

Screven County
Animal Shelter
(SCAS)
Volunteer Program

VOLUNTEER WELCOME LETTER

Dear Volunteer:

We want to welcome you to the Screven County Animal Shelter Volunteer Program. We are pleased that you desire to give your time and efforts to assist us with our customers and in caring for the animals in our facility. The task of helping animals is not always an easy one, but it can be a very rewarding experience.

Your personal motivation to seek volunteer opportunities with us may vary for a variety of reasons: your love of animals, desire to serve your community, desire to develop your personal skills or other reasons. Whatever prompted you to consider giving your time to the Animal Shelter and the animals, we hope it will develop into a long-term relationship with us, as we partner to make a difference within our community.

It is the Animal Shelter's and the Screven County Board of Commissioners' hope, that through this program, we can enhance the ability to promote animal awareness within our community, educate the public about responsible pet care, ownership and safety.

While there will be some details to work through, such as completing a volunteer application, attending an orientation session and accepting some hands-on training before you get started volunteering with us, we are excited that you have an interest in working with us and look forward to meeting you, getting to know you and working together with you. Remember, the staff is here to help you as you begin your volunteer work. Please do not hesitate to ask for assistance, as you learn and grow with us.

Yours truly and welcome,

Screven County Animal Shelter Staff

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Screven County Animal Shelter Volunteer Program. We are excited and pleased to have you join our team. This handbook is an informational tool to help you learn about our service and also guide you as you begin your volunteer work with us. This handbook also provides essential information regarding your duties and responsibilities as a volunteer.

Feel free to ask questions. We believe all questions are important, so please do not hesitate to ask.

MISSION STATEMENT

To Promote and Protect a safe quality of life for the citizens of Screven County through safe and humane control of stray and unwanted animals in the community.

We will do this through:

- Sheltering stray and unwanted animals while providing food, water and care.
- Providing an adoption program that places animals in a caring and responsible home.
- Controlling the pet population by encouraging spaying and neutering.
- Serving as an advocate for animals, promoting humane standards and preventing animal cruelty.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the SCAS Volunteer Program is to promote animal awareness within the community and to educate the public about responsible pet care, ownership and safety for and around animals. The program helps teach quality care for the animals by allowing interaction between the volunteers and animals. The program is also designed to provide opportunities for residents to interact with animals at the shelter and to help increase live releases for all shelter animals. Interaction provides meaningful insight regarding the personality and behavior of the animal, which is beneficial in marketing the animals to the public and ultimately finding a home compatible for every animal.

Our goals are to:

- Humanely and temporarily house and care for adoptable animals
- Provide a clean and safe environment for animals, staff, and the public
- Handle animals with the least amount of restraint necessary
- Treat all animals with love and respect
- Return lost or otherwise missing, animals to their owners
- Adopt unclaimed stray animals into loving families
- Educate the public on responsible pet ownership

GOALS OF THE VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

- Establish a working relationship between our community, the shelter and its employees
- Delegate persons in the proper areas so help and support for the animal shelter is maximized to suit all needs of the animals and facility.
- Provide volunteers with a safe and happy environment that allows them to flourish, gain experience in the industry and feel good about doing so.
- Work together to save the lives of animals in our shelter.

ANIMAL SHELTER HOURS OF OPERATION

Monday 8:00am-5:00pm

Tuesday 8:00am-5:00pm

Wednesday 8:00am-5:00pm

Thursday 8:00am-5:00pm

Friday 8:00am-5:00pm

Saturday and Sunday Closed

*Closed all city holidays

*Times are subject to change due to manpower.

SCREVEN COUNTY ANIMAL SHELTER (SCAS)

Adoption Fee: Dogs \$100 and Cats \$55, which includes an entry vaccination, deworming, spay/neuter, and rabies vaccination.

Reclaim Fee: We have a \$35 reclaim fee which is charged to the owner of animals in which we pick-up.

Our dog room has 40 individual kennels, 3 outside kennels and 3 isolation kennels. Our cat room has 12 individual kennels. We are normally staffed with 1 full-time employee, 1 part time employee, and 3 individuals from the County Camp located next to the shelter.

CONTACT INFORMATION

SCAS Address: 915 Rocky Ford Road, Sylvania, GA

SCAS Phone Number: _____

Animal Control Officer: _____

DEFINITION OF A VOLUNTEER

A volunteer is an individual eighteen (18) years of age or older, who without compensation or expectation of compensation, performs a task at the direction of Animal Control Shelter Operator or on behalf of Screven County Board of Commissioners. A volunteer must be officially accepted by SCAS prior to performing any volunteer duties.

HOW TO BECOME A VOLUNTEER

Persons interested in volunteering for the SCAS should contact the Shelter personnel to obtain and complete an application.

1. After the application has been submitted, the volunteer will be scheduled to attend a one-on-one orientation to get acquainted with the staff and to discuss what areas the applicant would like to serve in. Following approval and interview, the applicant will be contacted and required to attend a volunteer orientation session. The purpose of the session is to give applicants an overview of the SCAS facility, the services provided and volunteer opportunities that are available.
2. Upon completion of the orientation session, following the interview and depending on the areas of interest, one or more hands-on training sessions will be scheduled. The purpose for the training is to teach the volunteer specific job duties and to ensure the volunteer is prepared to serve in the assigned capacity.
3. All volunteers shall be required to read, sign, and submit the appropriate waivers of liability and release forms before starting service at the SCAS.
4. Once steps 1-3 are complete, the Shelter Operator will schedule volunteer opportunities.

VOLUNTEER QUALIFICATIONS

- Positive and friendly attitude to people and animals
- Willingness to promote the Screven County Animal Shelter
- Commitment to follow the policy and procedures of the Screven County Animal Shelter
- Ability to work with staff, volunteers and visitors
- Willingness to meet the minimum monthly volunteer commitment of four (4) hours per month, less than 4 hours a month you will be considered a visitor.
- Must complete volunteer application packet and pass background check
- Must be at least 18 years of age

VOLUNTEER DUTIES

SCAS volunteers assist Shelter personnel with daily operations and with special events. Duties may include, but not required:

- Feeding, walking, socializing, bathing and grooming the animals
- Assisting citizens with information on animals ready for adoption
- Cleaning the animals' cages and/or kennels
- Cleaning and organizing food storage area
- Sweeping/cleaning cat room, work room and back hallway floors
- Working at and assisting with off-site adoptions and other special events

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

The following volunteer opportunities exist at SCAS:

Administrative Support: Provides assistance to the Animal Shelter Staff with normal operations of the shelter, as needed.

Shelter Attendant: Provides assistance with feeding, watering, cleaning and maintaining the kennels and cages for the comfort of all animals housed in the Animal Shelter.

Adoption Assistant: Provides assistance to prospective adopters by bringing selected animals to the designated visitation areas and relaying any information that the interested party needs to make an educated adoption.

Grooming: Bathes, brushes, trims and maintains the overall appearance of the animals when ready for adoption. Grooming may include the use of scissors, clippers, brushes, combs, shampoo, flea and tick dip and other electrical or mechanical devices.

Special Events: Assists with a variety of special events including offsite adoption and fund-raising events.

Education/Outreach: Speaking and providing handouts at schools, churches, and /or civic groups.

RULES AND GUIDELINES FOR VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers must familiarize themselves with all of the policies and procedures in the handbook.

The SCAS and resident animals rely on volunteers to be dependable and effective during volunteer hours by following established policies and guidelines. This allows the shelter to operate smoothly, providing maximum benefits to the animals, staff, and volunteers. Volunteer efforts are greatly appreciated and it is important to the Animal Shelter that every volunteer and resident animal encounter a rewarding experience from the volunteer program. Every effort will be made to ensure that your service is the best fit for both the volunteer and the animals.

1. PUBLIC INFORMATION:

Any information produced for the purpose of distribution to the general public must be reviewed and approved by the Shelter Operator, County Manager and Board of Commissioners, if needed, prior to being distributed. Volunteers are required to maintain a high level of confidentiality regarding active cases; therefore, conversations regarding such animals are prohibited.

CONFIDENTIALITY OF CERTAIN RABIES VACCINATION CERTIFICATE AND DOG/CAT REGISTRATION INFORMATION: Information contained in a rabies vaccination certificate and/or dog and cat registration or in any record compiled from the information contained in them that identifies or tends to identify an owner or an address, telephone number, or other personally identifying information of an owner of a vaccinated animal, is confidential. The information may be disclosed only to a governmental entity or a person that, under a contract with a governmental entity, provides animal control services or animal registration services for the governmental entity for purposes related to the protection of public health and safety. Therefore, volunteers who may help with paperwork, filing, or data entry tasks must be careful with this information and use it for its intended purposes only.

2. HANDLING OF ANIMALS

Dogs: All dogs, when removed from a confined area, will have a leash attached to their collar or around his/her neck. Be sure the leash is firmly attached to the dog's collar or neck before leading it out of the kennel. Maintain the leash in your hand at all times to prevent the dog from running free. Once the dog has entered the outdoor play area and provided it is the only dog in the play area, the leash may be removed. If a second dog enters the play area, both dogs should be leashed.

Cats: It is recommended that you wear safety gloves when handling cats. All cats should be picked up with caution by grasping the back of the neck and the hind legs supporting the body when removing it from the cage. Only one (1) cat at a time will be allowed out of the cage.

Injured Animals: Volunteers should not handle ANY injured animals. If a volunteer notices an injured animal, they should immediately notify Animal Shelter staff member.

3. ANIMAL SHELTER MAINTENANCE

Sanitation/Disease Control: Proper and timely application of chemical disinfectants is essential for sanitation and disease control and should be done on a daily basis. Great care should be used when handling these chemicals. Gloves and goggles should be worn at all times while using these chemicals. Any volunteer wishing to utilize the cleaning chemicals must first receive specific training.

Animal Feed: All animal food is to be placed in the proper containers/areas immediately upon receipt. The food containers are to be kept sealed tight at all times to avoid spoilage and contamination.

Deceased Animals: Volunteers should not handle deceased animals. Upon observing a deceased animal in the Animal Shelter, the volunteer should notify an Animal Shelter staff member immediately.

4. ANIMAL CARE

Feeding: The feeding of shelter animals is on a schedule; do not feed the animals without permission of shelter employees and only feed the allotted amount per the animal's age and size. Treats are okay but should be cleared by a shelter employee.

Walking: When walking a dog at the shelter, first ensure there are no signs on the kennel showing the animal to be aggressive. If no signs are present, yet the dog appears too aggressive or you feel you may not be able to control the dog, notify the shelter staff and do not walk the dog. If all is well with the dog, ensure the leash is on the dog prior to leaving the kennel and the leash stays on until returned to the kennel. The exception to this is if you place the animal in an outside play area or run. While walking the dog and the dog makes a mess, clean up after the dog.

Animal Medication or Treatment: Medication is done only by staff personnel. If you are asked to assist, you may assist. In the event you believe an animal is in need of medical treatment. You are to notify staff personnel immediately. Under no circumstances are you allowed to take an animal from the shelter or notify a veterinarian to respond to the shelter.

5. OFF-SITE ADOPTION EVENT PROCEDURES

Volunteers will have the opportunity to assist with and work at various off-site adoption events. Volunteers desiring to assist with and work at off-site adoption events will be required to attend a volunteer orientation session as well as training sessions at actual off-site adoption events. The off-site training will be conducted by the volunteers that have been selected by the Shelter Operator to conduct such an exercise. Individuals selected to provide the training, along with the Operator will determine how much training an individual will need and when the volunteer is ready to work at an event unsupervised by a trainer or Animal Services Personnel.

Volunteers working at off-site events will be expected to know how to answer questions commonly asked regarding the animals being shown at the event, other animals that are up for adoption at the Animal Shelter and general questions surrounding the adoption process, fees and the customers' responsibilities. Because many of the customers served at off-site events may not visit our Animal Shelter, these customers' experiences and opinions of the Animal Control Department and our Animal Shelter will come solely from the interaction they will have with off-site event volunteers. Therefore, these volunteers will be considered ambassadors for the SCAS and must possess skills to conduct themselves in a professional and courteous manner with all customers. The main objectives for these volunteers to accomplish will be to showcase the animals currently available for adoption, to answer the customers' questions and to promote a positive image of the SCAS.

6. VOLUNTEER SCHEDULING AND RECORDING OF SERVICE HOURS

All volunteers will be asked to notify the Shelter with times they are available to work for the upcoming week. The Shelter Operator will assign the days and times that are free and where there is a need. If the volunteer is unable to come on the days scheduled, it will be their responsibility to contact the Animal Shelter. If the volunteer misses more than two (2) consecutive times without notifying the Animal Shelter, their slot will be filled with another volunteer if there is a waiting list. A volunteer service record log will be kept at the Animal Shelter and every volunteer will be responsible to record the date worked, time in and out, and the total hours worked.

7. PERSONAL APPEARANCE AND HYGIENE

Volunteers are expected to maintain their appearance and grooming while at the SCAS or at any Animal Shelter sponsored event. Volunteers will be dressed and groomed in a manner that is clean, neat, and professional and that will not be a health or safety hazard or inappropriate. Volunteer identification (provided by the County) will be worn at all times, while on duty at the Animal Shelter or any Animal Shelter function. Proper dress is a necessity for public contact as it reflects on the person and the Animal Shelter. Clothing, which in the opinion of the Animal Shelter Operator, would

be deemed inappropriate, offensive or a safety hazard will not be allowed. Any open shoes, such as flip-flops, sandals or bare feet are prohibited. Volunteers should wear jeans or long pants while working at the Animal Shelter to avoid injury from scratches or other items. Each volunteer is required to attend to his or her personal grooming so as to present a good public image. Hair must be clean, groomed and by nature of the style, not create a distraction. Volunteers will not be held to any personal appearance standard that employees are not held accountable to.

8. SAFETY PROCEDURES

In an attempt to minimize accidents and injuries, the need exists for recognizing and following good safety principles. To accomplish this, SCAS staff will provide all reasonable safeguards to ensure adequate working conditions. The cooperation of the volunteer and the staff in the observance of this policy will assist in providing safe working conditions and accident-free performance.

1. Each volunteer shall be required to attend volunteer training before working alongside the Animal Services staff in the Animal Shelter. Training consists of verbal and hands-on instructions given by the Animal Services staff. The length of the training is dependent on the task to be performed and the speed at which the volunteer learns.
2. The Animal Shelter will provide safety equipment for all aspects of the job. Before any equipment is used by the volunteer, they will be fully trained in its use. No volunteer will be asked to use equipment for which they have not received training.
3. This document cannot anticipate all areas of potential injury or threat to safety and therefore it is expected that the volunteer will use good judgment and common sense when involved in Animal Shelter activities.
4. Any accidents or injuries, no matter how slight, must be reported immediately to the Animal Shelter Operator or other staff member in the absence of the supervisor and a report filed. This includes bites and animal scratches.
5. Under no circumstances shall a volunteer be requested to handle or be exposed to any wild or dangerous animal which may come into the custody of the Animal Shelter.

9. MATERIAL SAFETY DATA SHEETS (MSDS)

These sheets provide important information for all hazardous substances to which employees and volunteers may be exposed. MSDS explain what safety precautions and equipment to use when working with these substances. The MSDS are updated as needed and are available to the volunteers. The MSDS binder is located in the administration office.

10. ACCIDENT REPORTING

All volunteer accidents, injuries, and illnesses must be reported immediately to the Animal Shelter Operator or other staff member in his/her absence. A written report will be kept on file.

11. RESTRICTED AREAS

The volunteers and the public are not allowed inside any controlled access area. These are designated as restricted to protect the volunteer, the animals, and the shelter. Volunteers will be briefed on these areas during orientation.

12. INFORMATION REGARDING EUTHANASIA

Euthanasia is an unfortunate but necessary part of the work carried out by animal shelters across the country and a topic that most people would rather not think about. While it is probably the most difficult subject to understand, it is a very real part of the work conducted by animal shelters. Countless dogs and cats are brought to private and public animal shelters annually because they are unwanted, abandoned or lost. While an animal shelter may work very hard to place each of the animals they take in, there are always some that are either suffering, not savable or treatable and those that have temperaments that are not considered safe for the public. In addition, there may be times when a facility is running at full capacity and unsuccessful in placing animals in a foster home, adoption partner facility or with a rescue group.

Euthanasia is a last resort and is typically used due to space requirements or health reasons. As animal lovers, we all share a common goal for the pets in our community. We want them to have a warm place to sleep, good food to eat, a loving family, plenty of exercise and regular veterinary care. Unfortunately, there are times when this outcome may not be achieved.

The decision to euthanize an animal is made after carefully evaluating the following issues: the animal's health conditions and our ability to treat a sick or injured animal, the animal's temperament and if adequate space is available to isolate sick animals, as well as housing and caring for all animals in our possession. If the decision is made to euthanize an animal, Animal Shelter Staff will notify the appropriate veterinarian to perform the process.

It is unfortunate that this procedure must be conducted and, without a doubt very difficult for our staff. This task requires our staff to cope with both emotional and psychological challenges. Knowing that these challenges exist, we ask you to respect what our staff deals with and to be sensitive if talking about the topic. We do not want to add to our staff's challenges by insinuating that they are the "bad guy", "culprit" or reason why this task is performed.

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS FOR VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers must remember that while working with SCAS they are representing Screven County and everyone that you come in contact with will be treated with dignity and respect.

1. VOLUNTEERS - The Animal Shelter staff has final say in all situations regarding the shelter and the animals impounded therein. All policies and established shelter procedures and requests from the Animal Shelter must be strictly followed, no exceptions.
2. CONFIDENTIALITY - Volunteers may have access to records, staff discussions, and other information that may be confidential. As a volunteer, you are NOT permitted to share such information with others. Doing so could result in your volunteer status being withdrawn. If you have any questions regarding the professional standards, please do not hesitate to contact the Animal Shelter Operator or one of the staff members for clarification or to discuss the matter.
3. EUTHANASIA - The Animal Shelter is a municipal shelter owned and operated by Screven County Board of Commissioners. Its primary function is Animal Control, consequently and unfortunately animals will be euthanized at the discretion of the Animal Shelter Staff sometimes, but not always, based on available kennel space. Euthanasia is sometimes a necessity; however, all efforts will be made to find suitable homes when possible.
4. PROFESSIONALISM - Always maintain a professional and courteous demeanor with customers, staff, as well as with other volunteers. The use of profanity or talking down to visitors or employees will not be tolerated.
5. DRESS CODE - Proper dress should be conservative, Jeans or long pants and short or long sleeved shirt. T- shirts with profane, sexual or questionable prints/words are prohibited.
6. TOBACCO - Tobacco products are not allowed on any County property, this includes smokeless tobacco, cigarettes and electronic vapor devises.
7. INTOXICANTS - In the event a volunteer reports for duty under the influence or smelling of intoxicants they will be immediately removed from the shelter and their volunteer status will be revoked.
8. VISITORS - Volunteers may not bring friends, children or personal pets to the shelter during their scheduled volunteer hours.
9. GRIEVANCES - Grievances or concerns will be reported to the Animal Shelter Operator. Designated staff will be given opportunity to resolve issues. If such issues are not resolved, the volunteer is encouraged to speak with the County Manager, if the issue is then not resolved, they may contact the Board of Commissioners.

10. MEDIA- Volunteers are not permitted to speak to the Media on behalf of the SCAS. Refer Media personnel to the Animal Control Operator, or County Manager.
11. RESIGNATION - Please contact the Animal Shelter Supervisor if you need to stop volunteering for any reason. Your opinion and feedback is important to us. Departing volunteers are encouraged to provide feedback which can help make our program better for volunteers and animals.

14. **DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE**

The following is an outline used in the discipline of volunteers. The below list is an example of some reasons a volunteer may be disciplined:

- Inhumane treatment of animals
- failing to adhere to policies and procedures
- insubordination
- Alcohol/Drug abuse, on or off premises
- Defacing property
- Falsifying or defacing records or documents
- Lying
- Failure to follow the chain of command
- Disclosing confidential information
- Theft of property
- Entering unauthorized areas or a closed facility
- Failure to maintain harmonious relationship with staff, veterinarian employees, transport agency's or persons assisting with transport agencies
- Providing information to the media or public when not authorized
- Negligence or willful misconduct

Implementing Disciplinary Action. Unacceptable behavior that does not lead to immediate dismissal may be dealt with by any of the following interventions, taken in any order.

- Written Notice
- Counseling
- Termination

VOLUNTEER ACKNOWLEDGEMENT & WAIVER AGREEMENT

Upon signing this release, I, _____ hereby agree to adhere to the policies and procedures outlined in this handbook and I agree to volunteer to perform service(s) for Screven County Government, for civic, charitable, and/or humanitarian reasons.

As a volunteer, I understand that my services are being offered on a volunteer basis without anticipation of financial remuneration from Screven County Government. As such, I agree to perform services to the assigned governmental entity without promise, expectation or receipt of compensation for services rendered. I fully understand that volunteers are NOT considered to be Screven County employees for any purpose, and that I am NOT entitled to any employee benefits.

I acknowledge that my performance or participation may involve a risk of accident, illness, or injury to me during my service. I acknowledge my understanding that I am not covered by Workers' Compensation or any other policy of insurance provided by Screven County in the event of accident, illness, or injury.

I agree to indemnify and hold harmless Screven County, Georgia, its agencies, departments, employees, agents, leaders, instructors, officials, representatives, or other volunteers from and against all claims, demands, loss or injury to my person or property incurred through negligence, or other acts or omissions, however caused, as a result of, or during, my participation in volunteer services.

I hereby expressly assume the risk, and I acknowledge that I have carefully read and fully understand this agreement and its contents. I am aware and agree that this is a release of liability and a contract between me and Screven County, Georgia, its agencies, departments, employees, agents, and other, and I sign this acknowledgement of my own free will.

I also understand that either Screven County or I may cancel this agreement at any time by notifying the other party in writing.

Signature of Volunteer
(or parent/guardian if volunteer/intern is under 18)

Date

Printed Name