



CITY OF LUFKIN ANIMAL CONTROL &

Kurth Memorial



Animal Shelter

VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the City of Lufkin Animal Control and Kurth Memorial Animal Shelter. We are proud and excited you have decided to join our team. This handbook is an information tool to help you learn about us and to serve as a guide as you begin your volunteer service with us. Feel free to ask questions. All questions are important, so don't hesitate to ask.

WHY WE NEED VOLUNTEERS

Our organization could not exist without volunteers. Volunteers are an important part of our team. They are essential in providing the best possible care for our shelter animals. Volunteers who work directly with the animals can increase an animal's chances of adoption by providing additional human contact, thus making them more sociable and content. Volunteers also help us inform people of the aims and objectives of the shelter and promote responsible pet ownership. We are all working for the animals.

GENERAL INFORMATION

City of Lufkin Animal Control &
Kurth Memorial Animal Shelter
1901 Hill St., Lufkin, Tx 75904

Phone: 936-633-0218

Fax: 936-633-0266

Website: www.cityoflufkin.com/ac/index.htm

Hours:

Adoption & Reclaims: Mon-Sat 10:00am-4:45pm

Surrenders: Mon-Fri 7:00am-5:00pm, Sat 10:00am-5:00pm

Shelter Contacts:

Director

Aaron Ramsey aramsey@cityoflufkin.com

Asst. Director

Debbie Jones djones@cityoflufkin.com

Office Assistant

Amanda Cagnon acagnon@cityoflufkin.com

MISSION STATEMENT:

The mission of the Animal Control Department is to respond to animal related situations and manage the animal shelter in a manner that meets state standards, the needs of citizens and pets of the community.

The Kurth Memorial Animal Shelter makes our community a better place for people and animals by:

- Receiving stray and unwanted animals and providing them with food, water, shelter and care. □
- Adopting animals to caring and responsible homes.
- Reducing the animal overpopulation and promoting spay/neuter.
- Enforcing animal laws
- Advocating for animals, promoting humane standards and preventing cruelty.

OUR VISION

The mission of the City of Lufkin Animal Control Volunteer Program is to help the animals and support the shelter by:

- Directly and positively serving and protecting the animals, and serving the customers and the community.
- Through education, build a community in which all animals are valued and family life is enhanced through relationships with pets.
- Assisting staff to meet service expectations.
- Building strong, positive images of Animal Control and the shelter.

Volunteers are one of our lifelines to our community. Volunteers help spread the word about the shelter, Animal Control, and the animals' needs. Volunteers improve our operations, providing services that would otherwise be fiscally and physically impossible.

SERVICES

Field Services

- Response to animal emergencies
- Dangerous dog investigations
- Dog/Cat bite investigations
- Cruelty/neglect investigations
- Enforcement of animal ordinances and laws
- Rabies suspect investigations

Shelter Services

- Animal Surrenders, stray and owned
- Animal Reclaims by owners
- Animal Adoptions
- Rescue Transfers
- Spay/neuter surgeries on shelter animals for adoption

Education & Outreach

- Volunteer Programs
- Donations Program
- Programs for Schools and Civic Organizations

VOLUNTEER OPORTUNITIES

Adoption Counselor

Volunteer introduces potential adopters to animals that will complement the family's lifestyle. Volunteer escorts potential adopters through the adoption areas pointing out specific animals that may be suitable to their lifestyles. This will include answering questions about each individual animal and helping eliminate "impulse adoptions". Volunteer uses a professional approach to handling animals and dealing with the public, and ensures the public is appropriately handling the shelter animals. Volunteer socializes adoption animals as time permits. Volunteer helps maintain a sanitary kennel environment by practicing good disease control techniques, which may include ensuring animals kennels/cages are clean. May assist with off-site adoption events and other special events.

Adoption Follow-Up

Contact persons who adopted a pet from the shelter by using scripted telephone questions to survey how satisfied the customer was with the adoption process and how the pet's health and behavior is. Provide general tips as needed on pet health care and behavior. Ability to work independently and desire to work and interact with the public. Excellent telephone skills, good listening and speaking skills.

Animal Care Assistant

Assist shelter staff in providing care to dogs and/or cats. Includes cleaning kennels and cages, exercising, socializing, and feeding animals in adoption areas. May also include general cleaning, washing dishes and litter pans, and laundry. Ability to handle and work with animals and work independently. May assist with off-site adoption events and other special events.

Cat Companion

Socialize, groom, and cuddle cats and kittens. This may also include some light cleaning in cat rooms and cat exercise area. Volunteer must have the ability to handle and work with cats and work independently. Promotes cats for adoption by providing information to customers. Must use a professional approach to handling the cats and dealing with the public. May assist with off-site adoption events and other special events.

Dog Enrichment

Exercises and provides training for dogs available for adoption. Walks or jogs dogs available for adoption around shelter campus. Promote dogs for adoption by providing information to customers. Volunteer must have excellent dog handling skills. Volunteer must use a professional approach to handling the animals and dealing with the public. Volunteer helps maintain a sanitary kennel environment by practicing good disease control techniques and ensuring kennels are clean. May assist with off-site adoption events and other special events.

Foster Care

Foster placements are the decision of the shelter Director. Provide a temporary, foster care home for orphaned, sick, or injured animals, and occasionally for adoptable animals that there is no space for. Animals in foster care are expected to be returned for viewing by the public by scheduled appointments. May assist with off-site adoption events and other special events.

Humane Educator

Teach humane education to students on responsible pet care, and safety around dogs to prevent dog bites. Must have own transportation. May assist with off-site adoption events and other special events.

Administrative Support

Provide assistance to the shelter staff with office operations such as assisting the public with information, adoptable animal photo production, filing, typing and other office work as needed. Greet customers and direct them to staff or other volunteers for assistance.

Surgical Assistant to Vets

Prepare animals for surgery by anesthetizing, disinfecting surgery site, and monitoring animals during surgery. Clean surgery instruments and sterilize equipment for surgery. Must be committed, dependable, and submit to a background investigation prior to selection. Volunteers will be trained how to perform expected tasks by staff and other volunteers. This position requires a high level of commitment by the volunteer, and there is little flexibility in filling this position.

Outreach Volunteer

Our outreach volunteers are involved in promoting our adoptable animals on various adoption websites, may assist in teaching classes in the community about responsible pet ownership and bite prevention, and assist with offsite adoption or promotional events.

Volunteer Transporter

Throughout the year, staff reaches out to reputable rescue groups requesting they transfer animals from our shelter into their adoption programs. This saves hundreds of animals from euthanasia each year. Most of our Rescue Partners are in large metropolitan areas or even in other states. Though many groups agree to take animals in, getting the animal to them often raises issues and may even prevent an animal from being rescued. When needed, we reach out to volunteer transporters to see if someone is available to transport a shelter animal to either meet the rescue group halfway, or in some cases to transport the animal to the rescue group. Volunteers are often asked to drive or even fly animals one to four hours away. Volunteers with approved driving records are offered use of our van to transport in. Some volunteers transport in their own vehicles. The shelter often loans crates, carriers, towels and blankets to volunteer transporters to make the transport easier on the volunteer. We place volunteer transporters on an email list so we can email out requests for transport as they come up.

VOLUNTEER POLICIES AND PRACTICES

Demonstrate responsible and kind treatment to animals

All volunteers must demonstrate responsible and kind treatment to animals.

Scheduling and Attendance

Many volunteer positions do not require specific scheduling and attendance, and those volunteers are welcome to come at their convenience. Some volunteer positions require a higher commitment by the volunteer, scheduling and availability on specific dates.

Training

While you may have volunteered in the past with other animal care organizations, you will receive on the job training from shelter staff and volunteer mentors on shelter policy and procedures.

Professionalism & Conduct

Although your job is voluntary, we ask that you make a professional commitment. Become familiar with our procedures for dealing with customers (four-footed and humans). Although it can be difficult, it is important to try to always be polite, courteous, and helpful to the public. We ask that our volunteers support the shelter's policies and procedures and be willing to accept supervision and direction. We ask that all volunteers greet our customers as they come enter our facility, and provide basic information about adoption procedures.

Dress Code

As representatives of the shelter, we ask volunteers to dress in a clean and neat appearance. We do not allow short shorts, tops with thin straps or that show the midriff, or sandals because they are neither appropriate nor safe. Your shoes must have covered toes and be durable.

Alcohol and Drugs

We prohibit the sale, use, possession, or transfer of a controlled substance or alcohol on our shelter campus.

Smoking

We prohibit smoking inside the buildings at the shelter. Smoking outside is permitted.

Confidentiality

Volunteers shall possess a professional attitude, which upholds confidentiality toward the people we serve, co-workers, volunteers, applicants and any sensitive situations arising within the organization. You will learn of many types of cases and you must keep this information confidential. Names, locations, and personal data are confidential and demand discretion. Shelter problems, internal issues, or any information regarding staff, animals not in the adoption program or members of the public are not to be discussed with anyone outside of the shelter and should never be discussed in the presence of visitors. As a volunteer you may not disclose shelter or criminal affairs, or personal matters that you become aware of during your volunteer commitment. This includes information that may involve a paid employee, volunteer, client, or other person, or involves any business of the shelter. Upon termination as a volunteer, confidentiality shall be maintained. Volunteers understand that violation of confidentiality may be grounds for immediate dismissal.

As a volunteer, you are responsible for maintaining the privacy of any information you may obtain while serving as a volunteer, whether the information involves staff, volunteers, clients, or other persons in the overall agency. Information regarding customers should not be the subject of casual conversation, either inside or outside the shelter.

Media Policy

Animal Control follows the City of Lufkin's Media Policy. Refer all media inquiries to the Director. Volunteers may not initiate contact with the media on any shelter activity without prior approval from the Director. You may also see local print and television reporters touring around the shelter from time to time. Know that you must have authorization from the Director before conversing with the media concerning your activities as an volunteer.

Risks & Injuries

There are inherent risks in working with animals. Sometimes animals have unpredictable natures, and handling these animals can result in injuries. We make every effort to screen out unpredictable animals and restrict volunteers from handling them. We also make every effort to

provide effective animal handling training to our volunteers to prevent injuries. We cannot guarantee that you will not be injured when handling animals. Therefore, we require all volunteers to sign a release form, and we encourage you to carry personal medical coverage. Report any injury to staff, no matter how minor or insignificant you believe the injury is.

Respect for Staff Directives

You will be expected to respect and adhere to staff directives at all times.

Termination of Volunteers:

We appreciate all of our volunteer's efforts and will try to work with you if a problem arises. However, we must ensure the smooth operation of the shelter, and it is sometimes necessary to relieve a volunteer of his / her duties if a solution to a problem cannot be reached. The following *are some of the reasons* a volunteer may be asked to leave the program:

1. Being in one of the off-limit areas without staff permission
2. Cruel treatment of any animal
3. Discourteous or inappropriate conduct with staff members, other volunteers or a member of the public
4. Interfering in the operational procedures of the shelter
5. Removing an animal from the shelter without permission from a manager
6. Discussing confidential shelter matters with persons outside of the shelter
7. Not abiding by the guidelines outlined in this handbook
8. Continuing any action or activity with an animal after a staff member has asked you to stop
9. Consistently not showing for scheduled hours
10. Purposely concealing known aggression, bites or signs of illness in an animal
11. Pressuring a member of the public into an adoption

SHELTER OPERATIONS

Our shelter receives about 7,000 animals each year and we continue to operate as the only open admissions shelter for dogs and cats in Angelina County. This means we accept all stray, homeless, unwanted, and owned animals that find themselves at our doorstep, regardless of their adoption prospect.

We are not a "no-kill" shelter. These shelters, humane societies, animal sanctuaries or rescue groups publicly announce that they do not euthanize pets. However, in order to achieve the meaning of this policy, these organizations often only select pets that are most adoptable and turn away animals that do not meet their selection criteria. This also often means that they must stop taking in animals because they are full and must wait for animals to be adopted before taking on more.

Surrenders

We believe that every animal deserves a quality life. There are many instances when the public is unable to give an animal the quality of life it deserves. That is why we are in existence.

Animals are surrendered to us for some of the following reasons:

- Owner is no longer able to care for the animal
- An animal has severe behavioral problems, is destructive, or is aggressive
- An animal needs to be put to sleep for health reasons. We provide euthanasia services for a small fee

- Strays found by the public or Animal Control Officers
- Owner is moving and cannot keep the animal

Animal Services officers, law enforcement officers, and Good Samaritans bring in stray and/or homeless animals to our shelter. We house the strays in separate areas. We do not allow general public access to the stray animals. Likewise, we do not allow volunteers to interact with these animals.

By ordinance, the shelter holds stray dogs for three days. There is not a holding period for cats, but tame cats are held for three days. This gives any possible owner, after proof of ownership, exclusive rights to claim the animal. If an animal comes in with a current rabies tag or ID, we hold it five days, and attempt to contact the owner to notify them we have the animal. After the holding period is up, the animal becomes the property of the City of Lufkin and staff determines if it will move up for adoption.

Lost and Found Pets

Staff will take lost and found animal information for anyone missing their pet or who has found a pet. Pet owners are asked to come to the shelter daily to see if their pet has been brought in as a stray. Owners can also check online at www.petharbor.com to see if their pet is at the shelter.

Pet Euthanasia

We realize that pet euthanasia is difficult to understand. Because of this, want you to know our policies. Most people would rather not think about pet euthanasia when considering volunteering at an animal shelter. Yet it is a very real part of working at a humane society or animal shelter. Although pet sterilization has lowered the numbers of animals coming into the shelter, people still allow dogs and cats to breed indiscriminately. There are just not enough homes for all of the unwanted animals.

We care for the animals that the public brings to us in the most humane manner possible, with food, shelter, and attention. In some cases, animals receive more attention while they're at the shelter than anytime during their lives.

We do our best to place every adoptable pet. We do not place for adoption any animal that suffers from a life threatening illness or injury, extreme medical problem, or displays aggression toward people. Not every animal that comes to the shelter is adoptable, and the decision to place an animal up for adoption is up to designated shelter staff.

Several experienced shelter staff make the decision to euthanize; it is not a decision that any of the staff takes lightly. The pet's temperament, health, and age, and the shelter's available space all factor into the euthanasia decision. Our staff also tries to place pets with other facilities and rescue groups before euthanizing. At no time will you as a volunteer ever be involved in any of the euthanasia process.

Euthanasia is done by injection of a controlled substance, sodium pentobarbital. Our staff has received the same training as veterinary clinic staff and performs the process according to Texas State law. One technician holds and comforts the animal while the other administers the injection.

We do not allow volunteers in the euthanasia room.

Yes, we feel the grief, too. We all love animals, and many of us have pets from this shelter. We feel torn by the conflicting emotions and by the extra pain caused by friends, relatives and even total strangers who look down on us as shelter employees and believe we are some kind of heartless monsters.

Sometimes the public's attitude is subtle and sometimes it is blatant. These attitudes add to the difficulty of coping with the emotional side. As a volunteer it is important to consider these issues. Please do not add to the difficulty by telling the staff, "Make sure you don't put this one down! He's so cute" or asking, "Why didn't Fifi make it?" or "Why didn't we send her to a rescue group?" Comments such as these cause added pain to staff members, especially one who is carrying out someone else's orders or following shelter procedure.

We understand your good intentions; however, as a volunteer you will need to be able to come to terms with euthanasia and show consideration to the staff who are directly involved in this process. If you feel too uncomfortable or find it too difficult to work around the shelter, you might need to re-consider if this is a good volunteer match for you.

Each of you can help us cut down the number of animals the Animal Care Center has to euthanize by encouraging your friends and neighbors to do three things:

- Adopt a homeless animal instead of buying or purchasing pets from breeders, and encourage friends and family to adopt from a shelter.
- Encourage people to spay or neuter their pets. Every pet that is born means one less home for a shelter animal.
- Encourage people to be responsible and caring. A pet is a lifelong commitment that requires time and effort. Not something to be discarded should they become inconvenient.

Shelter Sanitation

Our shelter uses several chemical cleaning and disinfectant agents that help kill common bacteria and viruses, such as Parvovirus, Feline Leukemia virus, Feline AIDS virus, Upper Respiratory Infection virus, Bordatella and intestinal worms.

Our shelter staff and volunteers must properly clean every cage, floor, surface, bed, dish, litter box, bed, toy, blanket, to maintain the safety and health of every shelter animal and person. Many animals come to the shelter already infected. Consequently, the shelter sees a variety of viruses that spread through the kennels and cattery.

We require all staff and volunteers to follow sanitation procedures and to wash their own hands between visits with different animals and before eating. For the protection of your own pet, make sure that you keep your pets current on all vaccinations that your veterinarian recommends.

If you ever see a sick animal, please notify a staff member right away.

Areas that are Off-Limits:

For your safety and well-being, certain areas of the shelter are off-limits to volunteers. Please do not enter the area (unless working directly with a staff member). In no circumstances should you be handling animals in these areas:

1. Rabies Quarantine
2. Dog and cat kennel in non-adoption area's
3. Any area behind a locked door

Observations:

Your observations about the animals are extremely important to us. If you notice anything unusual about an animal, such as vomiting or extensive diarrhea, sneezing, running eyes or a dramatic change in behavior, please let a member of our kennel or adoptions staff know. For general observations and personality notes on an animal, please document in the Volunteer Log located at the front desk.

PROGRAMS & SERVICES**Adoption Program**

One of our most important programs involves placing unwanted companion animals in permanent homes. See below for commonly asked questions regarding adoptions.

How do you get animals?

Animals are brought to us as strays, removed from neglectful or abusive living situations or are surrendered by their owners.

How does the adoption process work?

Potential adopters come to the shelter to meet the cats, dogs and other animals available for adoption. Dogs can be walked and cats taken out of their cages, played with in the Meet and Greet room, or Paw Park. Once an animal is chosen, the adoption application is filled out by the potential adopter. Staff reviews the application to determine if they qualify for adoption.

How much does it cost to adopt?

Adoption fees are \$60 for all dogs and cats, except those seven year old or older, then the adoption fee is \$35. DOGS: Adoption fee includes: neutering or spaying of dog, deworming, a DA2P+PV and a bordetella vaccination for kennel cough. CATS AND KITTENS: Adoption fees includes: neutering or spaying, deworming, and a Felo-vax vaccination. The adopter is given a wellness coupon for a free health exam at participating veterinary clinics. Animals that have not been spayed or neutered at the time of adoption are scheduled to be returned for surgery on a provided date.

Are all dogs tested for heartworms?

No. Dogs are tested for heartworms by request of a potential adopter, and the payment of an \$8 fee.

Can an animal be returned if it gets sick or doesn't work out in the new home?

Animals that have been adopted less than 10 days prior can be returned for a full refund or exchange. We can not guarantee health or temperament of an animal, and want to give the new pet time to adjust in the home. Animals that have been adopted over 10 days prior can be returned but no refund or exchange will be provided.

Is there a time limit for adoptable animals?

This shelter does not have "time limits" for adoptable animals. Because of space limitations, animal health and temperament issues, not all will remain in this shelter until we find a new home for them.

ANIMAL CONTROL

The City of Lufkin provides animal control within the city limits of Lufkin. Our Animal Control Officers enforce State and City laws pertaining to the welfare and control of animals. They rescue animals in distress, respond to and investigate complaints of animal abuse and neglect, pick up stray dogs and cats, and quarantine animals that have bitten.

EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Animal Control and Kurth Memorial Animal Shelter has various education programs throughout the year. We accept civic groups, student groups, church groups, scouts, etc and provide educational tours of the animal shelter. We also give responsible pet ownership classes, rabies awareness classes, and bite prevention classes in the community, in schools, and at various events.

FOSTER PROGRAM

In an effort to save more pet quality animals from euthanasia, the shelter has a foster program. Volunteers who wish to foster must complete a foster application, go through and pass the approval process, and sign a foster contract. Fosters provide short or long term homes to shelter pets that are in danger of euthanasia. Fosters provide food, water, shelter, and medical care to shelter animals, and also network and promote them in the community as available for adoption.

VOLUNTEER POLICIES and PRACTICES

By my signature below I acknowledge the following:

1. I have been provided with and read this Volunteer Handbook.
2. I will adhere to the guidelines and procedures set forth by Animal Control.
3. I have been provided an opportunity to ask questions regarding the policies and practices and have had my questions satisfactorily answered. I will contact staff if I have future questions.
4. I understand the City of Lufkin does not provide medical insurance for volunteers, nor does the City reimburse for medical treatment resulting from volunteering at the Kurth Memorial Animal Shelter.
5. I understand that if I foster an animal, I need to return the animal to the shelter for adoption.

Name (please print) _____

Signature _____

Date _____

Please return a copy of this page to the Director.