



*Building a Better Community for Pets and People*



## **VOLUNTEER DOG WALKING PROGRAM MANUAL**

*Enhancing Shelter Life and Adoptability  
One Walk at a Time*



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# HSHA VOLUNTEER DOG WALKING PROGRAM GUIDE

## 1. Program Requirements

- Complete and Submit a Volunteer Application (*new volunteers only*)
- Attend the HSHA Volunteer Orientation (*new volunteers only*)
- Attend the HSHA Dog Orientation (which goes over the basics of the Volunteer Dog Walking Program – *new volunteers only*)
- Meet with an Experienced HSHA Dog Walker to Learn How to Handle and Socialize the Shelter Dogs (*new volunteers only*)
- Buy and Maintain Your Own Leash/Slip Lead
- Walk and Socialize Adoptable Dogs at the Shelter
- Mark the Dog Walking Sheets
- Update the White Board at the Dog Walking Station
- Attend Quarterly Volunteer Meetings (optional)
- Attend Mandatory Dog Walking Meeting(s)
- Assist New Dog Walkers
- Complete Medical Evaluation Forms as Needed
- Complete Behavior Evaluation Forms as Needed
- Commit to a Regular Dog Walking Schedule
- 2 HOUR MINIMUM WEEKLY COMMITMENT ON AN ONGOING BASIS strongly encouraged

## 2. Dog Walking Hours

- Monday – 11:00 AM – 7:00 PM
- Tuesday – 11:00 AM – 7:00 PM
- Thursday – 11:00 AM – 7:00 PM
- Friday – 11:00 AM – 7:00 PM
- Saturday – 11:00 AM – 4:00 PM
- Sunday – 11:00 AM – 3:00 PM

## 3. Volunteer Room

The Volunteer Room is adjacent to the Cat Get Acquainted Rooms. The following items are located in the Volunteer Room: Volunteer Sign-in/out Book, Volunteer Stickers/Name Tags, and a Bulletin Board with information posted by HSHA staff members.

## 4. Dog Walking Station

The Dog Walking Station is adjacent to the back door of the shelter. The following items are located at the Dog Walking Station: Dog Walking Sheets, White Board, Plastic Bags, and Dog Treats.

## 5. Dog Walking Sheets and White Board

Dog Walking Sheets are used to keep track of which dogs are walked each day. There is one sheet for kennel “B,” “C,” and “D,” and there is one sheet for dogs located in the Small Dog Room, dogs in crates, and Get Acquainted Rooms. The Dog Walking Sheets have a column for each day of the month and a row for each dog kennel and/or cage. Dog walkers need to place an “X” in the appropriate space for each dog they take for a walk. For example, if a dog walker walks a dog in kennel “B-15” – then she/he must place an “X” in the space for “B-15” for the day that the dog is taken for a walk.

**DOGS IN KENNEL “A” CAN ONLY BE WALKED/HANDLED BY QUIET KENNEL – “A” TEAM VOLUNTEERS.** See *Quiet Kennel – “A” Team on page 15.*

The White Board should be used to communicate to other dog walkers which dogs need to be walked and any other important information (e.g. make sure the dogs have water, etc.). For example, if all dogs in kennels “B,” and “C” were walked on Monday – the last dog walker in the shelter on Monday would need to write on the White Board that dog walkers need to start in kennel “D” on Tuesday.

## 6. Food Prep Room

The following items are located inside the Food Prep Room: Extra Dog Treats, Rawhides and Other Bones (if available) and Water Containers.

*Volunteers should NEVER give two dogs residing in the same kennel rawhides (even if there is a one rawhide for each dog), because it may result in aggressive or protective behavior.*

## 7. Cleaning Supply Room

The following items are located inside the Cleaning Supply Room: Water Source (with hose), Mops/Mop Buckets, and Cleaning Supplies.

*Volunteers MUST make sure that the dogs have adequate clean water at all times (especially during the summer months). In addition, volunteers are encouraged to assist HSHA staff in cleaning messy kennels, cages, or crates by either: asking another volunteer to walk the dog with a messy kennel while you clean it, go into the kennel yourself (with the dog in there) and pick/clean up the mess, or ask an HSHA staff member if they can clean the kennel while you take the dog for a walk.*

## 8. Grooming Supplies

Dog grooming supplies (bathtub, shampoo, combs, brushes, etc.) are located in the Small Dog Room. In addition, a portable bathtub is located outside on the side of the shelter between the first dog pen and the Multipurpose Room (volunteers need to ask an HSHA staff member to turn the water on).

*Volunteers may wash and brush/comb dogs on their own – if there are any questions regarding supplies or how to wash/groom the dogs – volunteers should ask an HSHA staff member or another volunteer for assistance.*

## **9. Dog Toys**

Stuffed dog toys, balls, Frisbees, and squeaky chew toys are located in the filing cabinet against the wall across from the entrance to Kennel “B.”

**ONLY NON-DESTRUCTIBLE TOYS CAN BE PUT IN THE KENNELS, CAGES, OR CRATES, SUCH AS, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, KONGS AND NYLABONES.**

## **10. Medical/Behavioral Evaluation Forms**

Medical Evaluation Forms need to be completed for any dog that is limping, bleeding, has diarrhea, blood in her/his stool, or any other health or medical condition. Be sure to check whether a Medical Evaluation Form has been turned in already so that you do not duplicate paperwork. *Medical Evaluation Forms are located outside the Medical Screening room and should be placed in the designated drop box when completed.*

Behavioral Evaluation Forms need to be completed for any dogs that are demonstrating signs of possible behavior issues including, but not limited to, growling, resource guarding, repeated spinning in kennel, tenseness, or aggression. The sooner any such possible behavior issue is reported to HSHA staff, the sooner HSHA staff can begin to work with the dog and treat the problem. *Behavioral Evaluation Forms are located across from the Medical Screening room and should be placed in the designated drop box when completed.*

## **11. Volunteer Incident Report Forms**

Every volunteer must immediately tell an HSHA staff member if she/he is injured in any way (including, but not limited to, scratch, bite, twisted ankle, etc.) while volunteering at the shelter. *Incident Report Forms are available at the front desk.*

## **12. Calm in Kennel**

Volunteers are assisting HSHA kennel staff with creating a quieter, calmer, cleaner, and less stressful shelter environment. One method HSHA has adopted to achieve such an environment is conditioning the dogs to “Sit” and be quiet when people walk through the kennels. This takes time and patience, and it requires CONSISTENCY. This is done by:

- Grabbing a handful of tasty treats. Use as small a treat as possible. Dogs react to the treat, not the size of the treat. Besides, the goal is a quiet dog, not an overweight dog.
- Walk to each kennel in the shelter. If the dog is not barking and has all four paws on the floor, say “Good” and give one treat.

- If a dog is barking or has her/his paws on the kennel door, just stand there quietly to give her/him some time to be quiet and put her/his paws on the floor. If the dog becomes quiet and settled, click and give her/him one treat.
- If the dog does not settle, just move on and go back to the dog later. Under no circumstance should a dog receive a treat for not being calm.

### 13. How to Walk a Shelter Dog

#### First Things First

Taking a shelter dog for a walk might seem as simple a task as walking your own dog, but giving shelter dogs a little exercise involves more than just grabbing a leash and running out the nearest door. As a volunteer you need to do a few things to ensure your safety, the safety of the animals, and the safety of shelter staff and visitors. *All new dog walkers MUST meet with an experienced dog walker who will show them how to handle and socialize the HSHA shelter dogs before they start volunteering.*

#### Benefits for Shelter Dogs

- Exercise keeps shelter dogs calm, sane, and content
- Improves the behavioral, mental, emotional health and well being of shelter dogs
- Increased socialization strengthens the ability for shelter dogs to connect and bond with people
- Increases shelter dogs chance for adoption, because they appear more relaxed, happy, and calm

#### Understanding Dog Behavior

- **Temperament**

Temperament determines how dogs behave in many situations. HSHA uses a temperament test, which consists of a set of procedures and responses, to find out how each shelter dog will behave at the shelter, on walks, and in their new home. Through temperament testing, shelter staff and volunteers can accommodate each dog's training and behavioral needs while the dogs are residing at the shelter. *Volunteers MUST read each dog's specific temperament/behavior profile before taking the dog out of its kennel. Temperament/behavior profiles are located on the front of each kennel door and are normally coded on green paper, yellow paper, or red paper.*

*GREEN:* indicates the dog has little or no behavioral issues.

*YELLOW:* indicates the dog may have a moderate level of behavioral issues, such as moderate fear, but can be worked with.

*RED: indicates dog may have behavioral issues and will likely have adoption restrictions, such as going to an experienced owner or not going to a home with children.*

Any noticeable behavior issue including, but not limited to, growling, resource guarding, tenseness, or aggression need to be reported to HSHA staff as soon as possible so that they can begin to work with the dog and treat the problem. *Volunteers should complete a Behavior Evaluation Form for any dogs that are exhibiting any of the above listed behaviors.*

- **Emotional State**

The shelter is a very stressful place where dogs have little control over their environment. Many are lonely, anxious, fearful, frustrated or depressed. Behaviors indicating emotional stress include: ears down, low body, pupils dilated, eyes look away, low whine or moan, spinning, and tail beating. *Volunteers should complete a Behavior Evaluation Form for any dogs that are exhibiting any of the above listed behaviors.*

\*\* Walking and socializing the dogs and providing kennel enrichment helps to reduce emotional distress and increases the psychological well-being of each dog residing at the shelter.

- **Body Language In Dogs**

A dog's body language can tell a lot about her/his mood, behavior, and emotional state. Volunteers need to be aware of the body language of each dog they are working with. For example, if a dog is demonstrating a behavior that a volunteer is uncomfortable with, such as growling from inside her/his kennel, the volunteer should refrain from entering the kennel and walking the dog. The volunteer should report the behavior to an HSHA staff member and complete a Behavior Evaluation Form for the dog. In addition, if a dog runs to the back or outside of her/his kennel when a volunteer approaches, the dog may be fearful and require extra patience and attention from the volunteer.

### **Walk This Way – Step By Step Instructions**

- Wear shoes with good support and grip for your safety and comfort – floors are often wet and the ground outside can be very uneven.
- Sign in to the volunteer book in the volunteer room as soon as you arrive.
- If you are not wearing an HSHA volunteer shirt, put on a volunteer name tag (located in the Volunteer Room).

- Before you pick a dog to take out, check the Dog Walking Sheets to see which dogs need to be walked first.
- Before opening the kennel/cage door, read the dog's kennel card and temperament/behavior evaluation form.

*The kennel cards will tell dog walkers which dogs can be walked (see below) and the temperament/behavior evaluation forms will give dog walkers an idea of what type of temperament the dog has (excited, playful, submissive, etc.).*

**PLEASE NOTE:**

**DOG WALKERS CANNOT TAKE ANY DOG OUT OF HER/HIS KENNEL IF THE KENNEL CARD STATES THAT THE DOG IS "ON HOLD" FOR ANY REASON, INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO: (1) THE DOG NEEDS A TEMPERAMENT TEST, (2) THE DOG IS UNDERGOING MEDICAL TREATMENT OR (3) THE DOG HAS AN ADOPTION APPLICATION PENDING.**

- Before entering the dog's kennel, have the leash ready and be sure you know how to work the latch.

*Most kennel doors are designed to thwart escape by even the craftiest canine, so the latches may be difficult to open; the ability to quickly open and close a kennel door will be important when dog walkers are getting dogs out and putting them back in the kennels.*

- It is important not to reward a shelter dog for inappropriate behavior, such as jumping or barking, in her/his kennel. Open the kennel door only when the dog has four paws on the floor and is not barking. This procedure should be used any time the kennel door is opened.

When preparing to open the kennel door, wait for the dog to have four paws on the floor and to be quiet. (When the dog learns a "solid" Sit, substitute the Sit for the four paws on the floor.) When the dog is calm, reach for the kennel latch, and unlock the door. If at any time the dog barks, jumps, or becomes too animated, immediately shut and lock the door and back away from the kennel. Start over again and wait for the dog to have four paws on the floor and to be quiet. This will continue until the dog remains calm. At this point, open the kennel door.

These steps can initially take a great deal of time. Remaining calm and not losing patience is one of the keys to success. If five to ten minutes have passed, move to another dog and come back to this dog later. With each session, the amount of time spent opening a kennel door will decrease.



- Once inside the kennel, put the leash on the dog and once the collar is in place get ready to exit the kennel.
- Ask the dog “Sit” before she/he is taken out of her/his kennel. *See Training Commands and Techniques on page 12.*
- Before exiting the kennel, look to your left and right to make sure no other dogs are coming.

*How to hold the leash: place your hand through the loop with one hand and grasp the middle of the leash with the other – **YOU MUST KEEP YOUR DOG UNDER CONTROL AT ALL TIMES.***

- Do not allow the dog to jump on people (volunteers, staff or visitors).
- Do not allow the dog you are walking to “fence fight” with other kenneled dogs.

*The easiest way to do this is to place the dog against the wall and keep your body between the walking dog and the kennels.*

- Before entering the hallway, open the door and look to your left and right to make sure that no other dogs are coming.
- If a dog is too strong or lively for you to control, return the dog to her/his kennel and take out another dog.
- Before going outside, ask the dog to “Sit” and grab at least three plastic bags – **YOU MUST PICK UP YOUR DOG’S POOP.**

*If the dog you are walking eliminates in the hallway or common kennel area – you must clean it up (supplies are in the Cleaning Supply Room).*

*If you notice something wrong with the dog’s stool (i.e. runny or bloody), complete a Medical Evaluation Form (only if one has not been done already for that dog) and/or talk to an HSHA staff member to see if she/he needs/wants a sample.*

- Once outside, the first lesson to teach a shelter dog is that nobody’s going anywhere if the leash isn’t slack.

Not allowing the dog to pull is one of the best ways to stop a dog from pulling. When the dog begins to pull -- “Be A Tree.” Meaning, stop moving and do not allow the dog to move forward. After a few moments, the dog will look back and loosen on the lead. As soon as the lead loosens, move forward. Moving forward is the dog’s reward. Anytime forward motion starts, use the command “Let’s go.”

If, after 5-10 seconds, the lead does not slacken, take three big steps backward. The dog will have to follow. As soon as there is slack in the lead, begin moving forward again.

Another method for loose leash walking is to change direction often. When you change direction, give the dog the “Let’s Go” command. Use this as an alternative when the dog begins to pull. This will teach the dog to follow the handler.

Some rules for loose leash walking – NEVER yank on the dog’s lead. The dog may do this naturally during “Be A Tree” or when changing directions. Each volunteer needs CONSISTENCY and plenty of PATIENCE when doing these exercises. It is very easy just to let dog pull occasionally. However, allowing the dog to pull, even occasionally, will teach the dog to do it regularly. In time, the dog’s newly learned manners will make for nicer walks and a better chance for adoption.

- Volunteers should use basic training techniques when handling the dogs. The success of these basic techniques requires CONSISTENCY from every dog walker to be effective. When handling the shelter dogs, volunteers must use the Training Commands and Techniques set forth on pages 12-14.
- Make sure that the dog you are walking does not get too close to or come in contact with any other dog (unless dogs are a pair sharing a kennel).

***EVERY DOG WALKER MUST BE IN CONTROL OF THE DOG SHE/HE IS WALKING AT ALL TIMES.***

*Volunteers need to be alert and constantly aware of her/his surroundings and be diligent in keeping her/his dog under control at all times (i.e. not walking too close to other dogs, waiting at a safe distance until another dog walks by, etc.).*

- There can only be one dog in a courtyard/enclosure at a time (unless dogs are a pair sharing a kennel).

***DO NOT LEAVE DOGS UNATTENDED IN THE OUTDOOR ENCLOSURES.***

- Before taking a dog back inside the shelter, check the windows and door to make sure no dogs are coming out and ask the dog to “Sit” before opening the door.
- Once you are back inside the shelter, grab some treats (this will help when returning the dog to her/his kennel) and mark the Dog Walking Sheet.
- You may encounter a little resistance when the dog you are walking realizes that she/he is about to be returned to her/his kennel.

- When putting a dog back in her/his kennel, enter the kennel with the dog, close the door, remove the leash, ask the dog to “Sit” and give her/him a treat, exit the kennel and close and lock the gate.

*Always make sure that the latch on the kennel door is locked – if a kennel door has a clip attached to it, make sure that you replace the clip above the latch.*

- If you are unable to exit the kennel without the dog escaping, put the leash back on the dog and go back out into the hallway and ask an HSHA staff member or another volunteer for help.
- Before moving on to the next dog, make sure the dog has clean water and some form of kennel enrichment. *See Kennel Enrichment on page 15.*
- **Additional Tips/Reminders:**

No children under the age of 18 may accompany volunteer dog walkers.

Remember – dog walkers should be guided by the Dog Walking Sheets – a dog who has not been walked (taken out of its kennel) in three days takes preference over a dog who was taken out yesterday.

Do not take dogs out of the kennels until HSHA staff has finished cleaning.

Do not allow dogs to leash-bite/play tug with the leash while walking. This is not an easy task and may take some time to correct. Deterrent tools like shake cans and spray bottles are *not* appropriate ways to correct this behavior because they are fear-based and can increase the dog’s stress level.

Use your discretion when walking a dog in inclement weather or less-than-ideal conditions (rain, snow, ice, hot weather, or when it is dark outside).

When walking a dog sharing a kennel with another dog, it is often easier to get in and out of the kennels if another volunteer walks the other dog at the same time.

Watch your step in the cemetery – there are a lot of sink holes and uneven areas – try to stay on the perimeter of the cemetery.

Do not let dogs eliminate on grave markers in the cemetery.

Keep dogs out of the shrubs/brush/weeds – ticks, fleas, burrs, and poison (ivy/sumac) are an issue (especially during the warm months).

## 14. Training Commands and Techniques

- **Jumping.** For most dogs, jumping is only rewarding when the dog receives attention for jumping. When a dog jumps, turn 180° away from the dog and ignore the dog. When all four paws are on the ground, reward the dog with a small treat or petting. The focus is to teach the dog that good things happen when they are not jumping.
- **Watch.** Stand or kneel in front of the dog. Take a treat between the thumb and forefinger and show it to the dog. Bring the treat to the bridge of your nose and say “Watch.” As soon as the dog makes eye contact, give the dog the treat. Repeat this 5 to 10 times.
- **Sit.** Begin with a handful of treats. Allow the dog to smell the treats. Slowly move the treats up and back from the dog’s nose towards the area between the dog’s ears. As the dog raises his head, he should naturally move into a sit position. When the dog understands the movement, add the verbal command “Sit.”

What if the dog does not sit? Try different techniques. Move the lure hand a little slower or faster. If the dog backs up, start him in a corner or near a wall.

When the dog knows sit well (about 90% reliability), begin using it as a bridging command to certain rewards. Have the dog sit for petting, going outside, or throwing a ball. The dog should learn that good things happen when it is sitting.

- **Down.** The “Down” command can sometimes be difficult for shelter dogs since it is a submissive position.

Exercise 1 – Put the dog into a Sit. Hold the treats in a closed hand in front of the dog’s nose. Lower the hand towards the floor. The dog’s nose should be following the treats. When the hand is right above the floor, move the treat away from the dog. In order to reach the treat the dog will need to move the front paws forward and will lie down. As soon as the dog’s belly is on the ground, give the dog a treat. After the dog begins to understand the behavior, add the command “Down.”

Exercise 2 - Put the dog into a “Sit”. Hold the treats in a closed hand in front of the dog’s nose. Lower your hand towards the floor. The dog’s nose should be following. When the hand is right above the floor, move the treat hand between the dog’s front legs. In order to get the treat the dog will need to slide back and lie on the ground. As soon as the dog’s belly is on the ground, give the dog a treat. After the dog begins to understand the behavior, add the verbal “Down” command as the dog is starting to lie down.

Exercise 3 – You sit on the ground with your legs in front. Bend your legs at the knees to form a tunnel or arch. Lure the dog with the treats to go under the legs. Make sure that the legs are low enough that the dog must lie down to go under. As soon as the dog’s belly is on the ground, give the dog a treat. After several successful

attempts, begin to add the verbal command “Down.” Try exercises 1 or 2 with the verbal command to continue training the Down position.

Exercise 4 (AKA Waiting for the behavior.) – During your time with the dog, be ready for the dog to lie down naturally. Say “Down” as the dog is about to lie down. Give the dog a treat as soon as the belly touches the floor. Repeat this as often as possible.

- **Leave It.** Start with a handful of tasty treats. Keep your hand closed, but let the dog smell what is inside. The dog will begin to dig his nose into the hand to get the treat. Tell the dog to “Leave It” and patiently wait for the dog to move his head away from the hand. As soon as the dog’s attention moves away from the hand, give the dog a treat. Repeat this process until the dog begins to understand the association between the command and the behavior.

Next, unveil the treats in the palm. When the dog tries to grab them, say “Leave It” and close your hand, if necessary. When the dog moves his head away, give a treat while saying, “Take It.”

Continue with the exercise but place the treats on the floor and cover it with a hand. Continue until the dog does not move toward the treat. Slowly increase the amount of time that the dog must ignore the treats before rewarding him.

Use “Leave It” in a variety of situations and objects so the dog is able to recognize the command for multiple objects.

- **Stay.** Start by asking the dog to “Sit.” Say “Stay” and have the dog sit for approximately one second, then say the release word, “Free,” and give the dog a treat. Try this 2 -3 more times. If the dog moves prematurely, just start again.

After the dog is successful for several attempts at one second, increase the duration to two seconds, then three seconds, etc. Say “Free” and give the dog a treat. Do not increase the duration if there is an unsuccessful attempt. If the dog is unsuccessful after 2 or 3 tries, go back to the duration where the dog was last successful and reinforce at that duration a couple of times.

After the dog can stay for 5-10 seconds at a time, begin to move away from the dog. After the “Stay” command is given, slowly take a step back away from the dog, hold for one second, and return to the original position. Say “Free,” and give a treat. If the dog moves when you step back, take a smaller step back on the next attempt. Continue this exercise until you can stay away from the dog for 5-10 seconds.

Teach the same exercises listed above with the dog in the “Down” position.

- **Recalls.** These are commands to have the dog return to the walker.

Targeted Recall: In this exercise, the target is the walker's hand. To start, put a treat between the index and middle finger. When the dog touches the hand, release the treat to the dog. Do this several more times. Then add the command, "Here" for the dog. When the dog begins to understand the command, remove the treat lure, but continue to reward for hitting the target.

Come: Start the dog in a "Sit." Holding on to the very end of the leash, the walker will start to move backwards a few steps while giving the command "Come." When the dog reaches the trainer, give the dog a treat. The walker should keep their voice excited and body posture low. When practicing this exercise, move in the direction that the dog is to move. Dogs will tend to follow your feet as you move.

## 15. Quiet Time and Socialization

A quick walk around the property is not enough. Dogs need time to unwind, release stress, and bond with humans, especially when they are outside of their kennels. Providing a few quiet minutes of relaxing one-on-one time with the shelter dogs is just as important as the walk itself. Volunteers are strongly encouraged to sit in the grass, in the gazebo, or at a bench with the dog they are walking to relax before returning to her/him to her/his kennel.

Dogs should remain out of the kennel for at least 20 minutes. It normally takes a shelter dog about 15-20 minutes for a dog to begin to relax. Returning a dog to her/his kennel before this point can actually increase the dog's stress level, resulting in a more agitated state that is not conducive to adoption.

## 16. Kennel Enrichment

Kennel enrichment (environmental enrichment) is providing activities and object to the shelter dogs to promote physical and mental stimulation. The purpose is to prevent the dogs from becoming bored, stressed, and/or destructive, which can cause certain behaviors that may be unattractive to potential adopters. Forms of kennel enrichment include, but are not limited to, providing the dogs with certain non-destructible toys or other objects, such as blankets or beds, to keep the dogs occupied and more comfortable in her/his kennel.

## 17. Special Events and Offsite Outings

After 26 cumulative hours/3 months of regular volunteering (handling the dogs), dog walkers are eligible to take dogs to special events and community outings coordinated by HSHA. If you have volunteered regularly for 26 hours/3 months and are interested in taking dogs to special events and community outings, **please contact the Volunteer Coordinator at [nancyv@humanesocietyhbg.org](mailto:nancyv@humanesocietyhbg.org) or (717) 564-3320, x.113.**

Special events volunteers must attend her/his first event without a dog and shadow an experienced volunteer to learn how to handle the shelter dogs at events and other outings. In addition, the dog that a special events volunteer takes to an event **MUST** be a dog that she/he has regularly handled.

## **18. Quiet Kennel – “A” Team**

After 26 cumulative hours/3months of regular volunteering (handling the dogs), dog walkers are eligible to join the Quiet Kennel – “A” Team. **Please contact Dog Volunteers Betty Harris, Cindy Kable, or Jen Kramer if you’re interested in joining the A Team.**

## **19. “Get Acquainted Calls”/ SAFER Training**

After 48 cumulative hours/6 months of regular volunteering (handling the dogs), dog walkers are eligible to attend HSHA’s SAFER Training to learn how to assist HSHA staff with “Get Acquainted” calls. SAFER Training classes will be announced by the HSHA Volunteer Coordinator.

## DOG WALKING FAQS

### **Should I bring my own leash to walk the shelter dogs?**

Dog walkers should use the English slip-lead style that acts as a collar and leash all in one. This is convenient since most shelter dogs do not wear collars.

If you choose not to bring your own leash, you will be at the mercy of the shelter as to what leash will be available for you to use. Nylon slip collars and choke chains are *not* appropriate tools.

### **What is the appropriate "attire" for walking dogs?**

You definitely want to be dressed comfortably. Wear shoes with good support and grip on the soles for wet floors.

For your own safety, it is recommended you wear long sleeves and pants at all times. It may not be realistic during the summer months, but understand if you choose to wear shorts or short-sleeved shirts you run the risk of getting scratched, cut, or easily bitten.

Don't wear anything you care about. You will get dirty and your clothes will take a beating.

Volunteer t-shirts are available to order periodically (approximately twice a year). You must be identified as a volunteers in some way – either an 'official' t-shirt or name tag.

### **What should I do if a dog gets away from me in the kennel?**

First of all, don't panic. It happens to everyone at some point – even staff. If a dog gets away from you, it will usually run to the door. If that is the case, calmly walk to the door and leash up the dog.

If the dog is "fence-fighting" with another dog, if it can be safely accomplished, put the leash on the dog and return it to its kennel to calm down.

### **What should I do if I get bitten or scratched?**

Report the incident to a staff member immediately. You will need to get cleaned up and then fill out a shelter incident report. We would also like you to speak to



the kennel supervisor to let them know what was going on when you were injured. Please be honest. Just because a dog bites does not mean the dog will be euthanized. It does warrant further evaluation to determine whether behavior modification is necessary.

### **What should I do if a dog I walked has a medical or behavioral issue?**

There are medical and behavioral evaluation forms you can fill out to let us know if a dog is having an issue. They will be located at the dog walking station and outside the medical screening room and can be put in the drop box when completed.

### **Is it OK if I don't want to walk some of the dogs?**

Several of our dogs are very difficult to walk – even for seasoned walkers. We don't ever want you to take out a dog outside of your comfort level. Experienced walkers will usually identify those dogs that are more difficult to walk – as well as those that are easier to walk. Many of the dogs in the small dog room are good choices for beginners because they are usually easier to control on the leash.

### **Where can I go to spend time off-leash with a dog?**

We have several areas where you can take a dog to spend off-leash time. If the courtyard is available, that is a great place to toss a ball. The outside exercise pen and visitation rooms are other places to “hang out” for some quiet time. Unfortunately, availability to these areas is limited as we currently need to use these areas for get-acquainted calls. If you are using one of these areas, please be mindful if a get acquainted call needs to take place in the area you are occupying.

### **Can I come early in the morning to walk dogs?**

Unfortunately, we cannot allow volunteers to walk the dogs before we are finished cleaning the kennels. Because we use chemicals to disinfect, we don't want the dogs walking through harsh chemicals or slipping/sliding on wet floors. You will be able to come in at 11 AM and walk until we close or until dusk.

### **Can my dogs at home catch anything from the shelter dogs?**

While it is unlikely, we do highly suggest your own dogs be up-to-date on vaccinations. We also suggest having your dog vaccinated with the bordatella (kennel cough) vaccine. This vaccine is not routinely given to dogs unless they are boarded or spend time at a dog park or anywhere else other dogs may be. Illnesses can be carried home on your shoes or clothing – especially airborne illnesses like

kennel cough. Changing your clothing before interacting with your dogs and having them current on vaccines should be all the safeguards you need to take.

*Hopefully, some of your questions have been answered. If you have a question not covered above, do not hesitate to ask a dog walking team leader, or the volunteer coordinator.*

*Thank you for your support and dedication to the dogs. Without you, we couldn't do what we do for our residents.*

**HSHA VOLUNTEER**  
**DOG WALKING PROGRAM GUIDE**  
**ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

Keep your copy of the HSHA Volunteer Dog Walking Guide (“Guide”) in a safe place for further reference.

**To: Volunteer Coordinator**

- I acknowledge that I have received, read and understand the Guide and obtained guidance where I had questions.
- I acknowledge that the Guide sets and refers to policies and procedures that I must follow while volunteering at HSHA.
- I acknowledge that my compliance with the Guide is a requirement of my volunteer relationship with HSHA.
- I acknowledge that I can and will volunteer in compliance with the Guide and other HSHA policies.
- I acknowledge that I will report medical and behavior issues to HSHA staff.

**Please sign and return this Acknowledgment to the experienced volunteer you meet with the first time you volunteer.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name (Print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Experienced Dog Volunteer