



**Humane Society**  
**OF HARRISBURG AREA**

*Building a Better Community for Pets and People  
Through Compassion, Protection, Education, and Collaboration*

**S. A. F. E. R.**

**(Showing Animals: Friendly, Effectively, and Responsibly)**

**TRAINING**

*Updated October 2014*

blank

page



*Dear Humane Society Volunteer,*

*Thank you for your continued commitment to our residents. By becoming a SAFER trained volunteer, you will be helping us better our customer service to our potential adopters. As a volunteer, you understand how busy staff can become during the course of a day. When we have committed volunteers willing to acquaint our animals with the public, we better the opportunities for our residents to find forever homes.*

*What follows in this booklet is information that you may find necessary or useful during your interactions with the adopting public. You will find our policies, pricing, procedures and helpful hints while doing a get-acquainted call. By no means does this cover every piece of information and every scenario you may encounter, but it will arm you with the basics to conduct get-acquainted calls.*

*After you have attended your SAFER training, we suggest you shadow more experienced (SAFER trained) volunteers or staff members while they conduct a get acquainted call. This will allow you to observe the dynamics of a call and get a feel for how you would like to conduct the calls you oversee. Once you feel comfortable enough to conduct a get-acquainted call, have a more experienced volunteer (or staff person) sit in your get-acquainted call – just as a “safety net.” Once you feel comfortable “flying solo” you may be called upon to help with get-acquainted calls when the shelter is short-staffed, unusually busy, or for special adoption events.*

*Again, thank you for taking on even more volunteer responsibilities by becoming SAFER trained and for all you have already done for our residents.*

*Sincerely,  
HSHA Management and Staff*

## GET-ACQUAINTED CALL TIPS

There are several things you should look for, ask, and/or do during any get-acquainted call.

- Introduce yourself with a smile ☺
- Ask which animal they would like to meet.
- When you are retrieving the animal from the cage or kennel, look over the kennel card and the personality profile to get a sense of the animal's personality and any restrictions that may apply to that particular animal.
- When you are conducting the call, observe to make sure the person/people seem to be comfortable with the animal and are handling and interacting with it. Take note if anyone appears to be fearful or uninterested in interacting with the animal.
- Ask open-ended questions to engage the potential adopters in conversation: What interested them about this particular animal; who makes up the household; what type of lifestyle do they lead; what type of qualities are they looking for in a pet...? (Questions that can be answered by a "yes" or "no" are not as useful determining the best match between adopter and adoptee.)
- Ask if they rent or own their home.
- Ask if they have experience with this type of pet.
- Ask whether or not they have other pets.
- Listen for cues about the type of home they will provide for our resident. (Do they plan on keeping it outside? Have they had 5 dogs that have been hit by cars?)
- Observe the manner in which the adults interact with the children. Are the children unruly? Do the parents discipline the children? Do they yell or use physical punishment to discipline?
- Make sure our animal is comfortable with everyone in the get-acquainted call.
- Pay close attention to what the children say. They can be a wealth of information that the family may not otherwise pass along.
- Find out what the adopter's level of comfort is dealing with behavioral issues. What would they do if the cat doesn't use the litter box? What would they do if the dog has separation anxiety? To what means is the adopter willing to go to work with a problem behavior?
- Are the adopters realistic in their expectations? Are they looking for a perfectly house-trained dog from the get-go? Do they keep bringing up the fact of shedding when they are looking at a long-haired cat?
- If you observe or overhear anything questionable in regard to the animal, you have the right to end the get-acquainted call right there. If anything the person says or does makes you feel uncomfortable, personally, you have the right to end the call.
- If our animal exhibits any questionable behavior during the get-acquainted call that could be harmful to the persons in the call, end the call, explain what your concern is, and put the animal back.
- If you have any question or concerns about the adoption progressing, pull a supervisor aside and let them know what your concerns are. Let it up to the supervisor to be the "bad guy."

## NEVER

- Never leave a customer alone with our animal. Customers and animals must be **supervised** by a member of staff or a SAFER trained volunteer at all times – no exceptions.
- All animals must be under the **control** of a staff person or SAFER trained volunteer. This means that a customer may not take a dog for a walk, or carry a cat from the front cat room to the get-acquainted room at the back of the building.

## DOG GET-ACQUAINTED CALLS

During a get-acquainted call, it is especially important to pay close attention to the dog's body language. Is the dog happy, excited, fearful, shy...? It is your responsibility as the person conducting the call to control the situation and keep our dog safe as well as the potential adopters. If you observe any behavior from our dog that may be even the slightest bit aggressive or dangerous to any human in the call, end the call and take the dog back to its kennel.

Bring the dog into the get-acquainted area (room, courtyard, exercise pen), while still on leash, allow the dog to sniff/investigate the people and the area. While on leash, the dog will be under your control if it tries to jump on anyone or exhibits any signs of disliking anyone in the call.

Once you feel comfortable with the dog's response to the people, remove the leash. Observe the dog's interaction with the people and vice versa. (Does the dog avoid anyone? Do the people spend a lot of time picking hair off their clothing? Does the dog seek attention from the people? Does the dog seem to like them? Do they seem to like the dog?)

*If the dog should get wound up or over-stimulated at any point, put the leash back on so you can control the actions of the dog.*

During the call to this point, you should have been asking your open-ended questions and getting a feel for the match between dog and adopter.

## CAT GET-ACQUAINTED CALLS

Ideally, a cat get-acquainted call will take place in a get-acquainted room where the cat will be able to walk around the potential adopters freely. (If this is not possible, you may have to make the best of conducting the get-acquainted call in the cat room where the cat resides. Should this be the case, allowing the cat to roam freely may not be wise and the extent of the interaction with the cat may be limited to holding the cat.)

- You should first determine that the cat the adopter would like to meet is not already on hold. (This may be more of an issue in the kitten room where the kennel cards and hold signs are not placed on the cages but on the wall.)
- When transporting the cat to the get-acquainted room, you must be the person to carry the cat. This is important because our hallways are often full of loud dogs which could scare the cat. A scared cat may claw, bite, or try to escape.
- Once everyone is in the room, allow the cat to roam freely. Instruct the people present to allow the cat to come to them and initiate the interaction. Rushing the cat before it is comfortable interacting with the people may not be beneficial to the process.
- Encourage the people to pick up the cat, play with it, pet it, brush it... If at any time the cat appears to be uncomfortable, step in to avoid the cat becoming overly stressed.
- If the adopters have a cat at home, they may bring their cat in to meet our cat, although it is usually cautioned against doing this for two main reasons. First, there are a lot of contagions in our building a “civilian” cat may not otherwise be exposed to increasing the likelihood the cat will pick up an illness while here. Second, many cats do not appreciate car rides. By the time a cat is shoved into a carrier, transported here, then brought into a building with a lot of barking, loud dogs, they are usually extremely stressed and not agreeable to interacting with another cat.
- If the adopters want to see more than one cat, they **must** disinfect their hands in between cats.
- If an adopter is interested in adopting more than one cat, and those cats are not housed together; try to determine how serious they are about multiple cats. We go out of our way to limit the cats’ exposure to the other cats because of disease control, and only in cases of adopters being serious about such an adoption should the cats be allowed to interact with each other. (If they only want to adopt one cat, but want to see multiple cats together to determine which one they “like better,” this is a NO-NO – again for disease control purposes.)
- Try to determine the level of experience the adopter has. Talk to them about litter box training and issues, scratching, grooming needs, and the adjustment period to a new home.

## CALLS WITH CHILDREN

Often, we are placed in the situation of having children meet our residents. In order to create the safest environment possible – for all involved:

- When you bring the dog into the area, have the child/children stand with backs against a wall or side of a pen. This will help them from getting knocked over in the case of a rambunctious dog.
- With the dog still on leash, or while holding a cat, allow the animal to sniff the children.
- Allow the children to pet the animal.
- When you feel comfortable, allow the children gentle interaction with the animal while it is unrestrained.

- After the dog and children have interacted, put the dog back on the leash and have the kids run around the area screaming, yelling, waving their arms... doing what children do when they play. Observe the dog's reaction. Does it get agitated? Does it growl? Does it try to nip at their heels?
- How does the cat react to the same type of behavior? Frightened? Agitated? Does it try to hide? Does it hiss?
- Take the time while the children are interacting with the animal to educate the parents – as well as the children – about how to remain safe around animals.

***At any time, if you have questions, concerns, doubts about anything at all concerned with the call, get assistance from a supervisor or an experienced member of staff.***

***Your willingness to help us with get-acquainted calls is greatly appreciated! Thank You!***

## ADOPTION POLICIES

**Age to adopt:** 18 years old; adopter must be old enough to enter a legally binding contract.

**All animals adopted from HSHA are to be INDOOR pets. In certain cases, exceptions have been made, but that will be done at the management level as it goes against policy.**

**Renters:** Permission must be obtained from the landlord. We will call and get verbal permission, or a copy of the lease can be brought in. If a pet deposit is required, proof of payment must be confirmed.

**All Adopters:** Everyone in the family must meet – even “visitation” kids. Exceptions may be made, but again, approval will be case by case, and approval will be made by management.

**For Dog Adoptions:** If the adopter has a dog (or several) already at home, all dogs must come meet our dog. This is very important as we want to determine the dog-dog interactions.

**Other Pets in the Home:** If the adopter has other pets, proof of current vaccinations must be provided. If they cannot provide documentation, their veterinarian's contact information can be supplied and we will call. If their pets are not current on vaccinations, they must bring their pets up to date before the adoption can proceed. Our animal will not remain on hold during this waiting period.

## THE ADOPTION APPLICATION PROCESS

1. Adopter comes in to see our animals
2. Adopter sees an animal they would like to meet; meeting takes place outside of the cage/kennel
3. The meeting goes well and the adopter wants to proceed with the adoption process

4. An application is filled out
5. A 24-hour hold may be placed on the animal if there are other “checks” (landlord, vet check), other family members/pets to meet
6. If all goes well and everything checks out, the adopter can complete the process. If the animal is not yet spayed or neutered, it will be put on the surgery schedule. It can go home the day after surgery.

## SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

There are times, due to special circumstances with a particular animal, that warrant extra steps. These are Medical/Behavioral Addendums, House Checks and Adoption Support Classes. It is not always necessary you know who those animals are because these things will be discussed with the adoption counselors, but it is helpful for you to be aware of these conditions for adoption.

**Medical Addendum:** If an animal has a medical condition that can be managed or might pose an issue later in life, we may have the adopter sign a medical addendum to the adoption contract. This simply informs the adopter of the medical issue and what measures were taken to treat the issue/condition. It also confirms the adopter is aware of the issue prior to adoption.

**Behavioral Addendum:** If an animal is temperament tested, or a behavior is observed while here, it can be placed in the behavioral rehabilitation program. All animals who have gone through the “rehab” program must be adopted with a behavioral addendum. As with the medical addendum, the behavioral addendum states the adopter was informed of the behavioral issue, what measures were taken to rehabilitate/manage the behavior, and that the adopter is aware of the issue. We may choose to have an adopter sign a behavioral addendum for an animal that did not go through the rehabilitation program but exhibited a behavior that we felt not serious enough to rehabilitate – but want the adopter to be aware of the behavior.

**Adoption Support Classes:** In an effort to strengthen the adoption, we offer adoption support classes. For some adopters, these classes can be optional, but for others, completion of the class is a condition of adoption. Dogs who have gone through rehab, first time pet owners, and cruelty case animals are just a few of the reasons we would require attendance in the class.

**House Checks:** House checks may be performed for animals that arrived under special circumstances (cruelty), if there is a question about the adoptive home, or for any reason we deem necessary. If a house check is to be performed, it will take place after the application has been completed; any checks that are necessary are performed, but before the animal is placed on the surgery schedule.



**ADOPTION PACKAGES/PRICING effective 1/1/12**

<b>DOGS/PUPPIES</b>			
	<b>Small Dogs (&amp;Puppies)</b>	<b>Medium Dogs</b>	<b>Large Dogs</b>
<b>Basic Packages-</b> Includes adoption, spay or neuter surgery, microchip, basic vaccines, and 30 days of free pet insurance.			
<b>Puppy</b>	\$214.81	\$214.81	\$214.81
<b>Adult</b>	\$183.46	\$183.46	\$183.46
<b>Senior</b>	\$116.80	\$116.80	\$116.80
<b>Standard Packages-</b> Includes adoption, spay or neuter surgery, microchip, basic vaccines, and 30 days of free pet insurance, Zanies Tugger toy, collar (Small: 6-10", Medium: 10-16", Large: 18-26"), leash (Small: 4', Medium: 4', Large: 6'), food & water bowls (Small: 1 pint, Medium: 2 quart, Large 2 quart)			
<b>Puppy</b>	\$236.76	\$236.76	\$236.76
<b>Adult</b>	\$205.41	\$211.41	\$216.41
<b>Senior</b>	\$138.75	\$144.75	\$149.75
<b>Premium Packages-</b> Includes adoption, spay or neuter surgery, microchip, basic vaccines, and 30 days of free pet insurance, Zanies Tugger toy, collar (Small: 6-10", Medium: 10-16", Large: 18-26"), leash (Small: 4', Medium: 4', Large: 6'), food & water bowls (Small: 1 pint, Medium: 2 quart, Large 2 quart), crate (Small: 24", Medium: 36", Large: 42")			
<b>Puppy</b>	\$261.75	\$287.75	\$312.75
<b>Adult</b>	\$230.40	\$265.40	\$281.40
<b>Senior</b>	\$163.74	\$189.74	\$214.74

<b>CATS/KITTENS</b>	
<b>Basic Packages-</b> Includes adoption, spay or neuter surgery, microchip, FeLV/FIV test, and 30 days of free pet insurance.	
<b>Kitten</b>	\$125.49
<b>Adult</b>	\$102.26
<b>Senior</b>	\$87.45
<b>Standard Packages-</b> Includes adoption, spay or neuter surgery, microchip, FeLV/FIV test, 30 days of free pet insurance, soft slicker brush, nylon collar with bell, small crinkle toy, bat & scratch toy, and double sided bowl	
<b>Kitten</b>	\$150.46
<b>Adult</b>	\$127.23
<b>Senior</b>	\$112.42
<b>Premium Packages-</b> Includes adoption, spay or neuter surgery, microchip, FeLV/FIV test, 30 days of free pet insurance, soft slicker brush, nylon collar with bell, small crinkle toy, bat & scratch toy, double sided bowl, litter pan, and stainless steel litter scoop.	
<b>Kitten</b>	\$161.44
<b>Adult</b>	\$138.21
<b>Senior</b>	\$123.40

## **Mature Pets for Mature People**

The Mature Pets for Mature People program offers senior citizens (60+ years) the opportunity to adopt a companion animal (5+ years old) free of charge. Additionally, if a senior would rather adopt a pet that is younger (between the ages of 6 months and up to 5 years), the adoption fee will be reduced.

*Thank you, again, for adding SAFER training to your HSHA volunteer skill set.*

*Do not hesitate to ask questions of staff at any time.*