediately to the Volunteer Coordinator or Kennel Supervisor.

Cat Socializing

Our shelter cats long for love and attention. You can help us and the cats by spending quality time with them. This special one-on-one time allows for play, brushing, and positive reinforcement.

Key points to remember while visiting the cats:

- Only visit with cats that you have been instructed to visit with.
- Visiting takes place in the Meet-N-Greet rooms only. Only GHS staff can transport animals through the building.
- Use hand sanitizer and foot bath before and after visiting a room.
- Stay calm and quiet - we don't want to add stress to our cats' lives.
- Use cat toys appropriately and do not use your hands, sleeves, or other clothing for cats to play with.
- Inform staff of unusual animal behavior or potential medical problems you notice.
- If a cat gets loose from a Meet-N-Greet room, try to close off any nearby doors to prevent it from getting away farther. Do not try to catch a running cat (this could result in an injury to you and/or the cat). Immediately get staff assistance to confine the cat to its room again.
- Do not get in the middle of cat fights. Let a staff member know if any take place. An injury may have occurred that only one of our vet techs can determine.

GENERAL

Feeding

All dogs and cats are fed twice a day, morning and evening, at the measured amount indicated on their kennel card. Unless otherwise directed, volunteers are not to feed the dogs. You may however give the dog a shelter-provided or approved treat, unless there is a medical reason that the dog may not have them.

Reporting

Please report any odd behaviors or changes in an animal's health to the Volunteer Coordinator or Kennel Supervisor.

Bites/Scratches

Preventing bites is not only important to your health and well-being, but to the animal's as well. There is a difference between play-biting and aggressive biting. Even so, every bite and scratch must be reported to staff as soon as it occurs; so it is in everyone's best interest to avoid bites altogether.

If you are bitten:

- Immediately secure the animal.
- Inform the Volunteer Coordinator or Kennel Supervisor immediately.
- **Wash the wound completely and thoroughly with antibacterial soap or iodine for a full five minutes.**
 - **If there is bleeding apply pressure to the wound.**
- Fill out an Incident Report Form. You will be asked to describe the circumstance of the bite.
- Depending on the severity of the bite you will be directed to see your doctor or go to the nearest medical clinic or emergency room.
- The Kennel Supervisor will evaluate the animal and situation to determine if further steps or actions need to be taken.

Disease & Prevention

Zoonotic diseases are diseases that humans contract from animals. The most effective means of preventing zoonosis is to:

- Wash your hands frequently with antibacterial soap, especially after handling any animal and prior to eating or drinking.
- Wear gloves when cleaning (especially when cleaning up waste and litter).
- Immediately disinfect scratches and bite wounds.
- Let your physician know that you work closely with shelter animals.

Some of the illnesses that humans can catch from dogs and cats include:

- Giardiasis (Beaver Fever)
- Infections including Cat Scratch disease
- Rabies

You should not let this list alarm you, but rather remind you that you are volunteering in a hospital-like environment where these organisms often exist. Just as you can catch illnesses from dogs and cats, you can also unknowingly carry illnesses home to your pets.

The most effective means of preventing the spread of illness to your pets (or from your pets to our shelter animals) is to:

- Make sure that your own animals have all of their vaccinations up to date.
 - Let your veterinarian know that you work with shelter animals.
- Change your shelter clothes before socializing with your animals at home, and vice versa.
- Check the soles of your shoes before leaving the shelter to ensure you are not tracking feces into your car and home.
 - Even better, designate a pair of shoes to be your "shelter shoes" and take them off before entering your home.

Signs of Illness:

Maintaining the health of our animals and helping prevent the spread of disease is everyone's job. If a shelter animal shows any signs of illness, read the kennel card to see if the symptom has already been noted and is being treated. If it has not, or if you notice that previously observed symptoms have gotten worse, immediately notify the shelter staff.

Watch for symptoms such as:

- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Eye discharge
- Nasal discharge
- Sneezing / coughing
- Anorexia (loss of appetite)
- Lethargy (lack of energy)
- Dehydration
- Abnormal gait or muscle control
- Excessive salivation
- Aggressive or unusual behavior

Other Volunteer Opportunities at GHS

Volunteer Dog Walkers:

Regular exercise is important for dogs. A walker provides a dog at our shelter the opportunity to get out and stretch its legs, play and obtain a bit of training. Walkers may volunteer anytime during shelter business hours. By donating even a half hour once or twice a week, you can help make the stay of a shelter dog more enjoyable until a new home can be found.



Dog walking takes place during the hours of: Monday-Saturday 9:30am-2:00pm

Kennel Assistant Volunteers:

Kennel Assistant Volunteers help with the daily care of the animals in the shelter and maintaining shelter cleanliness which includes helping with dishes, laundry, sweeping, etc.



***While volunteering as a Kennel Volunteer you may also do a dog walk or socialize cats between tasks!**

F.A.Q.

- 1. What is the mission of the Gastineau Humane Society (GHS)?** Our mission: Dedicated to the promotion of animal welfare and prevention of animal cruelty and suffering.
- 2. How do you accomplish your mission?** Education is the key to successfully accomplishing our mission. The shelter has a large number of one on one programs, training and information videos, printed material and professional resources to provide to any member of then public who wants or needs assistance.
- 3. Is GHS a City and Borough (CBJ) agency?** No. GHS is a private 501(c)3 non-profit corporation. We are independent of, and from any government agency.
- 4. How is GHS funded?** GHS is funded by membership dues, private donations, grants, sale of pet related items, boarding, grooming, doggy day care and a contract for providing animal control and protection services.
- 5. What is the relationship between Gastineau Humane Society and Animal Control and Protection?** Animal control and protection is a section of the Gastineau Humane Society. The Gastineau Humane Society is contracted by the City and Borough of Juneau (CBJ) to provide animal control and protection services. The contract outlines the duties and responsibilities of GHS to the municipality. Animal control officers and the staff that supports animal control are employees of GHS and are not attached to CBJ in any manner.
- 6. What is the benefit of having animal control run through the humane society?** The benefit to CBJ (and Juneau tax payers) is tremendous. The primary benefit to CBJ is financial. CBJ (and therefore Juneau citizens and tax payers) save on personnel costs such as salaries, insurance and benefits (for staff who have to be available 24 hours a day 365 days a week); workman's comp; facility costs and insurance; staffing numbers; and facility operating expenses. The most important benefit is the one the animals receive. In every way their lives are made better because they receive the same care, love and attention that shelter animals receive and (unlike municipal shelters) when their "time is up" they are not euthanized. They simply make a move from being a stray to being up for adoption ~ a choice the humane society pays for and the animals appreciate!
- 7. Is GHS a No-Kill Shelter?** The term "no - kill" is incredibly inflammatory and is a term we do not use. Unfortunately, there are animals that come into the shelter that we do euthanize. Those decisions are made by a dedicated staff of professionals and with due consideration of all the factors involved.
- 8. What is your euthanasia policy?** GHS does not euthanize any animal unless they have failed a temperament test or have a serious illness or condition that diminishes the quality of their life or affects the lives of other sheltered animals.
- 9. How many animals do you euthanize a year?** In 2015 we euthanized 50 animals. It is important to note that a large percentage of these animals were sick or gravely injured and left in our outside kennels for us to deal with.
- 10. What is the GHS policy on spaying and neutering?** GHS believes that the most effective way to reduce the population of unwanted pets is to have an active spay and neuter program. We provide low cost or no cost spaying/ neutering to individuals who financially qualify.
- 11. How can the general public assist GHS with spaying and neutering?** Most importantly is to spay and neuter your own pets. Secondly we have a designated fund (meaning the money will be spent on spaying and neutering only) that people can donate to. This fund helps individuals who would like to spay and neuter their pet but cannot afford to do so.
- 12. What other special designated funds does GHS have?** We have a Second Chance Fund designed to help animals who need surgery or other veterinary care in order to have a good quality of life. The spay/neuter fund (mentioned above) and the Pet Behavior Hot Line fund to help GHS provide free services to individuals who would like help with their pets behavior problems.

13. How can people help?

- By adopting an animal from the shelter. All shelter animals have all of their vaccinations, are spayed or neutered, micro chipped and licensed.
- By becoming a member. Members help keep the organization healthy and vibrant and the dues they provide goes into programs that benefit all of the animals at the shelter.
- By providing an item on our wish list of supplies ranging from sponges to dog food that are easily obtainable in most grocery stores.

14. How many adoptions do you do a month? We average 48 adoptions per month.

15. How much does it cost to adopt an animal? Dog adoptions are \$125.00 and cat adoptions are \$85.00. The adoption fee includes: a health check, vaccinations, spaying or neutering, temperament testing, and training. It does not include a CBJ dog license. Other animals (gerbils, rabbits, snakes, birds etc) range from \$10.00 - \$150.00 depending on the species. Keep in mind that adoption is just the beginning of the cost. Just like people, animals need care and that care can be costly.

16. What do you do if someone cannot keep their pet? The owner of the animals needs to bring their pet to the shelter. A staff member will ask them to fill out paperwork that includes a medical release form and a pet personality profile. Our staff recognizes this is often an extremely traumatic event. We try our best to help each person who has made this difficult decision.

17. What is the main reason people cannot keep their pet? The main reason is behavior problems followed closely by either not being able to find a place to live or moving to a new place that will not accept pets.

18. Is GHS doing anything about either of these problems? GHS has a staff member who is specifically trained to provide pet owners with solutions to some of the more common pet problems. All you need to do is call and say you are having a problem with your pet and we will help all we can.

19. What services does GHS provide to the public?

- Adoption
- Owner relinquishment
- Animal advocacy
- Boarding (both day boarding and overnight boarding)
- Grooming (you can groom or we can groom)
- Rabies and Microchip clinics
- Pet products
- Classroom speakers
- Printed information
- Volunteer activities
- Low cost spay and neuter clinics
- Behavior consultation
- *Contact us for more information*

20. What is the GHS policy on spaying and neutering? GHS believes that the most effective way to reduce the population of unwanted pets is to have an active spay and neuter program. Over the past three years GHS provided over \$42,000.00 to the public in spay and neuter assistance raised from private donors.

21. How can the general public assist GHS with spaying and neutering?

- First and most importantly is to spay and neuter your own pets.
- Secondly we have a designated fund (meaning the money will be spent on spaying and neutering only) that people can donate to. The Spay/Neuter fund helps individuals who would like to spay and neuter their pet but cannot afford to do so.