



Sunrise Humane Society  
FORT PIERCE *Florida*

## **VOLUNTEER MANUAL**

## **Welcome to Volunteering!**

Thank you for starting your volunteer experience at Sunrise Humane Society (SHS) and welcome to our Team!

Volunteers at the Sunrise Humane Society are an integral part of achieving our mission of caring for companion animals in need, teaching others and increasing the stewardship of the pets in our community. We are very excited to have you join us in this venture and look forward to working with you.

The following pages provide an overview of how our Shelter is run and the many ways that volunteers can help us succeed together. Each volunteer has an opportunity to become a significant member of our team regardless of the activities chosen to help.

The volunteer policies summarized in this manual have been adopted to ensure that you have a safe, educational, enjoyable and rewarding experience that is mutually beneficial to staff, animals, other volunteers, our community and YOU!

### **Our Commitment to You**

The staff and Board of Directors of Sunrise Humane Society value your contributions. We want your experience to be fulfilling, productive and positive, so we strive to:

1. Provide information, training and help so that you may successfully complete your volunteer assignments.
2. Outline goals and provide guidance and feedback to you.
3. Treat you as a valued and respected member of our team.
4. Be open-minded to your comments and answer your concerns to the best of our ability.

There are many tasks that you may help with at SHS in this goal. During your first shifts you will become familiar with the facility and some of its operations. You will get to know us, and we will get to know you. We couldn't do such an effective job if not for each and every one of you helping us clean cages, prepare food, walk dogs, hug cats, fix and repair the facilities, complete paperwork, update our databases, maintain landscaping and more.

Please remember to **ASK** questions of any of our staff members if you are unsure about something. Never begin a task that you are uncomfortable performing, particularly when an animal is involved. We are here to help you.

Your time, energy, enthusiasm, and laughter are invaluable to us in our work of providing assistance and support to the animals that need us.

Thank you, and welcome to the Sunrise Humane Society.



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## **ABOUT SUNRISE HUMANE SOCIETY**

### ***Mission Statement***

The mission of the Sunrise Humane Society is to protect the companion animals of Greater Fort Pierce through Sheltering, Rehoming and public Humane Education. This work builds a more compassionate community that promotes respect for all living beings and seeks to strengthen the Human-Animal Bond.

### ***Goals***

We strive to fulfill our mission by:

Implementing the latest methods and techniques of shelter management

Providing Fear-Free methodology in the care of shelter animals

Driving adoptions through education and public awareness programs

Encouraging animal retention in their homes through training and emergency contacts  
Partnering with progressive spay/neuter programs and organizations

Empowering volunteers to change the face of animal welfare  
Emphasize the importance of responsible pet ownership

### ***History***

The City of Ft Pierce owns and has maintained this location as an animal shelter for over 60 years. It was started to provide humane treatment to the area's domestic animals. In 2021, Sunrise Humane Society, a private non-profit, was formed by local animal welfare advocates to bring the next generation of animal care to the local community. SHS leases this property from the City of Ft Pierce.

The Animal Control Officers (ACO) are employed with the City of Fort Pierce under Code Enforcement and therefore are not employees of SHS. Their office is in the second story of the main building. They are vital to the health and safety of our Community. They have a hard job, so please thank them for their service. We respect and honor their contribution.

### ***Funding***

Although Sunrise Humane Society receives some funding from the City of Fort Pierce, much more is always needed to bring a higher level of shelter care and outreach programs. SHS accepts donations of time, money, in-kind services, useful equipment, etc.

### ***Staff***

SHS is staffed by a Medical Director, a Facilities Director, Lead Kennel Staff for each kennel building and a growing number of Kennel Attendants. The Lead Receptionist coordinates the volunteer's daily activities.

### ***General SHS Policies***

- No food or drink in any animal areas. Please use the Upstairs Administrative kitchen for your coffee breaks, meals and snacks.
- Volunteers are not allowed to bring pets into the Shelter.
- Drugs are not permitted without the written authorization of a personal physician.
- SHS is a non-smoking facility. Smoking is not permitted in or around the building. Please smoke off property or in your car.
- The Shelter is open to admit animals and answer calls from 11 am to 4 pm Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Saturday, Friday 11am-5:30pm, Sunday 1pm-4pm, and closed for public visits on Mondays.
- The Shelter is open 6 days/week but the animals need attending to 7 days/week, including holidays when the shelter may be closed.
- Please help us keep our facility and grounds clean!

If you have any questions regarding SHS general policies or your responsibilities, please ask the Manager.

## **SHS PROGRAMS AND SERVICES**

### ***Sheltering of Homeless Animals***

SHS serves as a shelter to which the public may bring homeless, abandoned or unwanted animals. Sunrise Humane Society is an open-admissions shelter. By contract, SHS is required to accept any/all animals surrendered from City of Fort Pierce residents regardless of behavior, history, age, and health. A trained and dedicated staff provides a high standard of humane care for each animal in our facility. Volunteers are essential to helping the Humane Society continue to meet this high standard of care for each shelter animal.

### ***Adoptions***

Sunrise Humane Society receives and adopts out a variety of animals including cats, dogs, kittens, puppies and other small mammals. As we grow, so does the list of animals that we can accommodate. The most common adoptions are cats and dogs. All adopted animals will be spayed/neutered, microchipped, licensed, dewormed, age-appropriate flea/tick/heartworm preventative, and up-to-date on vaccinations. An adopter will receive the animal's medical history, microchip information, rabies certificate, 30-days free Trupanion pet health insurance and a voucher to use at participating Veterinary Hospitals for a complimentary wellness visit. To qualify to adopt an animal, the potential adopter will go through an Adoption Counseling to make sure that the animal and the person are a good fit for one another. Find more information on how to adopt, please see our website. [\(Insert link\)](#)

### ***Transfer Program***

In an effort to save the lives of even more homeless animals, Sunrise Humane Society will transfer animals to other rescue groups and shelters both in the state of Florida and outside. Volunteers may help by driving the initial leg of a long distance transfer or drive the whole transfer if it is within a two hour drive.

### ***Foster Program***

Our Foster Program provides temporary homes for animals that are too young/too small to be spayed/neutered, those with medical issues that need to recuperate, or behavioral issues that are exacerbated in a shelter setting. Volunteer Foster Parents care for shelter animals in their homes for both short-term and long-term periods of time, based on the needs of the animal.

### ***Animal Rescue and Enforcement***

Animal Control Officers (ACO) bring stray, abandoned or hurt animals to Sunrise Humane Society to be harbored and cared. The Animal Control Officers enforce Animal Care codes, investigate animal cruelty cases, assist police, medical, fire agencies and respond to animal emergencies. By contract, SHS is required to intake every animal brought by the ACO.

### ***Licensing***

All dogs and cats in the City of Fort Pierce must be licensed. SHS offers licensing on-site for unincorporated St Lucie County, the City of Ft Pierce and the City of Port St. Lucie.

### **Food Bank**

SHS has a small foodbank made of unopened unexpired cat/dog food. A record of program participants in the program is kept to ensure the resources are spread to as many households as possible.

### ***Low Cost Spay/Neuter Program***

Sunrise Humane Society adheres to the Florida regulations that all animals adopted from a rescue organization be spay/neutered. City of Ft Pierce residents can apply for a voucher by calling the Animal Control main office in Ft Pierce City Hall 772-467-3720

## GENERAL CONDUCT GUIDELINES

As a volunteer for SHS, what you say and do reflects on the whole of Sunrise Humane Society. Please be mindful of this when wearing any SHS volunteer apparel or otherwise identifying as someone associated with SHS. Prior to sharing any information relating to the shelter with the public or with other volunteers, please ensure that the information you are sharing is correct, not confidential and supports the mission of the Shelter. As a volunteer, you are expected to uphold the same standards of conduct and customer service that we require of our staff. Please adhere to the following guidelines:

- **Be Positive** - At SHS, we strive to give every person who comes through our shelter a positive experience, regardless of their reason for being here.
- **Be Courteous and Helpful** - This is crucial in creating a positive experience for those who come to SHS. Please also be courteous and helpful to your fellow volunteers and staff.
- **Be Professional** - It is important to present a professional image to the public while volunteering at SHS. When our staff and volunteers are professional, it supports the credibility of SHS and its programs in the minds of the public.
- **Be Knowledgeable** - It is likely that in the course of volunteering, you may be asked questions about SHS by members of the public. As a representative of SHS, you need to be able to provide accurate responses to these questions or know where to direct their question. Be sure to familiarize yourself with SHS's departments, programs and staff.

### *If We're Not a Match With You*

Sunrise Humane Society has established certain rules of conduct so that we can all work together in an efficient and effective manner. We believe that volunteers are accountable for their actions, and failure on the part of the volunteer to adhere to these codes of conduct may result in disciplinary action. Minor violations of the Volunteer Program Policies and Procedures will be verbally counseled in an effort to correct the issue immediately through education. Minor violations could include absences, not following safety rules, etc. Continued violations could result in additional counseling, a note placed in volunteer's personnel folder detailing the specifics and volunteer's explanation or dismissal. Serious violations may result in immediate dismissal without counseling or notice. All volunteers are at-will, meaning that their volunteer status can be severed at any time, for any non-discriminatory reason, by either the volunteer or SHS.

Some specific behaviors are so egregious that they will be cause for immediate dismissal. The following list of examples of these behaviors is intended to be a guide and is not all-inclusive:

- Consistent inefficiency, incompetence, or negligence in the performance of volunteer assignment.
- Openly challenging the authority of any staff member
- Uncooperative or negative attitude which lowers discipline and morale.
- Any other action that is deemed unlawful or inappropriate and discredits the program's service.
- Hitting, hurting or mistreating an animal deliberately or through negligence.
- Falsification of any document or volunteer hours
- Unauthorized possession or use of drugs; bringing liquor or other intoxicants to the shelter; reporting to volunteer in an intoxicated condition or under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

- Stealing or unauthorized possession of property belonging to others; destroying or damaging property of others.
- Use of abusive, profane, or threatening language toward a staff, volunteer, or others.
- Discussing confidential information about adopters, owners who relinquish, or donors.
- Any illegal activity done on-site
- Smoking in areas other than those designated
- Bullying or harassing people or animals

It is hoped that everyone will conduct themselves in a manner that is respectful of each other and the animals so that we can all enjoy and further this mission together.



## **VOLUNTEER POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

For volunteer and animal safety, SHS does have policies and procedures that volunteers must follow. All policies and procedures will be explained during the volunteer training orientation process, which all new volunteers are required to attend. This lasts approximately 60 minutes and covers basic rules and protocol at SHS. Some of our policies and procedures are explained in this section.

The most important thing in your work at the Sunrise Humane Society is your health and safety.

- Please do not do anything that you have not been trained to do.
- Ask questions if you are unsure of something.
- Be aware at all times of safety – your own, that of your co-workers and the animals.
- Latex gloves, eye protection, ear protection and boots are all available for your use and protection
- Be aware of what and where safety equipment is located in the Facility should it be needed

If there are health issues that you have that do not allow you to perform certain tasks safely (e.g. a bad back), then please let the staff know. We may unknowingly ask you to help out with something that you feel might compromise your health or safety.

### ***Age Requirements***

Currently, volunteers must be 18 years old to volunteer by themselves. On a case-by-case basis we may be able to accommodate a younger person with a parent present.

### ***Volunteer Calendar and Scheduling Your Shifts***

Each volunteer must sign in and out for their shift using the Homebase application. We are using the online application, Homebase to collect volunteer hours, schedules to save time and reduce costs.

We understand that obligations come up and volunteers can't always make their monthly hours schedule. If you cannot, please notify the manager using Homebase as far in advance as possible. We prefer that you use Homebase to communicate or email: [Info@SunriseHS.org](mailto:Info@SunriseHS.org)

### ***Communications***

You will receive communications from your Homebase manager or Volunteer Coordinator if there are any weekly updates, needs, changes to protocols or Volunteer Requests. Requests will be sent as needed for specific assignments and to inform volunteers of any shifts that might be short-staffed.

### ***Inactive Volunteers***

When a volunteer has not done any service hours for a year or longer, they will be required to re-take all training classes before they may resume volunteer duties. This requirement exists because rules and protocols may change and it is important for volunteers to stay up-to-date on current standard operating procedures.

## **Attire**

Volunteers are required to wear:

- Each Volunteer should **MUST** an SHS shirt while volunteering or representing the Shelter.
- All volunteers and staff **MUST** wear closed-toed, rubber-soled shoes.
- Long pants.
- You should have footwear and clothing that are dedicated to use at the Shelter

Volunteers are **NOT PERMITTED TO WEAR:**

- 
- Sleeveless shirts or tank tops
- Short pants or skirts/dress (unless due to religious beliefs).
- Headphones
- Perfume, cologne or strongly-scented lotion
- Flip flops, sandals or open toed shoes

## ***Parking***

The parking area for permanent staff is along the right side of the facility. Volunteers park here if space is available. If the lot is full, volunteers should park in the city lot across from SHS. The area to the left of the facility is reserved for rescuers, Animal Control vans or contractors. The area in front of the Shelter is reserved for pet owners and adopters. Please do not block the dumpster, or the fire lane.

## ***Housekeeping***

Keep all common areas clean and tidy. Your personal items should be left at home or in your car. Staff and volunteers share refrigerator and cabinet space in the upstairs kitchen. Label your food items. If it isn't labeled, it is up for grabs. Clean up spills, crumbs, etc. on counter, floor, etc. Please do not leave dirty dishes in the sink or on the counter. Wash and return.

## ***Who Answers the Phone?***

Primary responsibility for answering the telephone lies with staff members and designated volunteers trained to do so. Phone messages are returned during our regular business hours.

## ***Cell Phones***

Use of cell phones or other communication devices is highly discouraged while volunteering at SHS. While you are encouraged to carry your cell phone with you in case of emergency, it is expected that you pay attention to your task for the short time that your shift encompasses. This is especially true while working with the animals as they need the socialization and interaction that they would not receive if a volunteer is focused on their cell phone.

## ***Guests***

For safety reasons, volunteers are not allowed to bring friends, family or any guests with them when they come to volunteer. Only volunteers that have completed the required training are allowed in the "back" and other areas not open to the public.

## ***Injuries***

We require volunteers to report all bites, scratches and other injuries that occur while they are volunteering at SHS. For all injuries, an incident report must be completed. Incident reports are available at the front desk and a staff member will assist in filling them out.

## ***Private Areas***

Please be aware that volunteers are not allowed in some areas of the grounds. Volunteers are not allowed in Building C (the one closest to the Play Area) as these are animals dropped off by Animal Control. Some of these animals are on a legal hold for court cases, some are bite cases, some need isolation and some just haven't yet been assessed for behavior.

## ***Zoonotic Diseases***

Zoonotic diseases are diseases that can be transferred from animals to humans. Potential zoonotic agents include bacteria, viruses, fungi, internal parasites and external parasites. Most commonly known are rabies from a bite or lyme disease from ticks on animals. Although animals with diseases aren't usually in Buildings A or B, to protect yourself from potentially catching a zoonotic disease:

- Sanitize and wash your hands thoroughly after handling an animal
- Change your clothing and shoes after visiting the shelter
- Avoid touching your face to the animal's face or allowing them to lick you
- Read all signage on an animal's kennel as this will notify you if an animal requires special handling due to known zoonotic disease

For more detailed information about zoonotic disease and how to prevent the spread of these diseases, we recommend visiting: [www.sheltermedicine.com/zoonoticdisease](http://www.sheltermedicine.com/zoonoticdisease)



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **What times of day are volunteers most needed?**

It depends on the volunteer assignment. For example, cat care volunteers are needed most in the morning from 8:00-11:30am; dog walkers are needed from 1:00-3:00pm as these are the times of our dog walking shift. Administrative volunteers and adoption assistants would be needed when the public traffic is heaviest on the weekend.

### **Why do I need to record my hours when I volunteer?**

We need you to record your service hours for a variety of reasons. If we need to contact a volunteer, we need to be able to know what shifts they worked and what duties were done. SHS also relies on grants and government contracts that routinely ask for volunteer statistics such as number of hours. We need to report these as accurately as possible, so please be diligent in recording your check-in and check-out times.

### **What do I do if I don't like the assignment I signed up for?**

You may switch assignments if you wish. Contact the [Homebase manager or Volunteer coordinator](#) for help scheduling new assignments and signing up for any training that the new assignment may require.

### **What can volunteers under the age of 18 do to help the animals?**

We have a variety of at-home or at-school projects that children and young people can do to help the animals. For instance, the animals need a constant supply of new towels and young people can stage a towel drive at their school. They can do projects to raise awareness of programs at SHS and to educate the public about responsible animal relationships.

### ***Is SHS a No-Kill Shelter?***

The term "No-Kill Shelter" can be misleading. The generally accepted definition of a "no-kill" shelter is one that does not euthanize more than 10% of the animals received annually. The Sunrise Humane Society's euthanasia rate has been consistently lower than this because we look at each individual animal, making decisions based on their needs and not our Shelter numbers. This approach is much work, but it saves lives. We do euthanize some Humane Society animals and wish to be as transparent as possible with our staff, volunteers and the members of our community.

SHS places a high priority on the quality of life for the animals in our care and we feel that if an animal has a poor quality of life and is suffering, we may choose to humanely euthanize that animal after we have exhausted alternatives for the transfer or care elsewhere. In other words, animals who are suffering mentally, emotionally or physically may be candidates for euthanasia. Animals with a poor prognosis, or incurable debilitating illness may also be candidates for euthanasia if they are non-responsive to treatment or if treatment is not reasonably available. Finally animals who are determined to pose an unacceptable danger to other animals, themselves or members of the public may be candidates for euthanasia. We do considerable outreach to local, state-wide and nation-wide rescue groups to transfer animals out to other locations and, to date, have not euthanized any animals due to space constraints. We do not euthanize based on length of stay or due to breed.

If you philosophically disagree with our euthanasia principles, this Humane Society may not be a positive volunteer experience for you. We encourage you to consider your comfort level with SHS's guiding principles before fully committing as a volunteer.

