



**VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK
2010**

Welcome to the New Rochelle Humane Society Volunteer Program

The New Rochelle Humane Society relies on volunteers to assist with a variety of tasks around the shelter and in the communities that we serve. We welcome adults aged 18 or older and junior volunteers aged 14 – 17 years. Family volunteers are adult parents or legal guardians with children aged 10 – 13 years that work as a team only. Each of these groups has a program designed for them with different orientations and guidelines which are described below.

NRHS' volunteer community has a profound impact on the lives of the animals in our care. We are very grateful for your interest in our program and your commitment to donate your time and energy. This handbook is intended to outline the volunteer programs and the shelter policies to ensure a healthy and safe environment for the animals, the volunteers and visitors to our shelter.

About NRHS

New Rochelle Humane Society was founded almost one hundred years ago to provide care for lost, abandoned, injured or mistreated animals. Over the years this private 501c3 not-for-profit organization has become well known for offering animals in need a comfortable environment to live in, the medical care they require, and the love and attention they deserve.

We presently serve 17 communities in Westchester County and rescue over 500 dogs and 800 cats each year. Day or night we are responsible for taking in any animal in distress in any one of our communities. We make every effort to reunite the animal with its owner. When that is not possible, our staff puts a tremendous amount of energy into matching the animal with the right adoptive home.

NRHS is headed by a Board of Directors comprised entirely of volunteers. Our staff consists of an experienced, dedicated shelter manager and caring workers who make sure each animal receives the attention it needs. They are supported by an active group of volunteers including enthusiastic family and junior volunteers.

About 50% of the shelter's funding is provided from the communities we serve for rescuing their homeless cats and dogs. The other 50% comes from donations, wills, bequests and fund-raising. We do not receive any federal funding.

Location and Hours of Operation

New Rochelle Humane Society
70 Portman Rd, New Rochelle, NY 10801
914-632-2925
newrochellehumanesociety.org

	Operation Hours	Volunteer Hours
Monday	10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.	9:00 a.m. – 4:45 p.m.
Tuesday	10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.	9:00 a.m. – 4:45 p.m.
Wednesday	10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.	9:00 a.m. – 4:45 p.m.
Thursday	2:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.	9:00 a.m. – 7:45 p.m.
Friday	10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.	9:00 a.m. – 4:45 p.m.
Saturday	10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.	9:00 a.m. – 4:45 p.m.
Sunday	10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.	9:00 a.m. – 4:45 p.m.

Contact Information

All people listed can be contacted via email at petadopt@verizon.net or via the main phone number at NRHS (914) 632-2925.

Role	Name
Shelter Manager	Dana Rocco
Assistant Shelter Manager	Anna Lena Larsson
Adoption Counselors	Tiffany Monterela Ashley DiDomizio Kim Rayburn
Event Coordinator	Beverly Press
Cat Care Professionals	Carol D'Onofrio Amy Eisenberg Hulias Livingston Patrick Cardiello
Dog Care Professionals	James Adams Patty Anton John Salvo Ondray Williams Doug Cano Nick Patrella
Adult Volunteer Coordinator	Dianne Heim
Junior & Family Volunteer Coordinator	Diane Wade
Green Dot Dog Walking Class Coordinator	Lee Anne Veley

NRHS Volunteer Activities

Volunteers are needed in many capacities at NRHS. Detailed descriptions of the programs listed below can be found on pages 7-13. We hope you find something here that suits your interests and skills!

Volunteer Activities with Dogs:

- Walking
- Training
- Grooming
- Quiet time
- Adoption Events

Volunteer Activities with Cats:

- Socializing Cats and Kittens
- Playtime
- Adoption Events

Fostering Animals at your Home:

- Kittens too young to be adopted
- Dogs / Cats recovering from surgery or illness
- Dogs having difficulty adjusting to the shelter or in need of training

Assistant Adoption Counselor

- Assist staff by guiding potential adopters through the shelter to meet cats and dogs

Around the Shelter:

- Assisting staff with feeding the animals
- Assisting staff with cleaning duties including laundry
- Grounds work (gardening, weeding, sweeping, shoveling, etc.)

Behind the Scenes:

- Fund Raising
- Shelter Events
- Publicity
- Graphic Art and Design (for web site, events, brochures, T-Shirts, etc.)
- Photography (web site, events, dogs and cats, etc.)
- Thank You Notes

In the Community:

- Hosting group visits to NRHS (i.e. Girl Scouts, Elementary Schools, etc.)
- Off-site Community events: Publicizing NRHS at events in the communities that we serve
- Off-site Adoption days

The NRHS Volunteer Program

All volunteers must complete an application and attend a volunteer orientation session. Applications and scheduled dates are available at the shelter and on the website. The orientation sessions are specific for Adults or Family & Juniors. Once you complete the orientation session, you can do all volunteer activities except working with dogs. There is an additional class required to work with NRHS dogs and is described in further detail in this document. Some additional information to be aware of:

Sign In & Out: Every person is required to log in and out when they are volunteering at NRHS. There are binders on the shelves by the entrance to the large cat room for volunteers to log their time. There are separate binders for Adult, Junior and Family volunteers. Fill in a blank sheet with your name and file it under the first letter of your last name to use as your log.

Badges: You will be given an ID badge after you attend an orientation. The badge must be worn at all times when you visit NRHS so the staff can recognize you. Please do not leave your badge at the shelter. We are not responsible for lost or stolen badges.

Dress Code: Wear clothes that can get dirty. Sweatshirts are better than sweaters since sweaters will pull if a dog jumps on you or a cat uses his claws. Closed shoes are strongly recommended. Open toed shoes risk injury; volunteers who wear sandals, even sturdy hiking sandals, do so at their own risk. Flip flops are not ever allowed. Dangling earrings, especially large hoops, can be dangerous and are not recommended since an animal may grab at them and injure you.

Adoptions: Adoption counseling and decisions are the province of the staff. Please do not recommend an animal to a potential adopter since not every animal is suitable for every adopter, and vice versa. If asked by a visitor, please refer them to the Front Desk. If you are occupying the Training Room or a Get Acquainted Room, you must vacate it for any adoption activity which is the top priority at NRHS.

Reception Area: The reception/office area is for staff only. Please do not enter this area without permission. Do not enter the manager's office.

Adult Volunteer Program Contact: Dianne Heim

The NRHS Junior Volunteer Program

The New Rochelle Humane Society junior volunteer program is for those between the ages of 14 and 18 who love animals and are self starters. After an initial orientation this loosely structured program allows the motivated young people to create their own volunteering schedule. Junior volunteers are welcome at the shelter any time the shelter is open, although volunteer help is needed most in the morning hours between 9:00 and 11:00 and at the end of the day - between 3:00 and 4:30.

Junior Volunteer tasks can include the following:

- Socializing cats and kittens
- Assisting staff in feeding cats and dogs
- Assisting staff in cleaning cat and dog areas
- Socializing puppies (when there are puppies in residence)
- Gardening

Descriptions of these activities are in the program sections below. Additionally, junior volunteers are welcome to help with adult volunteer fundraisers, as well as to create fundraisers of their own (Over the years junior volunteers have made some terrific contributions in this area!)

After performing 20 hours of service junior volunteers are eligible to take the Green Dot dog walking class. Upon the successful completion of this class juniors are allowed to walk Green Dot shelter dogs as described in the Volunteering with Dogs section of this handbook.

Basic Guidelines for Junior Volunteers are shown in the Family Volunteer section immediately below.

Junior Volunteer Program Contact: Diane Wade

The NRHS Family Volunteer Program

The family volunteer program is our newest program. It was developed in recognition of the fact that some of our most passionate animal people are under 14 years of age. It provides an opportunity for young people between the ages of 10 and 14 years to become more involved at the shelter. **The family volunteers are a team and the parent or legal guardian must remain with their child at all times while at NRHS and is responsible for supervising all activities.**

Family volunteers must attend an orientation session designed for them. The sessions are usually held on the last Sunday of each month at 10:00 a.m. A list of orientation dates can be found on the website. The child (or children) and their parent or legal guardian must be in attendance. The adult that attends with the child must accompany the child to NRHS for each visit. If an additional parent or legal guardian plans to volunteer with the child, he or she must also attend the orientation.

Family volunteers perform the same tasks as Junior volunteers. Working as a team, they can help staff members with laundry, preparing meals for the animals, and cleaning dishes and animal areas. Family volunteers can also socialize our cats and kittens, play with our puppies (when available) and help with clerical tasks. Volunteers are always encouraged to get involved with special events. Community fairs, adoption events, fund raising and our annual dog wash are just a few of the many possibilities.

If you would like to walk dogs as a part of your volunteer activities, you must attend a Green Dot training class for family volunteers. See detailed information in the Volunteering with Dogs section of this handbook. The Volunteering with Cats section has guidelines and rules for working with our cats.

Family Volunteer Program Contact: Diane Wade

Basic Guidelines for Family and Junior Volunteers

- Sign in when you arrive at the shelter and sign out before you leave.
- Wear your ID badge at all times.
- Do not congregate in the reception area.
- No cell phones are to be used while in the cat rooms or kennel. If you need to make a call, please step outside the shelter.
- Do not wear headphones while in the cat rooms or kennel.
- Pay attention to posted signs on doors, walls and cages. Do not enter areas marked “STAFF ONLY.”
- Dress Code: No flip-flops or open toed shoes. Pants must be at least knee length.
- No “horseplay” in the cat rooms or kennels. Running, jumping around, banging on the kennels or yelling will not be tolerated. This type of behavior upsets the animals.
- Ask a staff member in the dog or cat department if they need help.
- Help with cleaning, laundry and sorting of donations is always appreciated.
- Volunteers are limited to ONE cat room per visit.
- Do not enter a kennel with a dog without permission.
- You are welcome to attend dog training classes which are held on most Thursday evenings at 7:00.
- Do not assist with adoptions. Never remove an animal from his or her cage for a potential adopter. Direct all questions regarding animals to the front desk.
- If an animal appears to be ill or injured, please notify a staff member.
- Please keep all negative comments to yourself. Our staff works very hard to keep their areas clean and the animals happy. Negative comments about odors or about a particular animal’s personality or appearance will not be tolerated.
- Staff members are happy to answer questions, but are often too busy to engage in long chats unless it is a particularly quiet time.
- If you have a friend who would like to visit the shelter with you, he or she must attend a volunteer orientation.
- E-mails will be sent regularly when help is needed with an upcoming event.
- We are always open to suggestions! E-mail is the best way to get in touch with the appropriate party. You can also leave a message at the front desk.

Volunteering with Dogs at NRHS

To work with dogs at NRHS, you are first required to take a Green Dot Dog Walking class. Your volunteer badge will get a green dot sticker on it once you have completed the class so staff will recognize you as a green dot dog walker.

NRHS takes in around 500 dogs every year, roughly half of which have become separated from their owners and need us to help them find their way home. Once dogs become available for adoption at NRHS, they will be categorized for volunteers into 3 types: Green Dot, Yellow Dot and Red Dot. The colored dot is shown on the kennel sign for that dog which also shows their name, breed, age, story and some instructions for walking and handling.

Like a traffic light, the colored dots indicate level of caution required to handle a dog. Red dot dogs are not available to be walked or handled by volunteers. This can be for a variety of reasons including:

- The dog has not passed the 7 days required to determine if the dog is lost and can be reunited with an owner
- The dog has not yet been temperament tested to determine the type of program it needs while at NRHS
- The dog is on a specific training program being run by the staff trainers which cannot be varied

Green Dot dogs are the easiest to walk and include most of our senior dogs, small dogs, some puppies, and certain adult dogs. All volunteers that want to walk any NRHS dogs must take the Green Dot walking class and walk Green Dot dogs only until they are comfortable in the shelter environment and feel ready to walk stronger dogs.

Yellow Dot dogs are the majority of the dogs in the shelter at any given time and are typically young, strong dogs that require some strength and dexterity to handle. Most of these dogs are walked with an EZ Walk harness or a Gentle Leader to give some extra control to the walker. You must get individually certified to walk Yellow Dot dogs at NRHS. Junior volunteers are not allowed to walk Yellow Dot dogs.

Green Dot Walking Program

The purpose of the Green Dot walking class is to ensure that every person undertaking to walk dogs at NRHS has a safe and pleasant experience doing so. Acclimating yourself as a volunteer to a shelter environment takes a bit of time and we limit dog walking at first to our easiest dogs to give the volunteer time to become familiar with the shelter itself and the workings of the kennel. You must sign up to take a one hour Green Dot class as we limit attendance to be sure each volunteer gets individual attention. To sign up, send an email to petadopt@verizon.net with “Adult Green Dot Class” or “Family/Junior Green Dot Class” in the subject line.

Contact: Lee Anne Veley

Yellow Dot Walking Program

After becoming comfortable walking the green dot dogs, you can become a Yellow Dot walker which will be shown with a yellow dot sticker on your volunteer badge. Generally, yellow dot dogs are more physically demanding to walk than green dot dogs. Every person is different as to when they feel ready to advance to walking the yellow dot dogs. Some people volunteer just a few times with green dot dogs and some prefer to walk green dots for several weeks or forever. To become a Yellow Dot walker simply ask the manager Dana or the assistant manager Anna-Lena to assist you or send a note to petadopt@verizon.net with Yellow Dot in the subject line. During the yellow dot session (roughly 45 minutes long) you will walk 2-3 yellow dot dogs to ensure your comfort handling these dogs and using the EZ Walk harness or Gentle Leader. Becoming a Yellow Dot walker is a one-on-one session, or multiple sessions if you need more time, aimed at improving your dog walking and handling skills.

Contact: Lee Anne Veley

Guidelines and Rules for Walking Dogs

- Secure a leash, poop bags, treats, toys and whatever else you need before you get a dog out of the kennel. A fanny pack or large pockets are helpful.
- Retractable leashes are not to be used to walk NRHS dogs.
- All walkers must enter the kennel and close the gate before leashing a dog. DO NOT attempt to put a leash on a dog while standing at the gate with the door open.
- It is important to the adoptability of the shelter dogs that you require the dog to sit or, at the very least, not jump prior to entering the kennel and before leashing the dog.
- When exiting a kennel with a dog do not open the gate until the dog is either sitting or is at least not jumping.
- When exiting the kennel
 - Look to see that the coast is clear of other dogs and walkers before exiting the kennel.
 - Walk as far away from the front of the kennel as possible before turning toward the door.
 - Exit quickly, but do not run. Do not stop to talk.
 - Keep the dog by your side by holding the leash about one foot from the dog's collar. Many of the leashes have knots in them to give you a guide as to where your hand should be on the leash when exiting.
 - Leave the building via the windowed door at the far end of the kennel room – to your right as you are exiting a dog kennel against the back wall.
 - The person inside the door has the right of way to exit. The person and dog on the outside of the door should move past the door toward the back of the building while the person inside exits.
- Follow the signs and walk the dog toward the upper parking lot. No dogs are to be walked on the front driveway as several house cats roam freely there. When returning to the shelter, walk your dog to the upper parking lot and down the walkway to the building.
- You must clean up any feces and dispose of it in the appropriate trash.
- No dogs are to be left alone in exercise pens, rooms or tied to fencing at any time, ever.
- Do not allow the public to approach and pet a dog you have out for a walk.
- When returning to the kennel area, keep your dog by your side. Your hand should be no more than one foot from the dog's collar.
 - Do not stop to talk.
 - Keep your dog as far as possible from the fronts of the kennels.

- Enter the kennel with your dog, close gate then unleash the dog and back out carefully.
- If you have problems entering the kennel & removing a dog in the above manner ask a staff member to assist you.

Family Volunteer Guidelines and Rules for Walking Dogs

In addition to the general Dog Walking rules Family Volunteers must abide by these additional restrictions:

- The dog must always be under the control of the adult Family Volunteer. Under no circumstances can the child hold the leash.
- The dog can not be left with the child unsupervised by the parent for any amount of time while volunteering at the shelter.
- Play groups are not to be formed or supervised by Family Volunteers.
- Family volunteers are not allowed to bring friends along to accompany them on their visits to the shelter.

Junior Volunteer Guidelines and Rules for Walking Dogs

In addition to the general Dog Walking rules Junior Volunteers must abide by these additional restrictions:

- Junior volunteers must ask at the front desk which Green Dot dogs they are allowed to walk each time they visit to walk dogs.
- Junior volunteers cannot use cell phones in the shelter, except for short calls made in the reception area, or while walking a dog and cannot listen to music on headphones while walking a dog.
- Junior volunteers are not allowed to bring friends along to accompany them on their visits to the shelter.
- Play groups are not to be formed or supervised by Junior Volunteers.

Volunteering with Cats at NRHS

Feline Socialization allows all cats to enjoy human contact and grooming while they wait for their forever homes. Our caged cats need time to roam and play and volunteers can do this in the private socializing room when it is available. Our shy cats can be helped to warm up to people and increase their chance of being adopted by working with our volunteers.

Contact: Kim Rayburn

NRHS Cat Department Rules

- **Prevent Germs from Spreading:** Animals can carry germs for several weeks before showing any signs of feeling ill. During this time, they are at their most contagious. Please be sure to sanitize your hands in between handling each caged cat or after leaving a free roaming cat room to avoid spreading germs. Keep in mind that germs can also be carried on your clothing, shoes, toys, brushes and other items the cats come in contact with. Brushing of cats is not permitted as it can spread fungal infections.
- **No Room Hopping:** To avoid the spread of germs from one area to another, volunteers are limited to ONE cat room per visit.
- **Do Not Pick up Cats and Kittens:** This can lead to serious injury. If startled, a cat or kitten may fall or jump from your arms. If restrained, they may scratch or bite in an attempt to break free.
- **Be Kind:** Shelter life isn't easy and each animal handles stress differently. Do not assume that these animals will behave like your pet at home. Pay attention to body language and be sure that each interaction is a positive one.
- **Co-op Kitty:** There are three adoption rooms open to volunteers and visitors. As stated above, volunteers are limited to one room per visit. If you should choose to visit Co-op Kitty (the adoption room where cats are in cages,) please read the following rules that apply to that area:

Co-op Kitty Rules

- You may open the cages and interact with the cats.
- Do not remove a cat from his or her cage without permission from the front desk.
- After you have been given permission, you may take the cat of your choice into the Get Acquainted Room. Cats cannot roam freely in Co-op Kitty.
- To prevent the spread of germs, you may only take one cat or kitten into the Get Acquainted Room at a time. The only exception is if the cats or kittens are sharing a cage.
- Be sure to wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water in between handling each cat. This is VERY important.
- If you need assistance with a particular cat, please ask at the front desk.

Foster Program

Open your heart and your home to an animal in need. Through our foster care program, you can provide a homeless pet with the extra time and care they need until they are ready for adoption. Every foster home requirement is different. Time commitments range from two weeks to two months. 24 hour support is provided. We supply the resources - you supply the love!

Contact: Dana Rocco

Assistant Adoption Counselor

During high traffic times, such as Thursday evenings and weekend days, there can be many potential adopters waiting to meet dogs and cats. NRHS staff works very hard to give these people personal attention. The Assistant Adoption Counselor will work with the staff to guide adopters through the facility and help them with meeting the animals they are interested in. This is a new program in 2010 and is available to those adults who have spent several months volunteering at NRHS. Yellow Dot dog walking certification is required and you must be able to commit to scheduled hours. You can apply for this activity directly to the shelter manager, who will evaluate your application and abilities for acceptance into this program.

Contact: Dana Rocco

Around the Shelter

Feeding the Animals

Assist the staff in preparing food bowls and feeding the dogs and cats.

Contacts: James Adams, Carol D'Onofrio

Cleaning Duties

There is always something to be done to keep our shelter clean. The heavy cleaning work is done from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. and includes; hosing down and scrubbing the dog kennel floors and walls, taking up dirty bedding and putting down fresh, and cleaning cat kennels and litter boxes. In addition, other tasks are done all during the day such as: laundry – LOTS of laundry, washing dog and cat dishes, scooping litter pans, and cleaning windows, shelves or anything else that is dusty or dirty.

Contacts: James Adams, Carol D'Onofrio

Grounds Work

Maintain the general landscaping of the grounds by weeding, raking, shoveling and cleaning up grounds around the shelter.

Contact: Dana Rocco

Behind the Scenes

Fund Raising

NRHS puts on several fund raising events each year including the Dog Wash, the Hounds on the Sound Dog Walk, Photos with Santa and others. We need a lot of help to support these events. People who can secure donations of merchandise, food, and money are in particular demand. In addition, we are always working to add new fund raising techniques such as web based, email, sponsorships, etc. Anyone who has experience or interest in fundraising is welcome!

Contact: Dianne Heim

Shelter Events

As described in fund raising, we have numerous events at the shelter and in the local vicinity during the year. Volunteers are needed in many capacities to support these events such as; sign-in table, selling merchandise, directing flow of traffic and people, assisting trainers, doing demonstrations, etc. These events are a lot of fun!

Contact: Beverly Press

Publicity

It is important that NRHS, our animals and our events get publicized. Volunteers are needed to make sure that information gets to newspapers, TV and radio stations. Volunteers also distribute event fliers throughout our service areas. Writing skills, creativity and tenacity in approaching publications and places to post fliers are skills needed for this activity.

Contact: Beverly Press

Graphic Art and Web Design

Effective communication demands great graphics. NRHS uses graphics to create fliers advertising coming events, around the shelter showing adoptable pets, and especially on our web site and in electronic communication. Photoshop or other computer photo program skills as well as creative design ideas are needed for this activity. Web design skill is needed for help with the NRHS web site.

Contact: Lee Anne Veley

Photography

Experienced photographers are needed to take professional quality pictures of our dogs and cats for our web site, fliers, and newsletters. We also need photographers to record events and help select photos for posting to the web site.

Contact: Dana Rocco

Thank You Notes

NRHS sends out three mailings a year; two newsletters and a holiday greeting. All responses get a thank you note which we need volunteers to help with. This work is done at home and requires a computer and a printer. We provide a form letter on which you enter the name and amount given before printing. Envelopes are hand addressed.

Contact: Dianne Heim

In the Community

Hosting Group Visits to NRHS

School groups and scout troops visit the shelter frequently and occasionally we have a birthday party group. These youngsters are given a talk about the shelter, a visit with a dog and cat and a tour of the facility. Help is needed with these groups since they number anywhere from 7 to 20. Most groups come after 3:30 during the week.

Contact: Dianne Heim

Off-site Community Events

NRHS tries to take part in community events which take place in any of the 17 communities we service in order to promote the shelter to people who do not know that NRHS “is their shelter.” This involves bringing a table and literature about NRHS and being able to talk to the public about what we do. Sometimes a dog is brought along to draw attention to the NRHS table. A green dot class is required for participation in the events where a dog is involved.

Contact: Beverly Press

Off-site Adoption Days

Assist staff with transport of dogs and / or cats to adoption events held in the community. Work with the staff to showcase our available animals and our shelter work. These events typically require a half day or full day commitment, usually on a weekend day.

Contact: Beverly Press