



VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION HANDBOOK

OUR MISSION:

Atlanta Pet Rescue is a non-profit, volunteer-based no-kill animal shelter dedicated to rescuing unwanted pets.

We provide compassionate care for homeless dogs and cats.

OUR GOALS:

Adoptability ~ Public education ~ Responsibility

ADOPTABILITY. We rescue dogs and cats and obtain necessary medical attention and services (including spay/neuter) to make them healthy adoptable dogs and cats. We find qualified homes for our pets with people who are able to provide the pet with a permanent home including the love, care, training and nurture they require.

PUBLIC EDUCATION. We educate the public about pet ownership issues through presentations, individual counseling, distribution of educational materials and sponsoring educational seminars on dog training issues. Whether a visitor leaves with the pet they came for, a different but better-suited pet, or no pet at all, it is important that they leave with a feeling of satisfaction, having received information that will help them select an appropriate pet for their individual circumstances or no pet at all.

RESPONSIBILITY. We exercise fiscal responsibility in handling our adoption fees, donations and other fundraising receipts to provide the maximum care for our rescued pets and to ensure our financial viability into the future.

Atlanta Pet Rescue has always valued both the emotional and physical health of our pets and is eager to gain recognition as an Open Paw accredited shelter. Open Paw is a revolutionary animal-and-people education program founded in January of 2000, designed to help stop the surrender and euthanasia of unwanted dogs and cats.

Every year, millions of dogs and cats are surrendered to animal shelters, most of them for easily predictable, easily preventable reasons like chewing inappropriate objects, barking or clawing, or lack of housetraining. It's not that their guardians were bad or lazy; it's just that most people don't know what to expect from their new dog or cat, and most don't know how to train their new animal to express their animal behavior appropriately in a home. Furthermore, once the animal goes into the shelter, even in a very good shelter, they often become de-trained in many ways. This means that the new guardian is faced with behavior difficulties when they adopt the animal, and the guardian doesn't know where to go to find out how to deal with the problems. Many then feel forced to surrender a beloved animal back to the shelter.

Open Paw (OP) is a unique program designed to address these issues through the education of people and animals. The primary goal is to educate animal guardians and prospective guardians. The second goal is to turn every animal shelter into a pleasant, friendly, quiet place where members of the community can go to learn about animals, and about basic training and behavior. And thirdly, the program changes the way shelters are set up, so that animals learn or retain animal and people social skills, housetraining and basic manners while they're in the shelter, instead of losing those skills. Thus, pets leave the shelter much better able to live successfully in a domestic environment.

We want to turn our adoption center into a Dog and Cat University, where not only animals, but people, can learn. As a volunteer, the single most important thing you'll do is help the animals to form positive associations to all kinds of people. This will help make them more calm, quiet and friendly when people approach the kennel, which will help them to get adopted, and will make them better socialized to people once they're out in the real world, which will help keep them in their homes permanently.

We teach our volunteers training techniques in four levels: OP Cats or OP Dogs Levels one, two, three, and four. There are also several specialties you can learn once you've mastered OP4. Specialties include working with animals that have special behavior needs, doing adoption counseling, bathing/grooming and mobile adoption. Consult your Open Paw training manual for a complete list of dog and cat specialties. More information on the Open Paw program is also available at www.openpaw.com.

There are a lot of other ways you can serve Atlanta Pet Rescue as a volunteer. Besides help with animal care and cleanliness at our two locations, we need volunteers to help with fundraising and marketing, foster homes, animal transportation and a variety of other activities.

If you plan to help care for animals at either our adoption center (14th Street) or at our rehab center (Vinings), you'll want to become familiar with and trained in basic animal handling techniques mentioned above. We want our animals to learn or retain animal and people social skills, housetraining and basic manners while they're in the shelter, instead of losing those skills. Thus, pets leave the shelter much better able to live successfully in their new home.

Thank you for making a difference! APR has a small but dedicated paid staff that oversees the day-to-day operations, adoptions and maintenance of our shelter, therefore we rely heavily on the

generosity of our volunteers, who give their time and skills to help us provide the best possible care for the animals that are entrusted to us. Your service is invaluable and greatly appreciated!

VOLUNTEER POLICIES & PROCEDURES

In order to work well with the staff and to present Atlanta Pet Rescue in the best possible light, we ask that you adhere to APR policies and procedures while you are on duty as a volunteer.

QUALIFICATIONS

Volunteers must be at least 18 years of age and must enjoy working with all types of people. They must show a genuine concern for the welfare of animals. The ideal volunteer is self-motivated, mature, sensitive, dependable and a team player. He or she must have the ability to complete assignments promptly, reliably and with flexibility. A willingness to work hard, get dirty and pitch in wherever needed is required.

Volunteers who work directly with animals must exhibit a willingness to learn about animals and how to safely interact with them. They must be able to react quickly to prevent or control any aggression in the dog pens.

REQUIREMENTS

Volunteers must complete a basic orientation session before reporting for their first assignment. Additional training may also be required depending on the area in which you wish to volunteer.

TIME COMMITMENT AND SCHEDULING

We ask each of our volunteers to sign up for two-hour block of time (one shift) per week. This is requested but not required. Volunteer hours are flexible depending on the assignment. Volunteers are welcome to come in any time from 8:00AM to 8:00PM, seven days a week, after completing an on-the-job-training session.

If you are scheduled to report for a particular shift, we count on you to be there. In the event you are unable to report for your assigned shift, please email or call the volunteer coordinator as soon as possible at volunteers@atlantapetrescue.org so we may arrange for a replacement.

When you report for your shift, we ask that you sign in the volunteer sheet (in the kitchen) your hours. We need to keep a log of your hours, not to check up on you, but to be able to report volunteer commitment when asked for that information in grant applications.

DRESS CODE

You are as much a representative of APR as our paid staff. Your appearance and conduct will reflect our organization. All volunteers helping at the shelter—even those who don't specifically work as dog or cat handlers—are likely to come in contact with the animals. For this reason, we recommend that all volunteers wear long pants and closed-toe shoes with good traction. Volunteers are required to wear Atlanta Pet Rescue apparel (either a t-shirt or apron) during their volunteer shift. T-shirts and aprons can be purchased for a minimal fee or you may use one of the shelter aprons while volunteering. Borrowed aprons **MUST** be returned before you leave the shelter. Volunteers are also required to wear nametags while on duty at the shelter or off-site. For the first three weeks of service, you will be wearing a blank volunteer clip-on badge. You may write on it with a dry erase marker, if you like. Because visitors cannot go places and do things you will be doing at the shelter,

identification of volunteers is important. You will find the ID badges in the kitchen. If you have trouble locating them, please ask a staff member for assistance.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

The success of our organization depends upon the quality of the relationships between APR, our employees, volunteers, customers and the general public. You, as a volunteer, represent APR both at the shelter and in the outside world. In a sense, you are APR's ambassador when you are not at the shelter. The more goodwill you promote, the more successful our organization will be. Carry our brochures in your car with you, and keep some at your desk. You never know who you tell about APR – they might be our next great adopter, donor or fundraising partner or participant – or all three!

FOSTER HOME PROGRAM

APR's Foster Home Program allows animals that are too young for adoptions, are recovering from surgery or illness, or are in need of other special care, to stay in private homes until they can be adopted. Volunteer foster homes provide a safe place for the animals to stay, and receive love, socialization and health care. All foster homes are provided with food and a crate and are not responsible for any medical or other expense for the animal(s) they are fostering. Foster homes need only provide a safe, loving home and a ride to and from the shelter for adoption on Saturday. This important volunteer program makes room at our shelter so we can save the lives of many animals that might not otherwise have the chance. It also helps make the foster pets more adoptable, as they become more healthy, socialized, and we know more about them to help us place them in appropriate homes. Foster homes provide an invaluable insight into each dog's or cat's unique personality that helps make them more appealing to a potential adopter.

OUR PROCEDURES AND PRACTICES

Our ultimate goal at APR is getting our rescued pets adopted. We strive to find permanent, loving homes for them. APR does not sell animals; nor is the adoption donation the cost of the animal. Our shelter animals are released to the lifelong care of responsible, loving homes after an application is completed and the applicant has been interviewed in person. Adoption fees help cover the cost of housing and care for the many animals in our shelter. They defray only a part of our actual cost of operation. The adoption fee for most dogs is \$250. The adoption fee for large purebred dogs and some high-demand smaller dogs is \$300. The fee for cats or kittens is \$115. Each dog or cat adopted has been spayed or neutered, received its core vaccinations appropriate to its species and age, dogs older than six months have been tested for heartworms, cats and kittens are tested for feline leukemia and feline AIDS. Both dogs and cats are de-wormed and treated for fleas. All go home with a bag of food. Dogs also go home with a leash, collar and ID tag. We microchip dogs for an additional \$35 fee and all cats are microchipped at no charge to the adopter through the generous sponsorship of a donor.

Shelter-housed animals are available for adoption Tuesday through Friday from 11am until 4pm. All adoptable animals are available on Saturday from 12pm until 5pm.

If a volunteer wishes to adopt one of our animals, he or she must go through the same adoption criteria and process that all potential adopters go through.

Each year, volunteers donate thousands of hours of service in virtually every part of the organization, which allows us to accomplish so much more to help the animals. In-shelter tasks range from comforting and caring for the animals as groomers, trainers and handlers, to assisting potential adopters. For those who do not wish to work directly with the animals, we need help with

in-shelter clerical and operational tasks and also some that can be done at home. We also need help with marketing efforts, special events, mailings and post-adoption follow-up calls. There's plenty to do, always.

OTHER WAYS TO HELP

Fundraising. Some examples of our annual activities are listed below in the "special events" section, and some fundraising examples are listed below, but there are many other large and small events and projects that come up throughout the year that we need help with. If this is something you are able to help us with, please let our fundraiser contact know: Betsey's email address is fundraiser@atlantapetrescue.org. Email her and let her know if there is a specific project you would like to help with. Once you email us, we will add you to our fundraising team distribution list and you will get a notification via email when there is an important fundraising event or project coming up that we need your help with!

- Bi-annual letter campaign: usually November and June
- Thank you notes to donors and supporters (must be sent from our adoption center)
- Sponsor-a-pet thank you packages (emailed and mailed, must be sent from our adoption center)
- VET PETS Notebook Program: we place printouts of our adoptable pets in various veterinary clinics around Atlanta.
- Various data-entry and/or mailing projects

Special Events. Our volunteers are the key to success at various events throughout the year. Charity events include our annual Paws for Cocktails party, our annual rummage sale: Wags to Riches, Barnes and Noble holiday gift-wrapping and many other fun events during the year. Sign up to help for an hour or two, or longer. Let us know if there is something specific you want to help us do at the event. You will have fun and help homeless dogs and cats at the same time! If this is something you are able to help us with, please let our fundraiser contact know: fundraiser@atlantapetrescue.org.

- Paws for Cocktails (November): solicit donations, solicit sponsors, pick up donations, help promote the event by posting fliers and/or mailing invitations, help with set up of the event, help at the event, help clean up after the event
- Wags to Riches (September): solicit donations, solicit sponsors, pick up donations, help promote the event by posting fliers and/or mailing invitations, help with set up of the event, help at the event, help clean up after the event
- Educational seminars (varies): solicit sponsors, help promote the event by posting fliers and/or mailing invitations, help with set up of the seminar, help at the seminar, help clean up after the seminar
- Barnes & Nobles gift wrapping (December 12-25th): gift wrap books for donations – no experience required!
- APR Calendar (October – January): solicit sponsors/advertisers for the calendar, help promote and sell calendars to individuals, ask businesses to buy in bulk for clients/employees, coordinate calendar sales at local businesses

Sponsor A Pet Program. Many of our rescued pets need special care, such as heartworm or other extensive medical treatment. The Sponsor-A-Pet Program, allows people to donate money to help a

specific dog or cat at APR. The sponsorship form can be completed and submitted from our website. Sponsorship forms are also available at the shelter.

Membership Program. Many people want to help, but with all the other commitments to family, friends, and our jobs, it is hard to find the time. The Atlanta Pet Rescue membership program enables people to make a meaningful difference in the lives of homeless dogs and cats in metro Atlanta through their tax-deductible donation. Memberships are available to both private parties as well as corporations, clubs or groups. There are two levels of a membership to choose from:

Silver Membership. For a one-time tax-deductible donation of \$500-\$999 you can show your support of Atlanta Pet Rescue as a silver member. As a silver member, you will receive the right to name the next five dogs and/or cats that you will be helping us rescue. Also with your membership, you will also receive our Silver Member's Welcome Kit which includes an inspirational custom framed and matted photograph, an Atlanta Pet Rescue t-shirt, and more.

Gold membership. For a one-time tax-deductible donation of \$1,000 or more you can show your support of Atlanta Pet Rescue as a gold member. As a gold member, you will receive the right to name the next ten dogs and/or cats that you will be helping us rescue. Also with your membership, you will also receive our Gold Member's Welcome Kit which includes an inspirational custom framed and matted photograph, an Atlanta Pet Rescue sweatshirt or t-shirt and apron, and more.

Animal Professionals. We always need professional services from veterinarians, trainers and groomers to help our dogs get through those tough times. If you are a professional and would be able to give some of your very busy day (or evening) to a worthy cause, you have found the right organization! If this is something you are able to help us with, please let our volunteer coordinator know.

CONTACT INFO

Shelter main number: 404-815-6680; Fax 404-815-6958
Shelter manager, Carolyn Baars: email westside@atlantapetrescue.org

Marketing and Development, Betsey Blimline: 404-643-2332
Marketing email: fundraiser@atlantapetrescue.org

Volunteer coordinator's email: volunteers@atlantapetrescue.org

HOURS OF OPERATION

Adoption hours:
Tuesday-Friday: 11am-4pm
Saturday: 12pm-5pm

Shelter hours: 8am until 8pm daily, including weekends and holidays