

SPCA of Westchester

Feline Care

Volunteer Manual



Welcome! On behalf of the SPCA we thank you for your interest in volunteering with us and hope you will enjoy the opportunity to learn more about our cats and feline care. As a feline care volunteer, you can offer invaluable services to the SPCA and the gift to our cats of human contact and attention. We can't stress enough how important it is for the cats to have people like you.

VOLUNTEER GOALS

The purpose of the Feline Care Program is three-fold:

- (1) To interact with our cats to make them friendlier and, therefore, more adoptable. This is accomplished by getting them used to the sound of the human voice, interacting with people, being petted, and offering physical and mental stimulation through play. This is important for kittens and cats, some of whom are semi-feral and, therefore, fearful of people, as well as for adult cats who may have been here for a period of time and need to maintain a positive connection with people.
- (2) To assist the Staff in maintaining a clean and pleasant environment for our cats and kittens, potential adopters and other visitors. This is accomplished by (where necessary) scooping litter pans and tidying up and/or changing cage bedding.
- (3) To alert the Staff if a cat or kitten appears to be ill or exhibiting behavior that may indicate an illness.

VOLUNTEER REQUIREMENTS

Genuine love of cats and a desire to enhance their stay at the shelter and help them to find homes. To become a Feline Care Volunteer, the following is required:

- (1) Volunteers must be 18 years of age or older.
- (2) Volunteers are requested to devote at least 1-2 hours per week to the care of our cats
- (3) Adherence to the responsibilities and procedures listed below, as these apply to the Feline Care Program and the shelter in general.
- (4) Completion of the Feline Care training program: general volunteer orientation, training, scheduled mentoring session (contact Joanne Witmyer at Joanne@SPCA914.org to arrange), tour of the cat facility and introduction to the Staff members responsible for cats and kittens.

VOLUNTEER RESPONSIBILITIES, POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND TASKS

- (1) Monday through Saturday Feline Care program volunteer hours are 12:30 PM to 3:30 PM. Sunday volunteer hours are 1:00 PM to 3:30 PM.
- (2) Sign in on the computer in the Volunteer Cottage and wear your volunteer badge at all times.
- (3) Upon entering any animal building, it is required that you use the hand sanitizer. The sanitizer also needs to be used between each and every cat/cage.

- (4) Before starting your feline care visit, first check the Volunteer Message board in the Small Animal Building for new or reminder information about new procedures or any of the cats or cats that are off-limits for that day.
- (5) Before spending quality time with a cat, walk around and review every cat cage to see if any need to be tidied up (e.g. throw out empty paper food containers, scoop litter, check water bowls and change bedding if necessary). Be sure to use the hand sanitizer after you have completed any cleanup work at a cage. And always take note of any "Do Not Touch/Staff Only" notes.
- (6) When visiting with a cat, quality time is more important than quantity time. There is no minimum or maximum amount of time you must spend with a cat. Some cats may want more time with you than other cats. Our cats will "let you know"! You do not need to spend time with every cat during your visit. Remember, it is quality over quantity that our cats need.
- (7) Do NOT take a cat/kitten out of the cage unless permission has been given by a cat Staff person. Also, do not socialize or interact with a cat in a manner that the cat can jump or escape from the cage area. If a cat gets loose, do NOT pick up the cat – ensure that exit doors are secure and alert Staff to catch and return the cat to its cage.**
- (8) If the Staff is moving a dog in or out of the Small Animal Building, please close the cage door of the cat you are visiting – some cats get upset when a dog passes by.
- (9) In ALL buildings, be sure to close all doors upon entering and leaving AND please close an entry door if you notice that it has been left open.
- (10) Alert Staff if any cat appears ill. The Staff is very busy and may not have noticed. If you can't locate a Staff person, leave a note on the Volunteer Message board.
- (11) Visitors should not be permitted to touch the cats or cat cages. Explain in a pleasant way that this procedure is required for the health of our animals. If a visitor is interested in a cat, locate a Staff person.
- (12) If asked to offer an opinion on a specific cat or kitten, locate a Staff person to answer these questions. Provide only the factual information about the animal that is provided on the kennel card. We do not want to give out incorrect or inappropriate information about any of our animals.**
- (13) Remind parents that small children should not get too close to the cages, as some cats reach out and may accidentally scratch them.
- (14) If there are a lot of visitors and sufficient Staff/volunteers in a location, please move to another area so as not to cause overcrowding, or wait outside until everything is clear.
- (15) Every volunteer starts in the Small Animal Building. With experience, you will be trained in the procedures and tasks of the Cattery building.
- (16) If in doubt about anything, please ask a Staff member or one of the senior cat care volunteers.**