

Volunteer Handbook



The Humane Society of Camden County, Inc.

950 South Grove Blvd.

Kingsland, GA 31548

912-729-7141

www.humanecamden.org

Email hccvolunteerwithme@gmail.com

Public Hours of Operation

Open Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturday 12-5

Closed Wednesdays, Sundays, and Major Holidays

*Updated 4/6/2022

A Message from the Volunteer Coordinator

Thank you for wanting to join our volunteer team! The desire to help animals has brought you to us as a volunteer. Volunteering at the shelter will not only be rewarding for you, but also for the animals. We hope that after orientation you take with you a better understanding of animal sheltering, animal welfare and animal care issues. We depend on you to help us continue to provide the highest level of care we all want for the pets during their stay. Our volunteers are our link to the community and we rely on you to advocate for the shelter and for animal issues within our community. We value your help greatly. We hope that you will find your experience here rewarding and educational. Thank you for joining our team!

Please understand that our #1 priority is the care of our animals and ensuring our staff can efficiently carry out the daily operations of the shelter. As a result, the current COVID epidemic has provided us with many opportunities of growth and adjustment of our policies. These policies will continue to be amended as the need arises to ensure the health and safety of the employees. This means there may be times when our volunteering opportunities are limited or restricted. Please respect these decisions and assist us the best way you can.

Jennifer Hutchinson
Humane Society of Camden County
Volunteer Coordinator
hsccvolunteerwithme@gmail.com

“Saving one dog will not change the world, but surely for that one dog the world will change forever.”

ADOPT
IF YOU CAN'T ADOPT
FOSTER
IF YOU CAN'T FOSTER
SPONSOR
IF YOU CAN'T SPONSOR
VOLUNTEER
IF YOU CAN'T VOLUNTEER
DONATE
IF YOU CAN'T DONATE
EDUCATE

Last updated 4/6/22

Welcome

Welcome to the Humane Society of Camden County, Inc. (HSCC). Thank you for joining our team! The information compiled in this handbook will serve as your guide as you begin your volunteer work. For further information regarding policies and procedures contact the Volunteer Coordinator or Board Member.

The HSCC is a nonprofit organization incorporated under the laws of the state of Georgia as "The Humane Society of Camden County, Inc." We receive a portion of our funds from donations and fundraisers and the remainder as reimbursement from services provided to Camden County. Please understand that we DO NOT receive any funds, nor are we affiliated with, "The Humane Society of America".



The HSCC provides food, water, shelter, and medical attention to approximately 2,000 homeless animals annually including those turned in by their owners as well as stray animals picked up by the Animal Control Officers. We receive and place for adoption dogs, puppies, cats, kittens, and small domestic animals. We promote adoptions by posting pictures on our web site www.humanecamden.org and via Petfinder, a national organization that assists in placing our pets. Our "Real-Time Strays" feature on Facebook also allows us to reunite pets with their families.

Mission Statement

Our mission is to provide an effective means for affording relief to abandoned animals when sick, injured, or otherwise in distress; to assist in finding and placing such animals in new homes; to encourage kindness to and consideration of animals through education of the public; to provide an effective means for prevention of cruelty to animals; and to cooperate with municipal, state and county authorities in prosecuting such persons as may be guilty of cruelty to animals.

Brief History

The HSCC was founded in 1986. We contracted to Camden County which pays a portion of our annual budget in return for our services in housing their stray animals. In March of 2000, we moved into our current shelter, which is five times larger than our previous one. The animals and staff are comfortably housed in a roomy, climate controlled environment. In 2005 we opened our new Intake Facility, which houses animals during their first few days with the HSCC while evaluating their health and before introducing them into the general population of the shelter. The Intake Facility greatly reduces the spread of infectious



diseases. A paid staff that consists of a Shelter Manager, a lead kennel tech and several kennel assistants operates our Shelter.

A volunteer board operates the HSCC. Business meetings are held the fourth Monday of January, March, May, July, September, and November at 5:30 pm at Camden County Chamber of Commerce 531 North Lee Street (Hwy 17) Kingsland, GA. The meetings are open to the public. We invite you to visit the HSCC and/or attend one of our meetings. We appreciate your interest in the humane treatment of animals.

The Journey of Animals Through the Shelter

- ★ Animals are brought in through a variety of ways, for example: Animal Control, citizens who have found the animal as a stray, owner surrender, or seized/court case
- ★ Animals who are brought in as strays are immediately put into the system and posted on our Real Time Strays Program on Facebook. By doing so we hope to alert the public as quickly as possible in the hopes of a happy reunion.
- ★ There is a 5 day stray hold. During this time we hope the animal will be reclaimed by their owner. If they are not reclaimed after 5 business days, they become the property of the Humane Society of Camden County.
- ★ When animals are officially considered the property of the HSCC, they go through Processing which includes medical and temperament evaluations.
 - The shelter tests for heartworms in dogs, feline leukemia and aids in cats, ear mites, intestinal parasites, wounds, and growths. We vaccinate as well as give heartworm and flea prevention.
 - If there is a more serious medical condition such as broken bones, open wounds, etc. they see our Medical Director.
 - After medical they have their temperament test (Sue Sternberg Assess-A-Pet). Here they will be tested on their energy level, personality, comfort level with humans, and how they respond when food, toys, treats, are taken away from them.
 - If they pass both, they are placed up for adoption. The entire process can take 2-3 weeks from the day they enter the shelter as a stray until the day they are officially up for adoption depending on the number of intakes we have and the daily operations of the shelter.
- ★ The fee to adopt is \$85 for dogs, \$155 for puppies/purebred dogs, and \$60 for cats. This fee has been reduced thanks to a generous donor. The adoption fee pays for the spay/neuter surgery. It is Georgia law that animals CANNOT leave the shelter until they



have been spayed or neutered. Some people might be put off by the adoption fee but the shelter truly doesn't make any money off of adoptions. We function as a "nonprofit" and then therefore have an adoption fee that reflects that mission.

- ★ The employees and volunteers greatly love the animals that we work with. Animals stay up for adoption as long as needed. We do not have a "time limit" for animals. We try to find the animals their forever home as quickly as possible.
- ★ HSCC works with other rescues and other shelters such as Nassau Humane Society, Newport News in Virginia Beach, Broward County in Florida. These rescues will help us transport our animals to their facilities so that we can help rescue more animals within our community.
- ★ We are an "Open Admissions Shelter". This means that we do not turn away sick, injured or aggressive animals that are brought in. We do not deny admission because of age, breed, or any other reason. All animals will receive the best care, respect and treatment at our facility and we will do our best to prepare an animal for an adoptive home. Sometimes this is not always possible. Animals that are diagnosed with life threatening illnesses, extreme medical problems or display aggression towards other animals or people are not placed for adoption. In these cases, the animal is euthanized using a humane method. The procedure is quick and painless. The staff is with the animal until the very end and helps them cross the Rainbow Bridge in the presence of individuals who show unconditional love. You might come in and a particular animal you've worked with is gone. Please ask the staff about the animal. Chances are the animal may have been adopted or transferred. Please remember if you ask, the shelter will be honest.



Your Role as a Volunteer

This is the rewarding part and where you can make a difference! Volunteer hours are the same as the public hours, Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday from 12-5. The goal



is to have volunteers throughout the week so that dogs are walked each day. If you can volunteer on Wednesdays and Sundays the hours available will be dependent on the schedule of the kennel technicians and when the Shelter Manager is present. Please consult with the Volunteer Coordinator to arrange volunteering during the shelter's "closed" days.

There are many areas where you can volunteer. On-site volunteers interact directly with the animals housed at the shelter.

- ★ Cat Cuddlers- This job helps reduce any stress the cats may have and it will get them used to interacting with different people. It will also help you learn about each cat, which will help place us in the right home.
- ★ Cat House Cleaners- Part of making the cats comfortable includes cleaning our cages and litter boxes. If this is a task you could assist with, the cats would greatly appreciate it!
- ★ Dog Walkers- In this job you can walk the dogs available for adoption. By walking the dogs you help to reduce their stress and stimulate their senses. At the same time you are helping them stay socialized with people and you can help determine if there are any specific training needs they have. Please encourage them to use their manners.
- ★ Dog Kennel Cleaners- Because dogs are in the kennels from 5:00 pm until the next morning, they sometimes have accidents and as a result need to have the kennels cleaned daily. By cleaning the caretakers make sure that the dogs stay healthy and can be ready for potential adopters. Our caretakers clean every morning between 8:00 AM to 12 Noon.
- ★ Matchmakers- By getting to know the animals you can help potential adopters find the perfect pet. Helping a customer find their "match" is important and rewarding!
- ★ Bath and Brush Buddies- There's always a dog or two that are in the need of a good spa day! It helps our animals awaiting adoption feel, smell, and look better by brushing or bathing them.
- ★ Other volunteering opportunities include, but are not limited to: fostering, helping with laundry and dishes, maintenance around the facility, maintaining the lawn, etc.
- ★ Do you have an additional skill that could help? Please feel free to contact the Volunteer Coordinator to discuss your desire to volunteer at the shelter!



Off-Site Volunteers

There are always ways to volunteer for the HSCC beyond on-site work at the shelter. Below are examples of additional positions available.

- ★ How Are We Doing? It is nice to follow-up on our adopted friends to make sure the adoption process went smoothly for their new family as well as to make sure the animals are fitting into their new homes. In this job, you will call new owners and using our post adoption questionnaire, make sure things are working out and if there are areas the HSCC could improve upon.

- ★ Education Volunteer- The HSCC has an education committee that provides programs for all ages. Schools, after school programs, scouts and nursing homes are just a few of the organizations that ask us to provide education and/or assistance. In order to provide such educational programs and to increase what we can offer, we need volunteers who are willing to contribute a few hours to fulfill these requests. We desperately need people who can help develop new programs, people who are retired teachers, and people who can help spread the word about the need for vaccinations and spay/neuter.
- ★ Furry Friends/Fundraising Volunteers-The HSCC has a group of volunteers called "Furry Friends". This is a group of volunteers who we call upon to assist in our various fundraising activities such as the Wines, Canines, and Felines fundraiser, coin drops, and other fundraising activities. The HSCC's Volunteer Coordinator is the point of contact for our fundraising volunteers.

The Volunteer Dos and Don'ts

- ★ As of 4/1/2022 you MUST use the monthly Sign-Up Genius link to reserve a spot to volunteer. We are currently limited to 2 dog volunteers and 2 cat volunteers at a time. As a result, you will want to check the sign-up form before coming to the shelter to ensure the slots are not filled. After orientation your email will be entered into the email distribution list on the site and you will receive the sign up link monthly.
- ★ Sign in and out on the volunteer log at the front desk when you arrive.
- ★ Always wear the appropriate clothing when volunteering (no flip flops or sandals or dangling jewelry).
- ★ Keep poop bags handy and clean up when needed. The more you can help the kennel technicians, the healthier the animals are! If you return a dog to its kennel and it doesn't have water, please fill the water bowl.
- ★ Help potential adopters get the information they need.
- ★ Because you will be working with the animals and will have a "behind the scenes look" and "insider information" of when new animals will become adoptable, volunteers are asked to wait 5 business days before pursuing adoption of their own. This will allow the public an equal opportunity at the adoption of all pets.
- ★ Do not enter the parts of the building that are off limits to the volunteers. This includes the Lab, Isolation Rooms, Intake Buildings, and Quarantine.
- ★ Please do not use the shelter as a place to socialize with your friends. Focus on helping the animals while you are here. Encourage your friends to become volunteers too!



- ★ Although HSCC has staff to clean the kennels and cat cages, the animals don't soil their places on our schedule. Volunteers are encouraged to pick up solid waste with poop bags but please do not use the hose. Soft stool is usually not a concern, but please notify staff of extreme messes such as diarrhea.
- ★ Use common sense; if you are uncomfortable or afraid of doing something or handling a particular animal, don't do it. Ask for help.
- ★ Report anything that concerns you to the Volunteer Coordinator or to the Shelter Manager. The Volunteer Coordinator has a "**Paws and Take Note**" form at the front desk that you can fill out and you will be contacted as soon as possible.
- ★ **Represent yourself and the shelter according to the volunteer code of conduct included in this manual.**
- ★ Most importantly, remember why we are all here- to help the animals find homes and have the best possible quality of life while in our care! Stay focused on that goal and use your time wisely. Volunteers are a huge part of that process and we need you!

Handling the Animals

Please remember that the animals at the shelter will require additional vigilance and care than what you might experience with your own personal pet. If at any time you do not feel like you can safely handle an animal, please return them to their kennel and work with an animal that is more on your comfort level. Follow these suggested guidelines when handling the animals. If you have any other helpful tips or tricks, please share them with the Volunteer Coordinator!

- ★ Look at the dog kennel cards. You will notice that in the upper corner each dog has been assigned a rating of V1, V2, or V3. This will indicate their handling ease for volunteers. You are welcome to handle any dog with a V1 or V2 rating. V1 indicates a VERY easy going and laid-back dog. They are suitable for Junior Volunteers. A V2 rating is a "typical shelter dog". This dog will require vigilance when handling because they might have some energy, might jump up in excitement, might pull on the leash, etc. At this time, you should **NOT** handle V3 dogs. These dogs are reserved for our Senior Volunteers who have more dog handling experience.



- ★ To leash up a dog, get into the kennel with them, shut the door, and then leash them up. If you try to do so with an open door chances are they're going to bolt past you.
- ★ If there is another volunteer in the walkway, secure your dog and wait in the kennel until the other volunteer passes. You can always walk in the opposite direction and walk "around" the kennels. **DO NOT** try to walk past other volunteers with dogs while inside the building.

- ★ Walk the dogs out the back door.
- ★ Feel free to bring your own harnesses and slip leashes. Some volunteers prefer to use tools they are comfortable with using instead of what is randomly available. Feel free to use whatever you feel the most comfortable with. Ultimately we need to keep you and the dogs safe.
- ★ You can use the play yard, but please only one dog in the yard at a time.
- ★ When you walk you can either go left or go right. If you go left towards the subdivisions, please be mindful that a few of the houses do have dogs behind the fences. Most walks last 15-20 minutes. You can also mix this up with time in the play yard.
- ★ While handling the dog feel free to practice basic commands with them such as down, sit, and stay. You can find treats in the Feed Room to help with this training.
- ★ When walking please always have a firm grip on the leash. Some of these dogs are not great leash walkers and they will pull so it's important to have the leash wrapped around the wrist. Always double check the collar if they have one- do not assume it's an appropriate fit, it might be too loose.
- ★ PLEASE do not let your dog meet another dog unless you know for certain your dogs are dog friendly. Routinely we have dogs that are not always dog friendly so if you let your dog run up to another volunteer's dog that could create a bit of a disaster. Unless you're prepared to break up a dog fight, it's best just to keep your dog separated from other dogs and enjoy the quality time with your dog.
- ★ PLEASE read all signs on the cages before taking a dog out. Sometimes there might be a sign that says "I'm not feeling well, please don't touch", or maybe the dog has had a procedure done and can't go outside. Just be mindful of the cage from day to day because it can always change.
- ★ Sometimes in the plastic sleeve there will be a "yield" sign that says they are not available for adoption and cannot be taken out. You'll see these signs mostly on the Processing side. If you see these signs please do not touch or take them out.
- ★ If at any time you don't feel comfortable with a dog, maybe it's too energetic, too big, or just not at your comfort level, please leave it for a more experienced volunteer. Ultimately we want you and the dog to be safe.
- ★ Fill out the exercise log hanging on each kennel. The front desk has the dry erase markers you can grab each day (just please return them). This log lets the volunteers who come in after you know which dogs still need to be taken out.

★ Maybe you're not here to work with the dogs and that's okay! Our new KoKo's place is open! It's a nice condominium for our cats where you can go in, socialize, and cuddle with our felines! We rotate the cats out of their kennels so they can get some free time. Always be mindful to put females out together and males out together. Do not mix, for obvious reasons.



- ★ Wash your hands as often as possible. This helps from transmitting disease.
- ★ Remember- stay out of the restricted areas.
- ★ Always ask for help if you need it.

Volunteer Disciplinary Policy

If, at any time, a volunteer violates the Humane Society of Camden County policies or is deemed unfit for volunteering for any reason, the Volunteer Coordinator and management reserves the right to immediately request that the volunteer leave the shelter premises. A volunteer may also be suspended from their volunteer activity as necessary until a final determination can be made or the action to be taken. A volunteer may be asked to not return to Shelter activities and terminate volunteer activities.

Prior to any request by the Volunteer Coordinator for reassignment, suspension, or permanent dismissal, the following effort should be made to resolve the matter; however, the Volunteer Coordinator and management is under no obligation to do so;

1. Provide clear warning and notice to volunteer(s).
2. Provide retraining if needed.
3. Consult with the Shelter Manager and the Board of Directors for possible reassignment.

Volunteer Termination

The Humane Society of Camden County reserves the right to terminate a volunteer's service at any time, with or without notice. We advise volunteers to follow staff directives and to not represent themselves as employees. The following are examples that will result in immediate termination:

- ★ Stealing or substance abuse
- ★ Discourtesy/rudeness to another volunteer, staff member or citizen
- ★ Misrepresenting HSCC or HSCC staff in any way
- ★ Unauthorized communication with media regarding shelter policies or practices. This includes, but is not limited to, negative comments/posts on social media platforms.
- ★ Any deliberate act of cruelty to an animal
- ★ Careless, negligent performance of volunteer duties

As to other lesser infractions, volunteers who do not adhere to the policies and procedures of the animal shelter or who fail to satisfactorily perform their volunteer assignments are subject to termination. The termination of a volunteer is at the authority of the Volunteer Coordinator, Shelter Manager, and Board of Directors. The following disciplinary procedure will be followed when the Volunteer Coordinator determines the conduct of a volunteer is inappropriate:

- ★ **First Action:** Verbal Warning
- ★ **Second Action:** Request by the Volunteer Coordinator/Manager to leave premises for the day
- ★ **Third Action:** Suspension from the Shelter with Corrective Action Plan
- ★ **Fourth Action:** Termination from the program.

Volunteer Code of Conduct

By signing this agreement, I _____, agree to the following Humane Society of Camden County (HSCC) Volunteer Code of Conduct:

I understand that the goal of the volunteer program at HSCC is to engage and educate the public on the mission and philosophy of HSCC, to support shelter activities, and to provide supplemental care and enrichment for the lives of shelter animals and that my actions and attitudes should always further these goals. I understand that I can and should always seek guidance if I am ever unclear about the mission, philosophy or practices of HSCC.

I agree to conduct myself in an appropriate and professional manner while volunteering for HSCC, following and publicly supporting HSCC programs, policies and practices. In my capacity as a volunteer, I agree to consistently conduct myself in a manner consistent with humane treatment of HSCC animals and professional interaction with HSCC employees, patrons, other volunteers, and members of the public.

I understand that HSCC welcomes and relies upon volunteer feedback. If I am ever in disagreement with any philosophy, policy or practice of HSCC, I agree to use the appropriate, established communication channels to share my concerns or feedback. The channels are, in order:

1. Communicate first with the Volunteer Coordinator. I will place my concerns on the appropriate form or email the Volunteer Coordinator at hsccvolunteerwithme@gmail.com.
2. If I feel my concern was not addressed at this level, I will then communicate it directly to the Board of Directors.

I understand that I am responsible for reviewing all the materials given to me at orientation including the Volunteer Manual. If I have any questions or do not understand anything in the materials, I agree to ask the Volunteer Coordinator.

I know that as a HSCC volunteer, I represent the Humane Society of Camden County, and I promise not to engage in any activity or communication that may cause harm to the reputation of HSCC. I agree to be a role model for the humane treatment of animals, at home and in all places as well as while working with the shelter animals.

I agree to accept supervision, direction and support from the HSCC staff and understand that they will provide me with feedback to help me perform my volunteer duties most effectively and safely, and in the best interest of the animals I am volunteering for.

I understand that failing to observe the above agreements could result in my dismissal from the volunteer program, and that I can be removed at any time at the discretion of the Volunteer Coordinator or the Board of Directors.

Volunteer Signature

Date

(Parent or Legal Guardian for volunteers under the age of 18)