



VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

People Helping Animals, Animals Helping People

Our Mission

To enrich the lives of both animals and people as a solution-based community resource for animal welfare by providing high-volume and high quality spay/neuter, rescue and adoption services, volunteer opportunities, outreach, and education.

Our Vision

To be the regional leader for animal welfare in adoption, spay/neuter, outreach, and education to ultimately create a No Kill Community.

PAWS Humane

4900 Milgen Road
Columbus, GA 31907
(706) 565-0035

Adoption Center and Retail Store

Monday – Friday 10am – 6pm
Saturday 10am – 5pm
Sunday 12pm – 5pm

Spay/Neuter Clinic

Monday – Friday 7:30am – 6pm
Closed from 12-1 p.m.

volunteer@pawshumane.org

www.pawshumane.org

Qualifications

- You must be 16 or older to volunteer.**
- You must attend a volunteer orientation. If you are under 18, your parent or legal guardian must attend the orientation with you.
- Sign an application and waiver while at orientation. If you are under the age of 18, your parent or legal guardian must also sign the youth waiver release form.

The History of PAWS Humane

PAWS Columbus, Inc. and The Muscogee County Humane Society merged together to form PAWS Humane in January of 2009, just after the completion of our new Adoption Center in November of 2008. PAWS Humane is a non-profit organization that receives no city, state or government funding, and we rely solely on the private support and contributions from concerned citizens of our community.

Just a few short steps away from the front door of PAWS Humane, the city's Animal Care & Control facility is forced to euthanize dogs and cats. Some of these animals are purebreds, some are puppies or kittens, and many of these animals have been abused, neglected or abandoned. This animal overpopulation issue directly affects the quality of life for both animals and the citizens of Columbus.

While we are two separate entities, PAWS Humane works in partnership with Columbus Animal Care & Control and we have made a commitment to:

- Address animal overpopulation through the **adoption** of healthy companion animals, a **spay/neuter** program to control animal overpopulation, and **humane education** to reduce abuse, neglect, and abandonment of companion animals, and promote responsible pet ownership.
- Develop outreach programs, bringing people and animals together to benefit both. We are **People Helping Animals, Animals Helping People.**

Animal Control — When a stray or found animal is dropped off at or picked up by Animal Control, they will keep them for 5 days. During that time, Animal Control will try to locate their owners to reunite the animal with their family, who may pay a fine depending on the circumstances. If an animal is not claimed from Animal Control, one of three things will happen:

- PAWS and other area rescues can pull them and adopt them out through their organization.
- Animal Control will contact anybody interested in the animal to come adopt them out after they have been held for 5 days.
- If animal is neither adopted nor rescued, they will be humanely euthanized.

This is why we do what we do. We continue to work to one day eliminate the need to euthanize healthy adoptable animals.

“Limited Admissions Shelter” – The terms “Kill” vs. “No-Kill,” when used to describe a shelter or rescue group are falling out of common usage. We describe PAWS Humane as a “limited admissions shelter,” meaning we take in as many animals as we can humanely care for. Attempting to take in more animals poses a threat to animal health and safety. A shelter that cannot take all animals in danger of euthanasia cannot accurately be described as a “No-Kill” facility.

Instead, our vision is focused on a “No Kill Community.” We will only realize this goal when all animal welfare groups in our community work together and refrain from using emotional and divisive language.

Programs and Services

Adoption Program

Adoption Counselors provide information to families and individuals to help them choose the right pet for their home. Our adoption process is designed to ensure each animal finds a loving, forever home.

Spay/Neuter and Wellness Clinic

The PAWS Humane Spay/Neuter and Wellness Clinic is open to the public. Our high-volume, high-quality spay/neuter clinic is a key factor in the No-Kill equation.

We offer excellent prices for spay/neuter surgeries, basic exams, annual vaccinations, flea and heartworm preventatives, and other basic services. **Please feel free to utilize our services and tell your friends.**

In addition, we offer special spay/neuter programs from time to time for those neighborhoods that provide higher numbers of intakes at Columbus Animal Care and Control.

Volunteer Opportunities

Volunteers for all programs must possess a love of animals and concern for their welfare.

Animal Care

Cleaning—Cleaning consists of cleaning out the dog/cat rooms, mopping the floors, etc. We clean every day from 7-10 a.m. If you would like to help us clean, you must first come in one morning to shadow our volunteer staff. This will get you familiar with how everything works. After your shadow day, you may begin cleaning. However, you must stay the entire 3 hours each day you come in.

Offsite Adoptions/Special Events – Volunteers make it possible for PAWS Humane to hold special events and offsite adoptions. You will help to ensure our dogs are kept comfortable when offsite and have the opportunity to walk around and interact with the public, especially potential adopters. We also need volunteers to help us put on special fundraising events such as the popular Applause for PAWS and the Fury 5K.

Foster Homes – Be a Hero and Save a Life by becoming a foster parent to one of our animals. Puppies and kittens cannot live in the shelter until after they are weaned, have had two rounds of vaccines and are big enough to be spayed or neutered. Some animals are shy and need time in a calm home environment where they gain the confidence to interact with the public. Still other animals are recovering from a broken bone, heartworm, or a skin condition and need a quiet and safe environment until they get well. Foster parents give these animals the time they need to become viable adoption candidates.

Walkers— Many of our dogs are housebroken or are in the process of becoming housebroken. Dog walkers ensure these animals get outside, so they don't have an accident inside which causes them anxiety. Use designated trails when walking and keep a distance of 5 feet from other animals. Be sure collars are fitted appropriately. Animal Care technicians can assist.

Potty Patrol – Our goal is to get our pets adopted and into the best forever home possible and a clean & sanitary room greatly increases their adoptability. As a volunteer, you also want to see each of our pets go to their forever home, so by keeping a watchful eye and helping to clean up after any pet accidents helps each pet get its best shot at going home. ***Mop buckets to clean up accidents are available at all times on the dog floor.*** And after all, dogs can't mop so they need us to help keep their rooms fresh & tidy!

In-Room Socializing – Many of our shelter animals may not have had the best experiences with people and do not know the meaning of true affection. Volunteers play an essential role in giving all of our shelter pets a good experience with people, instilling in them that people are not here to harm them, but to provide love and care. A well socialized animal is happy, which makes them more approachable and makes the transition into a new home

much easier on the adopter and pet. Let an animal fall asleep in your lap and soak up some of the love these shelter pets have to offer!

Playground Monitors– The dogs also have a play-yard to run and stretch their legs, but they need to have a monitor to prevent any play-yard mishaps or escapes. Volunteers can play fetch and exercise the pets in this area. **Never pair pets- only adoption staff can do this.** Always note which dogs are fence climbers and be sure to never leave them unattended.

Training/Enrichment– The shelter environment can be very stressful on the dogs and cats, and their stress levels directly coincide with their health. To keep our animals physically and mentally sound, it's important for us to provide them with plenty of mental stimulation. Volunteers can work with our dogs, teaching them basic manners (sit, stay, no jumping, no mouthing), filling kongs to freeze, creating scent trails outside and more.

Dog Bathing – We need volunteers that are brave and eager to discover the beautiful surprise so often found beneath the coat of a dirty, matted, overgrown, neglected dog. Volunteers willing to “sniff out,” wash, dry, puff & fluff

Customer Service/Outreach

Whisker's Thrift Store – PAWS accepts any and all types of donations. Any items that cannot be used at the shelter are sent to Whisker's Thrift Store to be resold. ALL proceeds from Whiskers go directly to the shelter animals as it is a donated space, run completely by volunteers, and all items are donated. We are in need of volunteers that can commit to a shift from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. to assist in the store.

Outreach & Education – PAWS is dedicated to educating the public on pet overpopulation issues and the importance of spay/neuter, proper pet care, safe dog interaction and more. We bring therapy dogs and shelter animals to visit elementary schools, give presentations or work on projects, and also host groups of children here at PAWS.

Policies and Procedures for Volunteers

Importance of Volunteers

Our organization could not exist without volunteers. Volunteers are an important part of our team and are essential to providing the best possible care for our animals. Volunteers who work directly with 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 PAWS Humane and promote responsible pet ownership.

As a volunteer, you have the **responsibility** to:

- Meet your time commitments or provide adequate notice so other arrangements can be made
- Be trusted with confidential information necessary to do your work
- Perform assigned work to the best of your ability
- Follow organizational policies and procedures
- Be open-minded and respectful of others
- Accept reasonable tasks with a positive attitude
- Maintain a positive attitude toward PAWS

As a volunteer, you will:

- Know that your efforts contribute to the organization's objectives
- Receive the necessary orientation, training, and supervision
- Learn how to improve your skills in the work you're doing
- Be treated with respect
- Be appreciated for the work you have done
- Ask questions and make suggestions about the work you're doing

Attendance

Volunteer sessions do not need to be scheduled however, if you volunteer regularly for a designated shift, please be punctual and reliable. If you are unable to fulfill your commitment, please contact the Volunteer Coordinator. If you no longer wish to volunteer, please contact the Volunteer Coordinator and you will be made inactive. You remain in our database so that if you wish to continue volunteering later, you can be made active again. If you sign up for an offsite event, we ask that you be present and on time. If you are unable to make it, please contact the Volunteer Coordinator.

Waiver and Release Form

An appropriate waiver and release form must be signed before you begin volunteering. Volunteers under the age of 18 must have their waiver signed by a parent or guardian before beginning volunteer work. Volunteers under the age of 16 cannot volunteer at the shelter. If you are under 16 years old and need volunteer hours, please ask about different projects/fundraisers you may complete outside of the shelter.

Accidents and Injuries

Any accident or injury that occurs while at PAWS must be reported to the supervisor immediately (within 10 minutes after the injury occurs). Bites and scratches are considered an injury and must be treated immediately. When working with animals, there is a potential risk of injury, however PAWS is not liable and you are not covered under our insurance policy.

Proper Dress

Volunteers are asked to represent PAWS in a professional manner. A PAWS Volunteer T-Shirt must be worn while volunteering at the shelter or at an offsite event.

Volunteer Personal Property

PAWS is not responsible for loss, theft or damage of personal items. Volunteers are advised not to bring excessive cash or valuables with them while working on-site. We provide lockers in the volunteer workroom for your use. Please provide your own lock and take it with you when you leave.

Cross-Contamination

Wash or sanitize your hands before and after contact with each and every animal. An animal that may look healthy could have recently gotten over or may be coming down with kennel cough or an upper respiratory infection (URI)

Personal Adoptions

Volunteers and staff may adopt animals that enter into our program as long as they meet PAWS adoption guidelines, follow adoption procedures, and pay all applicable fees.

Cell Phones / Headphones

There should be absolutely **NO** cell phone use while volunteering on the dog or cat floor! Volunteers need to be very aware of their surroundings when volunteering at PAWS. This includes listening for any dog scuffles, cars, or a staff person trying to get your attention. For this reason, we do not allow volunteers to listen to headphones, or to be texting or talking on the phone while walking or socializing. Phones can be used during a break, but not while interacting with the animals or other assigned duties.

Unauthorized Areas

Volunteers are not allowed in any unauthorized area at any time without staff approval. This includes quarantine, isolation, and the vet clinic unless trained and assigned to these departments.

Harassment, Including Sexual Harassment

It is illegal to harass others on the basis of their sex, age, race, color, national origin, religion, marital or veteran status, citizenship, disability and other personal characteristics. Harassment includes making derogatory remarks about such characteristics, making "jokes" about ethnic or other groups, and other verbal, physical and visual behavior, including sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment is a form of misconduct that undermines the integrity of the volunteer/PAWS relationship. No volunteer, either male or female, should be subject to unsolicited or unwelcome sexual overtures or conduct, either verbal or physical. Sexual harassment does not refer to occasional compliments of a socially acceptable nature. It refers to behavior that is not welcome, that is personally offensive, that debilitates morale, and that, therefore, interferes with work effectiveness. Such behavior may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

Sexual harassment is defined as any unwanted physical, verbal or visual sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and any other sexually oriented conduct, that is offensive or objectionable to the recipient, including but not limited to: abusive language, derogatory or suggestive comments, slurs or gestures, and offensive posters, cartoons, pictures or drawings.

PAWS Humane will not tolerate the harassment or sexual harassment of any employee, client, customer, volunteer, vendor or any other person dealing with the organization. **Volunteers should report suspected sexual comments or harassment directly to their supervisor or the managing director and the matter will be promptly investigated.** Confidentiality will be maintained to the extent possible consistent with the need to conduct a prompt and thorough investigation of a complaint. Retaliating or discriminating against an employee or volunteer for complaining about sexual harassment is prohibited.

Any instance of sexual harassment as described herein, any act of retaliation, or any failure to cooperate in the investigation or resolution of a sexual harassment complaint may result in disciplinary action or termination.

Mistreatment of Animals

There will be no mistreatment of animals. If a volunteer is found mistreating an animal, the volunteer will be terminated immediately.

Drug and Alcohol Abuse

PAWS Humane will not tolerate the use of alcohol or drugs in the workplace. Use of these substances can adversely affect a volunteer's performance and judgment, compromising the welfare and safety of the animals and others.

Smoking Policy

There is a designated smoking area on the side of the building. There is no smoking allowed when handling the animals!

Termination and Resignation

As a volunteer, you are under no contractual obligation to continue services at PAWS Humane. Should you decide to resign please notify the volunteer coordinator of your decision.

Reasons for involuntary termination include, but are not limited to:

- Distribution of any defamatory or slanderous comments about PAWS Humane (including, but not limited to e-mails, Facebook, Twitter, blog sites, and verbally)
- Any abuse of animals
- Sexual harassment of any kind
- Reporting for duty under the influence of alcohol or other substances

- Utilizing PAWS Humane property for any illegal purposes
- Theft in any form
- No Call/No Show for scheduled shift three times per one-year period
- Non-compliance with rules and regulations of PAWS Humane

Volunteer Center

The volunteer center is the room at PAWS Humane you will visit to log your volunteer hours. When you have completed volunteering for the day, please return to the volunteer center to log your hours on the computer. You will be given a username and password the day following orientation. You will use this information to log in to MyVolunteerPage.com. **Detailed instructions are listed in the volunteer center.** If you have any questions, please ask a PAWS employee to page the volunteer coordinator for help. The volunteer computer should not be used for anything other than logging hours.

Your promise to our PAWS resident animals:

To always treat every animal with kindness and respect – Remember, these shelter animals have ended up here because they have been deemed “unwanted” for one reason or another. If a dog is hyperactive or jumping and barking incessantly, do not take your frustration out on them – yelling at them will only raise that level of excitement. We believe in positive reinforcement opposed to harsh corrections. There is no such thing as a bad dog, only dogs that haven’t been shown the proper way to behave.

To report any signs of illness to a staff member – Be careful to notice any nasal discharge, loose stool, sneezing, coughing, vomiting and/or lethargy. A limping dog may be recovering from a previous injury, or they may have just hurt themselves, so always let us know if you see anything out of the ordinary.

Things to keep in mind while working with animals:

Never try to handle an animal that looks scared – Always remember that you don’t know these animals, and they don’t know you. When an animal is scared or feels threatened, they’re behavior can be unpredictable. If they are giving you clear signs that they do not want to be handled, please respect that and never force them to do anything.

- Do not bend over a scared animal. Keep in mind that from a cat or small dog’s point of view, we are much larger and can tower over them.
- Do not stare directly at a frightened dog or any dog for that matter. This is a challenge and can promote anxious behavior.
- Do not approach the dog from the front, but rather from the side with the side of your body facing them. This is a friendly, non-threatening way to approach a dog you do not know.

Never EVER try to break up a dog fight – Most fights can be ended quickly with a loud noise or by splashing the dogs with water. If that does not work, NEVER, not EVER, should you try to physically separate the dogs. When they are in that mind-frame, they can unintentionally redirect that aggression toward you, causing a serious bite and landing them in Rabies Quarantine. Get a staff person immediately to separate the dogs.

Every time we handle or touch an animal we increase the risk of illness – our biggest concern is the accidental spread of microscopic germs from feces, urine, saliva and nasal discharge. Wash your hands or use hand sanitizer before and after contact with each and every animal. This will reduce the likelihood of spreading germs or bringing germs home to your pets.

Never turn your back on a room or cage with the door left open – Always check to make sure the cage or room doors are closed and securely latched. The real life rooms have an additional latch to provide for our very smart residents who have learned to open doors.

Have fun! – Using your voice in a confident, up-beat manner can be a wonderful source of stimulation. The words you use are not important; the tone of voice is everything. If you are unhappy, the dogs will know. By being here, you can make a big difference, so let's make it a positive experience for both you and the animal.

“No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted.”

-Aesop



