Dear Volunteer,

Welcome to Paws and Claws Pet Shelter! We are so happy to have you on board!

Volunteers are such a vital part of PCPS. With you by our side, we make these animals’ lives better. With your help we can get our friends adopted and hopefully their new families will tell other people about PCPS.

Our program is for individuals 14 years old and over. Volunteers under the age of 14 must be accompanied by an adult.

PCPS could not do what it does without the help of volunteers! Although our staff is dedicated and knowledgeable, extra helping hands and hearts are necessary to the important work in which we are involved. Every activity you perform, whether directly handling the animals or not, improves the quality of their lives while at the shelter and decreases the length of their stay here.

We look forward to working with you and getting to know you! We want you to have fun with us while being safe, so if you have any questions, please don’t hesitate to ask one of the staff members. Welcome aboard and thank you again.

Sincerely,

The staff of PCPS

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Contact Information

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Huntsville, AR 72740

Mailing address
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Huntsville, AR 72740

479-738-1505

info@thepetshelter.org

Facebook: @PCPSHELTER

Instagram: @pawsandclawspetshelter

Hours of Operation

Open hours are 11-4 Tuesday- Saturday, with appointments available at other times.

Most days there is someone in the building from 8-5 cleaning and caring for animals. Volunteer hours can be scheduled during these times. Animals still need cared for on holidays and in inclement weather as well.

Frequently Asked Questions

*Where do the animals at PCPS come from?* Most animals at PCPS are strays (either from Huntsville City Animal Control or in Madison County) or owner surrenders.

*Do you know how big this dog will get or how much it’s going to weigh?* The majority of animals here are mixed breed and we make a “best guess” as to what the dominant breed is. Any adult weight is just a guess.

*How old does an animal have to be before it can be “fixed”?* PCPS endorses pediatric spay/neuter surgeries. If a puppy or kitten is at least 8 weeks old, weighs at least 2 pounds, and is a healthy weight, surgery can be performed.

*Do you have any small dogs (or specific breeds)?* The population here changes all the time and frequent visits may be necessary to find the perfect match. Most of the dogs are medium to large sized and mixed breed. Smaller dogs do come in, watching our Facebook or website are the best way to know what we have available.

*How long do you keep the animals before euthanasia?* PCPS is a No-Kill animal shelter. We do not euthanize animals to make space for other animals.

*How is PCPS funded?* We are a private organization that depends on donations from individuals to save lives.

Policies and Procedures

**Adoptions**

The fees for adopting animals from PCPS are $80 for most dogs, $100 for puppies and small dogs, $25 for senior dogs and cats, and $50 for most cats and kittens and $10 for feral barn cats.

This includes:

* Spaying/neutering
* Vaccines appropriate for the age of the animal.
* Microchip for all dogs, cats on request
* Wormer
* Flea and tick preventative

PCPS has an open adoption policy. We make every effort to ensure that each potential adopter is made to feel welcome and comfortable picking out their new pet. After filling out an application, adoption counselors will interview potential adopters to find the pet that is the perfect match for their household and lifestyle.

**Animal Pick ­Up and Surrender**

PCPS does not pick up stray animals. We rely on the City Animal Control within Huntsville city limits and concerned citizens in the rest of the county.

When a stray is found outside of city limits or an owner wants to surrender their pet, they will need to call so we can complete a wait list form.

Please remember that we cannot always accept an animal. We are a limited ­intake facility. We will accept animals as we have space. Pet owners should try every alternative to keep their pets or find a new home for them. Pet ownership is a lifelong commitment. Coming into a shelter will be a very traumatic experience for the pet and adds to our problem of having too many homeless animals in our community. Our goal is to help pet owners keep their pets.

When an opening is available we will schedule an appointment for intake of animals.

**Spay/Neuter**

This surgery is performed on animals to prevent them from being able to reproduce. This procedure ensures a longer life in animals and prevents certain diseases and behavioral problems. This procedure is also essential to reducing the homeless and neglected animal population in Huntsville and Madison County. Arkansas law requires that all animals from private and governmental humane and animal control organizations be spayed or neutered within 30 days after the animal is old enough to have the procedure performed.

We do not provide this service on site. We take our animals to other vets or clinics to receive this surgery.

Volunteer Policies

**Application**

A Volunteer Information Form and Volunteer Wavier must be signed and on file before you begin your volunteer work.

**Sign In**

Please remember to sign in and out. Keeping track of volunteer hours helps us be eligible for grants so we can save more animals.

**Responsibilities**

Animals are to be treated kindly, gently and within established guidelines. Volunteers must support PCPS policies both inside and outside the shelter.

**Harassment**

Any form of harassment by a volunteer or staff is not permitted and can lead to legal action, including immediate termination. If you are a victim of harassment, please report it to a supervisor immediately. Preventing harassment towards people and animals is important to us. If harassment is observed, it must be reported.

**Professional Attitude**

Volunteers must:

* Take their commitment seriously.
* Keep all client data confidential, no names of clients or information are to be discussed outside our organization.
* Be friendly and courteous at all times.
* Be neat and accurate.
* Ask the staff questions if you are not sure of the correct answer.

**Disease Prevention**

Shelter animals may carry diseases that are transmissible to other animals at the shelter, your animals at home, and even people. The best disease prevention is hand washing. Please wash your hands when you arrive at the shelter, between different animals, after touching dirty bedding or dishes, when you leave the shelter, after smoking or eating, and at other times as needed. Shoes can also carry disease. Washing and disinfecting the bottom of your shoes may be necessary.

**Accidents and Injuries**

Accidents will sometimes happen. Any accident or injury occurring to a person or animal must be reported to a staff member immediately.

If you are not comfortable working with any animal or completing any certain tasks, speak up! We can find other tasks that will work for you.

It is your responsibility to maintain a high level of safety at all times.

**Proper Dress**

Volunteers should:

* Maintain proper hygiene.
* Wear comfortable clothes with freedom of movement.
* No open toed shoes should be worn at the shelter (tennis shoes are probably the best choice). Floors may often be wet, so non-slip shoes are recommended.
* Long pants that do not drag the floor are strongly suggested.
* Large hoop earrings or dangling jewelry is not advised when working with the animals.
* We are not responsible for personal items.

**Parking**

Volunteers are asked to use the parking spaces near the red shed. Please allow the spaces closest to the entrance for shelter visitors.

**Foster/Adoption**

Volunteers will need to put in an application and complete all the steps before taking home an animal.

**Reasons For Dismissal**

Dismissals will be handled on a case-by-case basis. These include, but are not limited to, failure to adhere to policies and procedures, abuse of people or animals, and inappropriate behavior.

Volunteer Expectations

Please help us make your contribution of time and energy worthwhile by letting us know how your training and volunteer experience are going.

**What We Ask of Our Volunteers**

1. Take volunteering as a serious commitment.
2. Be open with us concerning your limitations, needs, wishes, and availability.
3. Be familiar with volunteer policies and procedures.
4. Follow instructions and be knowledgeable about expectations.
5. To represent PCPS professionally and act as an ambassador for our mission.

**What You Get in Return**

1. KISSES, TAIL WAGS, AND CUDDLES!
2. Knowing your hard work supports an animal shelter that serves the community and its animals.
3. Learn about animals through direct contact and educational programs.
4. Explore new career opportunities.
5. Develop new skills or polish old ones.
6. Meet others who share your interests.

Volunteer Rights and Responsibilities

**Rights**

● To be treated in a professional manner – and not just be free help.
● To be offered the opportunity to become a volunteer regardless of race, financial status, sex, age, or disability.
● To have a meaningful and worthwhile assignment.
● To know as much as possible about the organization – policy, people, and programs – and be informed.
● To not only participate in activities, but make activities possible, where they otherwise would not be if it weren’t for volunteers.
● To have proper working conditions.
● To be heard.
● To be regarded as a person with individuality, uniqueness, and value.

**Responsibilities**

● To accept realistic assignments. Know your limitations.
● To respect confidences.
● To respect professional attitudes, methods, etc.
● To follow rules and act as an ambassador of PCPS.
● To communicate clearly and as needed.
● To follow through with commitments.

Volunteer Roles

**Cat/Kitten Socialization**

Provide socialization and comfort to the cats while they are here at the shelter. Interacting with the cats in the shelter reduces their stress and helps us learn more about their personalities (to tell potential adopters). Providing interaction with a variety of people helps our cats find homes.

1. Pet and cuddle kittens/cats. Just sit quietly with them.
2. Get them to play with toys or take treats.
3. Help them to become comfortable with people. For more skittish cats, sitting near them is a good first step.
4. Observe the animal’s behavior to determine if it has any health conditions or if it has any personality traits that will help us find the appropriate home. If you notice any medical conditions alert a staff member.

**Dog/Puppy Socialization**

Provide socialization and comfort to the dogs and puppies while they are here at PCPS. Interacting with the dogs in the shelter reduces their stress and helps us learn more about their personalities to tell potential adopters. Provide basic dog training to help our friends become more social. Provide treats to dogs in order to encourage good cage presence.

1. Cuddle dogs/puppies. Or just sit quietly with them.
2. Help them learn to walk on leash.
3. Teach them to sit.
4. Get them to exercise (toss a ball or toy).
5. Help them to become comfortable around people.
6. Observe the animal’s behavior to determine if it has any health conditions or if it has any personality traits that will help us find the appropriate home for the animals. Alert a staff member.

More ideas for dog enrichment can be found with the volunteer sign ins or ask a staff member.

**Grooming**

Often animals arrive in rough shape. These animals will need to be cleaned up for health reasons. Other animals are already fairly clean but can benefit from the getting attention and learning to be groomed. Some of these tasks take more experience than others and for some animals this may be a two person job. If a dog or cat is acting more nervous or uncomfortable, please do not feel that anything must be completed. None of these should be forced. The comfort of the animal comes first.

1. Brush
2. Clip Nails and check that feet/pads are healthy
3. Clean ears, eyes, noses.
4. Bathe
5. Trim/cut hair
6. If you notice any health concerns, please tell a staff member.

**Cleaning**

Keeping the shelter clean helps us keep animals healthy. If you are unsure of the procedures that we use to clean and disinfect, please ask a staff member before starting. Wash your hands!

1. Laundry
2. Dishes
3. Sweep and Mop
4. Clean Windows
5. Clean Kennels
6. Spot cleaning as needed

**Take Pictures and Write Bios**

Social media is the main way we find adopters and donors. Having good pictures and interesting stories about our animals helps them find homes.

We have props, sweaters, and can set up backdrops.

After you have good pictures or write ups, please make sure they are sent to the shelter through Facebook, Instagram, or email.

**Special Events**

When we have adoption events or fundraisers at the shelter or off-site, we often need extra hands. Responsibilities at these events can vary but often include being able to talk to the public about available animals and helping care for animals.

**Foster!**

Ask a staff member for more information.

Basic Animal Handling and Awareness

You can help us spot health problems and quickly deliver the necessary care to our animals by looking for and reporting these symptoms to our staff:

1. Diarrhea – can be any color from pale yellow to dark brown. May or may not contain blood.
2. Sluggishness or inactivity.
3. Vomiting, drooling, or foaming.
4. Upper Respiratory/Kennel Cough – what you may hear or see:
	1. Dogs: ­deep chest cough, clear, white, yellow or green nasal discharge, watery, red, runny eyes.
	2. Cats: third eyelids up, red, watery or runny eyes, sneezing or poor appetite.
5. Hair Loss. If you suspect a skin problem, wash your hands (and all areas of your skin that have touched the animal).
6. Signs of parasites such as fleas, ticks, or worms.
7. Unusual smells or discharge

If you notice any of these symptoms (or one not mentioned) tell a staff member immediately!

Some diseases that shelter animals carry are zoonotic- they can be transferred from animals to people. Potential hazards include bacteria, viruses, fungi, and internal and external parasites.

Washing hands frequently is one of the easiest ways to prevent the transmission of disease.

**Dog Handling**

* Only small dogs and puppies should be carried. Carrying a dog like a baby is not permitted. If the dog will not move on the leash, coax the dog by moving in front and down low (treats can help!). Dragging a dog is never permitted.
* Do not hug dogs or otherwise have your face near the dogs’ heads.
* Watch for signs of stress/fear:
	+ ears back,
	+ hackles raised, tail down,
	+ dilated pupils,
	+ lifted lip,
	+ submissive posture,
	+ growling, snarling, barking, or lunging.
* If these signs appear, alert staff. Do not move quickly or grab at the animal.
* Maintain your safety first.

Loose Dog

* Yell for help. Alert staff and follow these instructions:
* Do not chase, run, or yell at the loose dog.
* Use non-threatening body language- use a sing-song voice, walk in a curve, look at the ground.
* Jogging away or sitting down can encourage the dog to come to you. Treats can help.
* Decide whether to get a slip lead, grab a collar, or lure the dog into a pen or vehicle- whatever can contain the dog as quickly as possible.

Animal Fight

Try to remember to slow down and breathe. Most fights are more noise and flying fur than actual physical damage. Rarely do animals intend to kill each other, so there is time. Use this time to put safety first.

* Alert staff and follow their instructions.
* Do not stick hands near either animal’s head or attempt to grab the collar; even animals you know well can often bite in situations like this. Stay away from the animals.
* Maintain your safety first.

**Cat Handling**

* When removing a cat from a cage, be sure to get the cat’s attention before opening the gate.
* Allow the cat to check out your fingers before you pick it up. The cat should come to you, not the other way around. Talk to the cat calmly and softly to avoid over-stimulating the cat.
* When handling a cat, control the head and neck at all times. Hold the cat firmly- left hand controlling the head and neck, right elbow supporting/gripping the hindquarters, right hand controlling the front paws. Take a moment to readjust your grip if you need to. Keep the cat’s face away from other cats. (You can reverse this procedure if you are left-handed.)
* Always use a carrier to transport the cat more than a few feet.
* Watch for signs of stress/fear:
	+ enlarged pupils,
	+ thrashing tail,
	+ growling,
	+ hissing,
	+ and attempting to hide or escape.
* If these signs appear, alert staff. Do not move quickly or grab at the animal.
* Maintain your safety first.

Thank you so much for volunteering at Paws and Claws.

We appreciate you!