The Animal Rescue League and Wildlife Center Volunteer Manual
Welcome!

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your interest in volunteering your time and talents with the animals at the Animal Rescue League and Wildlife Center. Volunteers are an essential part of the day to day operation of the shelter and Wildlife Center and one of the most important parts of the continued well being of the animals in our care.

Volunteering at an animal shelter or rehabilitation center is not an easy task, but is extremely rewarding. Your love of animals led you to volunteer and it is our hope that this love will develop into a commitment to the welfare of the animals at the ARL and to working along with our staff to reach our goals. Volunteering with animals can lead to headaches, heartaches, and, of course, joy and a sense of giving back to those who cannot help themselves. Through all this, keep in mind it is through your skills and commitment that we can make a difference in the lives of these animals and in our community.

We look forward to working with you and please let us know if we can help you as you begin your volunteer work.

Sincerely,

The Staff of the ARL
Receipt of Volunteer Handbook

The Volunteer Handbook is a compilation of personnel policies, practices and procedures currently in effect in The Animal Rescue League’s Volunteer Program.

This Manual is designed to introduce volunteers to the organization, familiarize you with organizational policies as they pertain to you as a volunteer, provide general guidelines on volunteer program rules, disciplinary procedures and other issues related to your volunteer status and to help answer many of the questions that may arise in connection with your volunteering at the ARL.

This Manual does not purport to include every conceivable situation; it is merely meant as a guideline, and unless laws prescribe otherwise, common sense shall prevail. Of course, Federal, state, and/or local laws will take precedence over The Animal Rescue League policies, where applicable.

Personnel Policies are applied at the discretion of The Animal Rescue League. The Animal Rescue League reserves the right to change, withdraw, apply, or amend any of our policies or benefits, including those covered in this Manual, at any time. The Animal Rescue League may notify you of such changes via email, via a printed memo, notice, amendment to or reprinting of this Manual, but may, in its discretion make such changes at any time, with or without notice and without a written revision of this Manual.

By signing below, you acknowledge that you have received a copy of The Animal Rescue League’s Volunteer Handbook, either in digital or hard copy, and understand that it is your responsibility to read and comply with the policies contained therein and any revisions made to it.

____________________________________  ____________________________
Signature                            Date

Please print your full name

Please sign and date one copy of this notice and return it to Volunteer Coordinator. Retain a second copy for your reference.
History of the Animal Rescue League

The Animal Rescue League of Western Pennsylvania has a rich history, filled with many triumphs and heartaches, beginning in the early twentieth century. In all the events that have occurred throughout the years, there is one common concern that the Animal Rescue League consistently stands for: the well-being and love of animals.

In 1909, with a shared concern for both animal welfare and public health, five men and women formed an organization that would devote itself solely to the welfare of animals in the Pittsburgh area. They sought to return lost dogs and cats to their owners while at the same time giving temporary shelter and food to lost and starving stray dogs and cats. In addition, their organization would secure a merciful and painless death for animals that are old, injured, diseased or dangerous. In May of 1910 the Animal Rescue League opened a small city shelter on lower Denniston Avenue in East Liberty. That same year, a generous benefactor donated a 16-acre farm to the League. The farm is located on Verona Road in Rosedale (6 miles east of the League shelter).

During the Great Depression, the Animal Rescue League was faced with difficulties no different than any other organization. The League still continued to offer services; especially offering comfort to disconsolate pet owners who were forced by economic circumstances to give up their pets. Despite the added demands and diminished contributions, the League manages to survive the Depression years.

The 1950s did not only show change in the expansion of programs the Animal Rescue League had to offer, such as humane education for children, it also saw a change in location. The League moved from its Kirkwood Street location to a newly built facility located at 6620 Hamilton Avenue in East Liberty.

In 1975, for the first time ever, the League retained the services of a veterinarian as a staff member. Also that year, the League donated a parcel of land at their Rosedale Farms property exclusively for the burial of the K-9 Corps dogs that worked on the Pittsburgh Police force.
Even though the ARL was a success in taking stray and abandoned animals into their care at the East Liberty shelter, the organization still desired to improve the welfare of animals in the city. At this time, any dogs and cats picked up by City Animal Control trucks were not given the proper treatment they deserved. The League signed a new contract with the City of Pittsburgh in 1976 that would grant shelter to all stray dogs and cats picked up by the City Animal Control Trucks.

The League expanded its mission to serve to all animals in 1997 by opening their Wildlife Center on the Rosedale Campus. The Wildlife Center treated its first patient, a Red-shouldered Hawk in March of that year. Since opening, the Center has treated over 15,000 wild animals in need. All animals native to Pennsylvania, with the exception of White-tailed Deer and native poisonous snakes are accepted for care. The Center is a fully licensed clinic staffed by professional Wildlife Rehabilitators, holding permits with the PA Game Commission, the USDA and the US Fish and Wildlife Service. Areas of specialty include the care of endangered species, oiled wildlife and the treatment of Rabies Vector Species, including raccoons, groundhogs, bats, coyotes, fox and skunks. The main goal of the Center is to release healthy wild animals back into their native habitat. In addition to medical services, the Center also performs outreach programs to teach local residents of all ages how to live alongside wildlife.

The most recent change to the Animal Rescue League occurred in the year 2000. The building construction resulted in an expansion of the kennel areas, renovations to the clinic, the addition of a brand new multi-purpose room, as well as the creation of a bright, airy lobby.

The Animal Rescue League is continuing to grow in the services we offer to the public and well as continuing to strive to better our care of the animals, through innovative new programs, as well as a new building. We are beginning a capital campaign to raise money for a state of the art shelter to more adequately serve the animals and people of our community. As a volunteer, you have decided to join us at a very exciting time!
Section: Introduction

Welcome and Purpose

This Manual is designed to acquaint you with The Animal Rescue League and Wildlife Center and provide you with general information about volunteer conditions and policies affecting your involvement as a volunteer.

The general policies contained in this Manual apply to all volunteers of The Animal Rescue League and Wildlife center. Individual policies are reflected separately for specific volunteer duties at the Wildlife Center and the Shelter. Following the policies described in this Manual is considered a condition of continuous volunteer work. The Manual is a summary of our policies, which are presented here only as a matter of information and should not be considered as a contract of volunteering.

You are responsible for reading, understanding, and complying with the provisions of this Manual. Our objective is to provide you with an environment that is constructive to both personal and professional growth.
GENERAL POLICIES
AND PROCEDURES
The work rules and standards of conduct for The Animal Rescue League are important, and the Company regards them seriously. All employees and volunteers are urged to become familiar with these rules and standards. In addition, employees and volunteers are expected to follow the rules and standards faithfully in doing their own jobs and conducting The Animal Rescue League’s business. Please note that any employee or volunteer who deviates from these rules and standards will be subject to corrective action, up to and including immediate termination.

While not intended to list all the forms of behavior that are considered unacceptable in the workplace, the following are examples of rule infractions or misconduct that may result in disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination:

- Any inhumane treatment or harm caused to ARL animals or animals served through our clinic
- Theft or inappropriate removal or possession of property
- Working under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs
- Possession, manufacture, distribution, sale, transfer, dispensation or use of alcohol or illegal drugs in the workplace
- Fighting or threatening violence in the workplace
- Boisterous or disruptive activity in the workplace
- Negligence or improper conduct leading to damage of Company-owned or customer-owned property
- Disrespectful conduct
- Violation of safety or health rules
- Smoking in the workplace
- Sexual or other unlawful or unwelcome harassment
- Unauthorized use of telephones, or other Company-owned equipment
- Using Company equipment for purposes other than business (e.g., playing games on computers or personal Internet usage)
- Unauthorized disclosure of confidential information
- Violation of personnel policies
- Unsatisfactory conduct
GENERAL GUIDELINES

Volunteer/Employee Conflict Resolution

POLICY

Problems, misunderstandings and frustrations may arise in the workplace. It is the Animal Rescue League’s intent to be responsive to our employees and volunteers regarding their concerns. Therefore, an employee or volunteer who is confronted with a problem may use the procedure described below to resolve or clarify his or her concerns.

PROCEDURE

Informal Resolution

The Animal Rescue League will make a good faith effort to achieve an informal resolution of a problem brought to its attention through direct consultation with all parties involved. Many complaints and conflicts can be resolved through open discussion between the parties involved and employees and volunteers are encouraged to engage in direct consultation with one another in an effort to achieve conciliation.

Informal resolution is a voluntary process of dispute settlement in which a neutral third party helps the involved individuals reach a voluntary resolution through negotiation, persuasion and problem solving. Mediation is conducted by the Supervisor, Director or Human Resource Director based on comfort level with the mediator by those involved. Volunteers and staff members who agree to participate in voluntary mediation do not give up the right to file a formal grievance at a later time if informal attempts to resolve a problem have not been successful.

The mediation process is best utilized for resolving interpersonal conflicts and disagreements and is not intended to be used for resolution of alleged violations of agency policies, employee misconduct and failure to meet performance standards. While a staff member or volunteer may desire to resolve a problem informally, the Animal Rescue League retains the right to conduct a formal investigation and take appropriate corrective action as it determines necessary.

If informal attempts to resolve a complaint or conflict are not successful or are not appropriate given the nature of the problem, a staff member may commence a formal complaint through the grievance procedure outlined below.

Formal Grievance Procedure

1. Step One.

   a. Employees or volunteers should initially discuss their concerns with their immediate supervisor. If the complaint involves the employee's or volunteer’s supervisor, the employee or volunteer should schedule an appointment with that supervisor to discuss the problem that gave rise to the complaint within five (5) working days of the date the incident occurred.

   b. The immediate supervisor should respond in writing to the complaint within five (5) days of the meeting held with the complainant employee or volunteer.

2. Step Two.

   a. If the discussion with the immediate supervisor does not resolve the problem to the mutual satisfaction of the employee or volunteer and the supervisor or if the supervisor does not respond to the
complaint, the employee or volunteer may submit a written complaint to the employee's director and a copy should be forwarded to Human Resources. The submission of the written complaint is due within five (5) working days of the response from the supervisor and must include:

1. The problem and the date when the incident occurred.
2. Suggestions on ways to resolve the problem
3. A copy of the immediate supervisor’s written response or a summary of his or her verbal response and the date when the employee or volunteer met with the immediate supervisor. If the supervisor provided no response, the complaint should state this.

Employees may request assistance with writing their complaints from Human Resources.

b. Upon receipt of the formal complaint, the director must schedule a meeting with the employee or volunteer within five (5) working days to discuss the complaint. Within approximately five (5) working days after the discussion, the director should issue a decision both in writing and orally to the employee or volunteer filing the complaint.


a. If the employee or volunteer is dissatisfied with the decision of the director, the employee or volunteer may, within five (5) working days, appeal this decision in writing to the Human Resources Department to investigate the complaint.

b. Human Resources may call a meeting with the parties directly involved to facilitate a resolution or may refer complaints to a review committee if Human Resources is of the opinion that the complaint raises serious questions of fact or interpretation of policy. Human Resources may gather further information from involved parties. All involved individuals, other than Human Resources, will be charged with the responsibility of not discussing the situation with any other employee or with the complainant employee.

4. Additional guidance.

a. If an employee or volunteer fails to appeal from one level to the next level of this procedure within the time limits listed above, the problem shall be considered settled on the basis of the last decision and the problem submitted by the employee shall not be subject to further consideration.

b. Because problems are best resolved on an individual basis, the conflict resolution procedure may only be initiated by individual employees and not by groups of employees.

c. The Animal Rescue League reserves the right to impose appropriate disciplinary action for any conduct it considers to be disruptive or inappropriate. The circumstances of each situation may differ and the level of disciplinary action may also vary, depending upon factors such as the nature of the offense, whether it is repeated, the employee's or volunteer’s work record and the impact of the conduct on the organization.

d. No one will be retaliated against for filing a complaint under this procedure. All complaints must be made in good faith.
The Animal Rescue League recognizes alcohol and drug abuse as potential health, safety and security problems. It is expected that all volunteers will assist in maintaining a work environment free from the effects of alcohol, drugs or other intoxicating substances. Compliance with this substance abuse policy is made a condition of volunteerism.

Volunteers are prohibited from the following when reporting to the ARL or for any off-site events:

- The unlawful use, possession, transportation, manufacture, sale, dispensation or other distribution of an illegal or controlled substance or drug paraphernalia;
- The unauthorized use, possession, transportation, manufacture, sale, dispensation or other distribution of alcohol; and
- Being under the influence of alcohol or having a detectable amount of an illegal or controlled substance in the blood or urine (“controlled substance” means a drug or other substance as defined in applicable federal laws on drug abuse prevention).
- If a volunteer reports to the ARL in a condition giving reasonable cause to suspect the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs, the volunteer will be asked to leave the premises immediately. Further incidents will result in termination of volunteer services.

Any volunteer violating these prohibitions will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.
It is The Animal Rescue League’s policy to provide a workplace that is safe and free from all threatening and intimidating conduct. Therefore, The Animal Rescue League will not tolerate violence or threats of violence of any form in the workplace, at work-related functions, or outside of work if it affects the workplace. This policy applies to The Animal Rescue League employees, volunteers, clients, customers, guests, vendors, and persons doing business with The Animal Rescue League.

It will be a violation of this policy for any individual to engage in any conduct, verbal or physical, which intimidates, endangers, or creates the perception of intent to harm persons or property. Examples include but are not limited to:

- Physical assaults or threats of physical assault, whether made in person or by other means (i.e., in writing, by phone, fax, or e-mail).
- Verbal conduct that is intimidating and has the purpose or effect of threatening the health or safety of a co-worker.
- Possession of firearms or any other lethal weapon on Company property, in a vehicle being used on Company business, in any Company owned or leased parking facility, or at a work-related function.
- Any other conduct or acts which management believes represents an imminent or potential danger to work place safety/security.

Anyone with questions or complaints about workplace behaviors which fall under this policy may discuss them with a supervisor or Human Resources. The Animal Rescue League will promptly and thoroughly investigate any reported occurrences or threats of violence. Violations of this policy will result in disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination of employees. Where such actions involve non-employees, The Animal Rescue League will take action appropriate for the circumstances. Where appropriate and/or necessary, The Animal Rescue League will also take whatever legal actions are available and necessary to stop the conduct and protect The Animal Rescue League employees and property.
The Animal Rescue League’s policy is to provide a work environment that is free from harassment. Therefore, The Animal Rescue League will not tolerate harassment based on age, race, gender, color, religion, national origin, disability, marital status, covered veteran status, sexual orientation, status with respect to public assistance, and other characteristics protected under state, federal, or local law. Such conduct is prohibited in any form at the workplace, at work-related functions, or outside of work if it affects the workplace. This policy applies to all The Animal Rescue League employees, volunteers, clients, customers, guests, vendors, and persons doing business with The Animal Rescue League.

Sexual harassment, one type of prohibited harassment, warrants special mention. Sexual harassment has been defined according to The Animal Rescue League guidelines as:

Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- Submission to such conduct is made a term or condition, either explicitly or implicitly, of an individual’s employment;
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as a factor in decisions affecting that individual’s employment; or
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of interfering with an individual’s work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

Examples of conduct prohibited by this policy include, but are not limited to:

- Unwelcome sexual flirtation, advances, or propositions;
- Verbal comments related to an individual’s age, race, gender, color, religion, national origin, disability, or sexual orientation; weight
- Explicit or degrading verbal comments about another individual or his/her appearance;
- The display of sexually suggestive pictures or objects in any workplace location including transmission or display via computer;
- Any sexually offensive or abusive physical conduct;
- The taking of or the refusal to take any personnel action based on an employee’s submission to or rejection of sexual overtures; and
- Displaying cartoons or telling jokes which relate to an individual’s age, race, gender, color, religion, national origin, disability, or sexual orientation.
If you believe that you are being subjected to workplace harassment, you should:

1. Tell the harasser that his or her actions are not welcome and they must stop, if you feel comfortable enough to do so.
2. Report the incident immediately to your supervisor/manager or Human Resources.
3. Report any additional incidents or retaliation that may occur to one of the above resources.

Any reported incident will be investigated immediately and thoroughly. Complaints and actions taken to resolve complaints will be handled as confidentially as possible, given The Animal Rescue League’s obligation to investigate and act upon reports of such harassment. Appropriate actions will be taken by The Animal Rescue League to stop and remedy any and all such conduct, including interim measures during a period of investigation.

Retaliation of any kind or discriminating against an employee or volunteer who reports a suspected incident of harassment or who cooperates in an investigation is prohibited. An employee or volunteer who violates this policy or retaliates against an employee or volunteer in any way will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including immediate termination.
Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to define the extent to which certain information, including but not limited to donor and client information, euthanasia policies, internal operations of the ARL, and adoption information will be kept private and confidential by the Animal Rescue League and Wildlife Center, its volunteers, staff and contractors, to fulfill the mission and goals of the organization.

Confidentiality of the Animal Rescue League and Wildlife Center business

The ARL expects and requires all volunteers, staff and contractors to keep confidential any sensitive or proprietary business-related information belonging to the ARL which has not been released to the public domain or generally made known to all stakeholders.

Such information includes but shall not be limited to:

1. Donor information such as donation amount, addresses, telephone numbers or other personal information
2. Policies and procedures regarding the care of the animals
3. Decisions made regarding the euthanasia process
4. Disclosure of information which could defame, damage or reasonably damage the reputation of the ARL or its relationship with customers
5. Confidential information of customers, volunteers or employees including but not limited to addresses, phone numbers, donations or personal information

Signed Agreement to Comply

Animal Rescue League and Wildlife Center volunteers and staff shall be required to sign a Confidentiality Agreement. All signed agreements will be kept in employee files or volunteer permanent records.
GENERAL GUIDELINES

Emergency Action Plan

Purpose
To proactively protect the health and safety of all The Animal Rescue League employees, volunteers, customers and visitors.

Practice
We recognize that our people drive our business. As our most critical resource, employees and volunteers are safeguarded through training, provision of appropriate work surroundings, and procedures that foster protection of health and safety. No duty, no matter what its perceived result, is more important than employee health and safety.

General Guidelines in an Emergency

Stay calm and think through your actions.

Know important emergency numbers:

- Fire/Police/Ambulance (9) 9-1-1
- Human Resource: 412-345-0347
- Operator 9-0
- or page for help

Be aware of your surroundings.

- Know where stairwells, exits and fire extinguishers are located.
- In the event of any emergency, leave the building via the closest exit.
- Should an event occur that would require evacuation, employees are to meet in the adjoining Sunoco parking lot for a head count and further instructions.
- Do not hesitate to call/alert others if you believe that an emergency is occurring.

Fire

Evacuation:

- Employees, volunteers and visitors are notified of a fire by either the fire alarm system or paged announcement.
- Upon hearing the alarm, immediately evacuate the building using the closest exit. Do not delay evacuation to get your coat, personal belongings, finish a phone call, or wait for friends.
- Do not delay evacuation to remove animals.
GENERAL GUIDELINES

- Any employee, volunteer or customer having mobility, visual, hearing, or other conditions that may hinder them from becoming aware of an emergency or evacuation may require special assistance at time of emergency.
- If any employee, volunteer or known guest/visitor is missing, immediately report the missing person’s name to a Director who will in turn report it to the proper company and civil authorities.
- All employees and volunteers should stay together in the location deemed appropriate, so periodic updates on the situation can be communicated. Do not go home, wait in your car, return to the building, or go to another building unless directed by a Director to do so.
- Safety Committee members will be responsible for conducting a last sweep of their areas to make sure everyone has evacuated their area of the building.

Medical Emergency

- Upon discovering a medical emergency, call (9) 9-1-1.
- Call the receptionist or page an emergency announcement.
- Stay with the ill/injured person. Be careful not to come into contact with any bodily fluids unless properly trained and protected.
- Send one person to alert Human Resources so they can notify family members of the ill/injured person.
- Employees in the immediate vicinity of the emergency, but not involved in the emergency effort, should leave the area.

Workplace Violence

- Any employee or volunteer who feels that (s)he has been threatened should immediately report their concern to a manager and Human Resources.
- If you observe anyone, including customers, exhibiting threatening behavior or making threatening statements, warn others in the area and immediately notify Human Resources. Stay away from the person exhibiting the threatening behavior.
- Depending upon the level of concern, (9) 9-1-1 may be called immediately.
- Never attempt to confront any person exhibiting threatening behavior.
The Animal Rescue League wants to ensure that our employees and volunteers remain safe and injury-free when accidents are preventable. We expect our employees and volunteers to refrain from horseplay, careless behavior and negligent actions. It is The Animal Rescue League’s policy to maintain a safe and secure working environment for all employees, volunteers, visitors and clients.

While working, employees and volunteers must observe safety precautions for their safety and the safety of others. All work and public areas must be kept clean and free from clutter and debris. Any hazards or potentially dangerous conditions must be corrected immediately or reported to a supervisor.

If you are involved in an accident, you must comply with the following procedure:

- Report the accident at the ARL shelter to the Volunteer Coordinator, Adoption Counselor or Operations Director immediately
- If working at the WLC, report the accident to the WLC Director or other staff member
- Fill out an accident report regardless of the severity of the injury
- The Animal Rescue League is not responsible for volunteer injuries on-site or at off-site events.
- While volunteers are not covered under the agency’s Workmans Compensation Insurance, it is recommended that in the case of an injury that involves broken-skin, medical care is obtained

Incident reports can be found in the Volunteer Coordinator’s office.

Please adhere to all rules and procedures learned throughout your training to reduce the chance of injury while working with the animals. Failure to do so may result in injury to you or other people and animals or dismissal from the volunteer program.
Our goal is to have a smoke-free environment. Smoking is not permitted at any time in The Animal Rescue League work areas, including Company vehicles or customer or client areas.

Smoking is allowed outside of the building but smokers must be at least 5 feet away from doors and building entrances. Smokers should be considerate of coworkers, volunteers, customers, and members of the public. Help to maintain a clean entryway by depositing cigarettes in appropriate containers and staying far enough away from doors so that smoke does not blow into the building.
General Policies

Volunteer Service Record

The volunteer service record is the method of reporting and documenting volunteer hours. This documentation of volunteer service hours is often used by nonprofits in board reports, to obtain funding, etc. This documentation must occur every time you participate in a volunteer activity. Different programs have different reporting procedures which will be explained in greater detail by your supervisor.

Hamilton Location:

1. All dog coaches, cat handlers and bunny cuddlers must sign in at the start of your shift and sign out at the end of your shift using the Volgistics program located at the Volunteer office.
2. If you are at an offsite event, volunteers are asked to sign in on the Volunteer Hours Tracking Sheet at the start and end time of volunteering.
3. All other volunteers at the Hamilton site who are performing special projects will be tracked via the Volunteer Hours Tracking Sheet and entered manually into the Volgistics program.
4. All volunteers who are performing humane education activities or community outreach must inform their supervisor in writing the hours worked. This time will be manually entered into the Volgistics software once it is provided to the Volunteer Coordinator.
Corrective Action

Corrective action may be taken if the volunteer’s work is unsatisfactory. Corrective action is within the discretion of the Volunteer Coordinator or the Operations Director and may include:

1. Additional supervision
2. Reassignment
3. Retraining with possible suspension
4. Referral to another volunteer position
5. Dismissal from the ARL program

Volunteer Dismissal

Volunteers who do not adhere to the policies and procedures of the ARL or who fail to satisfactorily perform their volunteer assignment are subject to dismissal. Dismissal is within the discretion of the Operations Director and Executive Director.

Grounds for dismissal may include, but are not limited to:

- Any abuse or maltreatment of an animal while volunteering
- Violation of program policies and procedures or PA state animal laws
- Gross misconduct or insubordination
- Being under the influence of alcohol or drugs while performing volunteer duties
- Theft of property or misuse of program equipment or materials
- Mistreatment or inappropriate conduct toward customers, other volunteers or agency personnel
- Taking action with an animal without program approval for off-site visits, events, etc.
- Failure to complete required initial or ongoing training
- Failure to accept assignments over a period of twelve months
- Breach of confidentiality
- Failure to satisfactorily perform assigned duties
- Criminal activities
ANIMAL RESCUE LEAGUE VOLUNTEER ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

Executive Director
Dan Rossi

Janice Barnard
Program Director

Jill Argall
WLC Director

Stephanie Williams
Medical

Cari Ciancio
HR/Operations Director

Cathy Oskin
Development Director

Adoptions Manager

Dog Coach Volunteers

Bunny Cuddlers

Education Volunteers

Adoption Volunteers

Cat Handlers

Petfinder Volunteers

Animal Contact Volunteers

WLC Volunteers

Medical/Clinic Volunteers

Recruitment / Retention Volunteers

Episodic Volunteers

Administration Volunteers

Maintenance Volunteers

Foster Volunteers

Cleda Klingensmith
Foster Coordinator

Fundraising/Marketing Volunteers

Funding Resource Volunteers
ANIMAL RESCUE LEAGUE SHELTER

6620 Hamilton Ave.

Pittsburgh, PA 15221

412.661.6452
Mission of the Animal Rescue League of Western PA

To provide temporary shelter, food, medical attention, and comfort to neglected and injured animals; to restore lost animals to their owners or seek new homes for them and to educate the public about the humane care of animals.

Why we are proud to be an OPEN DOOR SHELTER

Did you know that very few animal shelters in Western Pennsylvania accept all domestic animals, regardless of age, health or temperament? Many other shelters choose to reject animals that don’t fit a particular profile. We have an “open door” policy, so every animal finds shelter here, every day. For generations, the community has relied on us as a resource for adoption, foster homes, veterinary care, behavioral training and animal welfare advocacy. We consider the unique needs of all the animals in our care and work compassionately to prepare every safe, appropriately socialized pet for a wonderful new life. As you can imagine, opening our doors to so many animals requires the support of people like you. Thank you for donating your time to the Animal Rescue League. Find out more about at opendoorshelters.org.
Services offered by the ARL

- Sheltering of and medical care for stray and surrendered animals
- Adoption of animals
- Lost and Found animal registry
- Low cost veterinary clinic
  - Vaccines
  - Spay and neuter surgeries
- Humane education programs
- Pet supply gift shop
- Private and group obedience training classes for owned dogs and puppies
- Wildlife Center at our Rosedale location
- Dog boarding kennel, grooming services and pet cemetery at our Rosedale location
  - All profits go towards helping animals in our care

ARL Hours of Operation

Saturday, Sunday, Monday: 11 am –5pm
Tuesday - Friday: 11 am – 7:30 pm

*The veterinary clinic is by appointment only.
Contact Information

Please contact the Volunteer Coordinator with any questions or concerns.

Main phone number: 412.661.6452
Address: 6620 Hamilton Ave, Pittsburgh, PA 15206

Volunteer Coordinator: Monica Garcia
412.661.6452 x 235 or mgarcia@animalrescue.org

Foster Care Coordinator: Cleda Klingensmith
412.661.6452 x 231 or cklingensmith@animalrescue.org

Rabbit Volunteer Mentors: Suzanne Lyonsmuth
724.766.9399 or Suzanne.muth@gmail.com
And
Denise Schram
412.417.8839 or denise.schram@comcast.net

Program Director: Janice Barnard
412.661.6452 x214 or jbarnard@animalrescue.org

Development Director: Cathy Oskin
412.661.6452 x226 or coskin@animalrescue.org

Operations Director: Cari Ciancio
412.661.6452 x225 or cciancio@animalrescue.org

Adoptions Manager: Jennifer Daniels
412.661.6452 x 233 or jdaniels@animalrescue.org

Veterinary Clinic
412.661.6452 x 223

Donations
412.661.6452 x 213
WHAT WILL WE BE ASKING OF YOU AS A VOLUNTEER?

1. Volunteering is a serious commitment. Please have the time and availability to commit for at least 6 months.
2. Attend required training session for your interests.
3. Commit to volunteering six hours a month.
4. Support the ARL philosophies and policies inside and outside the shelter.
5. Be honest with yourself and us concerning your needs, wishes, and availability.

WHAT DO YOU GET IN RETURN?

1. LICKS, PURRS, CUDDLES, & TAIL WAGS!!
2. Opportunity to work in a highly recognized and well-respected animal shelter that protects the community as well as the animals.
3. Learn about animals through direct volunteer work and though a variety of educational opportunities.
4. Choose from and experience a variety of job opportunities.
5. Explore new career opportunities.
6. A chance to develop new skills or polish old ones.
7. Receive support and feedback from a professional staff.
8. A chance to meet others who share your interests.
9. Subscription to Animal Tracks, the quarterly newsletter of the ARL.
Shelter Intake Procedures

Incoming Animals
Animals come to us through the City of Pittsburgh Animal Control and from the public. As part of our Open Door Policy, we take in any animal that is brought to us and give them a chance. Incoming animals are classified as stray animals or owned surrendered animals.

Stray and Lost Animals
Stray animals come to us from animal control and from the public. A stray animal is held for a minimum three days to see if an owner can be found. If the animal is wearing tags or has a microchip they are held for ten days while the owner is contacted. During the time they are stray, animals are kept on Small Side Dog and Small Side Cat, and lost and found checks are done twice daily on every animal in these areas. Every effort is made to return lost animals to their owners. If the animal is not reclaimed during their stray period, they continue through the process.

Owned Surrendered Animals
These are animals that are given up by their owners for various reasons. The owner is asked to fill out some information about the animal’s history, to help us in placing the animal. Owned surrenders are held for a minimum of 24 hours to adjust to the kennel environment, before they continue through the process.

What Happens Next?
Every animal, from cats and dogs to birds and alligators, is given a chance in our system to be placed in an appropriate home or rescue situation.

Cats
All cats that are able to be handled by the vet tech on incoming are vaccinated and treated for fleas and worms immediately. If they are scared or grumpy at that time, they are given a chance to adjust to the environment and the vet tech again tries to handle the cat. After their holding period they are tested for feline leukemia and AIDS and then spayed or neutered. They can then be placed on the floor for adoption. If it is an underage kitten or nursing mom and kittens, we will try to find a foster home if it is available.

Dogs
Dogs are vaccinated on intake if the vet tech is able to handle the dog. After their holding period they go through a behavior evaluation to make sure the dog seems safe for adoption. This evaluation is done by our Kennel Department and it puts the dog in a variety of situations to observe the dog’s reaction. If the dog passes the evaluation, they are placed for adoption and spayed or neutered before going to their new home.

Other Animals
Bunnies and other small furry animals are kept for adoption unless a rescue can be found. Bunnies are spayed and neutered before adoption. Wildlife is sent to our Wildlife Center in Verona. Reptiles, farm animals, and birds are sent to local rescues.
Adoption
The adoption department screens adopters and helps them find an appropriate animal for their home. We also work with breed rescues to place some of our dogs. We do not have a time limit that an animal is up for adoption, if they remain healthy and friendly we keep them until a home is found.

What’s included in the price of the adoption?
All animals are spayed or neutered, microchipped, treated for fleas and worms, and have their vaccines up to date. Dogs have been tested for heartworms and cats have been tested for feline leukemia and FIV. Animals are also sent home with a bag of the food we feed at the shelter.

What’s the process for adopting an animal?
Potential adopters will fill out a questionnaire that helps the adoption staff match the person with an animal. The customer meets the animal and gets to know the animal through interaction and input from staff and volunteers. Once the adopter has found an animal they sign an adoption contract and pay the adoption fee.

Euthanization
Euthanasia is an extremely difficult aspect of working in an animal shelter. Every effort is made to protect and humanely preserve the lives of animals in our care. Euthanasia is seen as a last resort and will be carried out in a caring, responsible, and humane manner by staff members that are trained in euthanasia technique. Decisions to euthanize will be based on health and welfare of animals, staff, volunteers and community. Animals that are medically or behaviorally unfit to adopt will be euthanized.

The emotional conflicts that arise out of euthanasia and the decision making process affect everyone on staff (paid and unpaid) as well as persons utilizing our services, volunteers, members and the community. We are committed to helping people deal with the difficulties of euthanasia in the best way possible.

Please take the time to read the letter we have attached in order to better help you understand the euthanasia process and possible questions or comments that may arise during your time with us.
Dear Colleague:

In spite of the fact that it is an intensely emotional and difficult subject, euthanasia is something that we must consider before making the commitment to volunteer in any animal shelter. Unfortunately, due to the nature of sheltering unwanted animals, it is sometimes necessary to euthanize some of the animals that we receive. Depending on the individual circumstances of each case, you may never even see the animal, or you may have interacted or even become attached to an animal that is euthanized.

Please understand that the decision to euthanize (for every single animal) is carefully considered and all options are weighed. It is extremely difficult to make the decision to euthanize, hold the animal and then actually perform euthanasia. It is the policy at the Animal Rescue League to perform euthanasia in the most humane manner possible, using euthanasia by injection as our only method.

Decisions regarding euthanasia are unpopular and among the least favorite staff activity, but they must be made on a daily basis. Please do not confront the staff involved with questions like:

“Why is Fido being put to sleep?"
“How can you just kill them? You are so cold hearted.”
“Are you going to kill this one?”
“I hope you’ll consider Fido’s (age, breed type, temperament, etc.) before you decide whether or not to put him to sleep.”

These types of negative comments only make a necessary part of their job much more difficult. Staff members work at the Animal Rescue League because they genuinely like and want to help animals. Performing euthanasia and making the decisions regarding which animals are euthanized is no more difficult on anyone else than it is on the people who are tasked with this responsibility as part of their daily job duties.

As a volunteer, be prepared to answer questions concerning euthanasia from your friends and from people you meet who know that you volunteer at an animal shelter. It is important that you both understand and are able to discuss the subject in a calm and objective way.

If you have any questions or concerns about the euthanasia process in general or about a specific decision, please bring your concerns to the volunteer coordinator for discussion. We understand that your questions and feelings need a forum for discussion. Because compassion fatigue associated with dealing with these issues is very common, the Animal Rescue League can offer assistance in working through the stages of grief associated with our care of animals. We are all here to work together for the benefit of the animals. Trust is one of the most basic needs in any relationship, it is only with your help and understanding that we can work together to achieve our goals.

Sincerely,

Animal Rescue League Staff
Volunteer Positions

- **Dog Coach: Level 1**
  - Take dogs on walks around the shelter, socialize and spend quality time with the dogs
  - Use basic dog handling skills and behavior modification techniques

- **Cat Handler**
  - Socialize and groom the cats, give them a break from the cage in the cat cuddle rooms.

- **STAR Dog Trainer**
  - Work with dogs that need some training to help them get adopted; learn about behavior modification and dog training.

- **Bunny/Small Animal Handler**
  - Socialize the bunnies and other small furries.

- **Foster Parent**
  - We use foster care for underage animals, sick animals, animals needing socialization, and also when our kennels are full. We have a huge influx of cats and kittens in the warmer months and can have up to 300+ cats and kittens in foster care.

- **Adoptions Assistant**
  - Help the adoption counselors match people with pets during our busy times.

- **Animal Attendant**
  - Transfer animals to and from events
  - Provide information on the animal at the event
  - Be familiar with the Open Door philosophy to speak with attendees

- **Animal Attendant Assistant**
  - Represent the ARL and provide information on the animals
  - Provide general shelter information such as mission and Open Door Philosophy

- **Offsite Education/Adoption Events**
  - Transfer animals to and from Education/Adoption events
  - Represent the ARL in a professional manner
  - Provide general shelter information such as mission and Open Door Philosophy

- **Events Assistant**
  - Attend with planning and execution of events
  - Represent the ARL at events
  - Provide general shelter information to attendees
Volunteer Training Requirements

After the general orientation and turning in your volunteer waiver, you can sign up for a training specific to your interests in volunteering with the cats or with the dogs.

Cat volunteers will attend a Shelter Cat Handlers training before they are able to volunteer independently.

Dog volunteers will attend a Shelter Dog Handlers training before they are able to volunteer independently.

To ensure the safest and most rewarding volunteer experience, we offer comprehensive training.

Training for the other volunteer opportunities will be on an as needed basis. Monthly training sessions will be posted on the volunteer announcement boards and through our email groups. Please contact the volunteer coordinator with your interest in other opportunities.

Available Hours to Volunteer

**CAT** Volunteers:
- 11:00am – 1:00pm  Monday through Sunday
- 2:00pm – 4:00pm  Monday through Sunday
- 5:30pm – 7:30pm  Monday through Friday
- 3:00pm – 5:00pm  Saturday and Sunday

**DOG** Volunteers
- 8:00am -10:00am  Monday through Sunday
- 5:30pm – 7:30pm  Monday through Friday
- 4:00pm -6:00pm  Saturday and Sunday

**RABBIT** Volunteers:
- Sunday: 8 am – 6 pm
- Monday: 8 am – 8 pm
- Tuesday: 8 am – 8 pm
- Wednesday: 8 am – 8 pm
- Thursday: 8 am - 8 pm
- Friday: 8 am - 8 pm
- Saturday: 8 am – 6 pm
Volunteer Policies and Procedures

Volunteer ID:
Please wear a “volunteer” sticker for identification purposes after you sign in. These can be found next to the sign-in log book.

Staff Only Areas:
Volunteers are to be in the Adoption Areas only. Do not enter staff only areas, unless given special permission by the volunteer coordinator.

Professional Attitude:
Volunteers must:
• take their commitment seriously.
• agree to conduct themselves in a professional manner with the animals, co-volunteers, staff, and the public.
• maintain a professional and positive attitude. Bad mouthing the shelter or staff will not be tolerated.
• must keep all client data confidential. No names of clients are to be discussed outside our organization.
• be friendly, warm, and courteous to the public, and put them at ease.
• be neat and accurate.
• ask the staff for assistance with any questions to which you are not sure of the absolute correct answer.

Attendance
We prefer you to “schedule” your volunteer work sessions, however we will accept a few "unscheduled" volunteers as dog walkers or cat cuddlers. Volunteers are asked to schedule at least one and a half hours of service per week.

Be reliable. If you cannot keep your scheduled time, please notify the volunteer coordinator.

Each volunteer has made a commitment. You have agreed to a certain job, certain hours, and certain amount of time.

Volunteers are required to sign in upon arrival on our sign-in sheet, each time you come to volunteer. Upon completion of service, sign out. The sign-in sheet is also used in the event of evacuations and fire drills and must be accurate. Volunteers who are consistently unwilling to sign in and out may be terminated from the program.

Volunteers are required to record hours of service. This conscientious effort to this important detail will enable us to maintain accurate records. Volunteers who are consistently unwilling to record service may be terminated from the program.
Proper Dress
Volunteers are asked to convey a professional public image. Overall appearance should be clean and neat. Wearing of shorts is not recommended. Shoes must have covered toes. For those positions involving direct animal care, large hoop or dangling earrings represent a safety hazard and should not be worn.

Volunteer Personal Property
The ARL is not responsible for loss, theft, or damage of personal items. Volunteers are advised not to bring excessive amount of cash or valuables with them as we do not have a secure storage area.

Media Procedures
In order to maintain accuracy in information dissemination and branding, it is essential that all media requests are first approved by the Director of Development. All requests should first be brought to the attention of the Volunteer Coordinator who will involve the Director of Development.

Media is anything that will be printed, broadcast, or televised about the ARL. We welcome any contacts or story ideas you may have and ask that you direct them to the Director of Development.

Suggestions
Make suggestions! We welcome your ideas as a means of improving our operations. Suggestions can be made to the Volunteer Coordinator.

Resignation
Please notify the Volunteer Coordinator. You can do this in person, by email or by phone. An exit survey will be given to you to complete. This provides valuable feedback to improve our program.

Discipline
The ARL Volunteer Program encourages growth and improvement rather than focusing on punishment and negative feedback. Volunteers who commit minor violations of policy and procedure will be verbally counseled, in an effort to achieve acceptable compliance. Continued violations could result in additional counseling or dismissal. Serious violations (animal abuse; abusive, threatening, harassing behavior to staff or customers; disclosure of confidential information, etc.) could result in the immediate termination of service.
Frequently Asked Questions

What are “open door” and “no-kill” shelters?
In order to operate a “no-kill” facility, an organization must limit the number of animals it may take in at any given time. This means many animals are turned away when the shelter is at maximum capacity to maintain a “no-kill” status. The animals turned away are usually taken somewhere else to either be adopted or euthanized. While a “no-kill” shelter can help some of the animals in the community, they do not meet the needs of the majority of stray and at-risk animals who are served by an “open door” shelter like the Animal Rescue League.

Can I volunteer to fulfill required community service hours for school or other programs?
Yes, we will take a limited number of volunteers who are interested in volunteering for just community service hours. You must be willing and able to be a volunteer dog walker, a foster care provider, or complete an independent fundraising or donation gathering project. You must also be very accurate when signing in and out to help keep track of your volunteer hours. Please see the volunteer coordinator for more information.

Why do you have so many Pitbull Terrier mixes?
In our community and the surrounding area pitbulls are a very popular breed. Many people that own them do not have them spayed and neutered, which leads to many unwanted litters of puppies and many young adults. Pitbulls can be wonderful, loving, and well behaved family pets, but like all dogs they need socialization and training as puppies and young dogs. Many people who get them as puppies do not put in the time and effort to train and socialize them. This leads to them being surrendered to the shelter when they are no longer cute and manageable pups but undertrained and very active young dogs around 10 months to 2 years old.

What is the Open Paw program?
Open Paw is a shelter program that addresses the mental needs of animals in the very stressful shelter environment. This program provides the animals with mental stimulation in their cages, and training to become adjusted and well behaved in the shelter. Through this program we strive to provide structure and training to help under socialized and undertrained animals improve their behavior to quickly find permanent homes.