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### **Shelter Hours**

Monday – closed to the public (8am - 4pm for volunteers)

Tuesday – 11am-5pm

Wednesday – closed to the public (8am - 4pm for volunteers)

Thursday – 11am-6pm

Friday – 11am-5pm

Saturday – 11am-5pm

Sunday – 11am-4pm

CVHS is closed to the public on the following holidays, but volunteers are still needed to help care for the animals:

New Year's Day

Memorial Day

Independence Day

Easter

Labor Day

Thanksgiving Day

Christmas Day

### **VOLUNTEER HOURS:**

We need volunteer help every single day. Volunteers may arrive as early as 8am and stay as late as whatever time we close for the day

## Welcome to Cochecho Valley Humane Society!

Cochecho Valley Humane Society first opened its doors in 1984 to serve the animal welfare needs of Strafford County, New Hampshire. Each year, CVHS cares for approximately 2,000 abused, neglected, and surrendered animals. Our mission is to provide quality, compassionate care and shelter to our animals and to educate the community concerning animal treatment and welfare.

We carry out this mission by meeting these objectives:

- Sheltering surrendered, abandoned, neglected, and abused animals
- Placing animals in caring homes
- Promoting spaying and neutering
- Providing humane education in schools and in the community
- Promoting pet health and safety
- Helping pet owners in need
- Advocating for pets and their owners

Cochecho Valley Humane Society is a 501(c) 3 non-profit and, as an animal welfare organization, we do not qualify for state or federal funding. Instead, we rely on community donations, foundations, and grants to maintain our operations, programs, and services.

More than just an animal shelter, CVHS is a community resource. Much of our work is providing programs and services that benefit animals *and* their humans. To assist community members, we are pleased to offer the following programs and services:

- **Shelter:** providing safe, temporary care for homeless, lost, abused, or abandoned pets
- **Adoption and Placement:** helping families select an appropriate pet for their homes and lifestyles
- **Lost and Found:** reuniting pets with owners
- **Humane Education:** delivering animal and pet education lessons to audiences of all ages
- **Rabies and Microchipping Clinics:** conducting cost effective clinics to keep pets health and safe
- **Safe Pets:** working with social service, law enforcement, and other agencies to temporarily shelter pets for victims of abuse, homelessness, or other areas
- **Pet Food Assistance:** providing pet food for owners in need of assistance
- **Information and Awareness:** sharing timely, important information about changing legislature, volunteer opportunities, animal welfare issues, and pet care through area media and the Humane Society newsletter

### ***What is an open admission animal shelter?***

Cocheco Valley Humane Society is an open admission shelter. This means that we accept all animals regardless of adoptability and, as such, some of these animals may have to be humanely euthanized. At CVHS, all our animals have a safe and loving place to call home until they are found by the right adopter. No animal is ever euthanized because of time or space limits. We will also do anything and everything in our power to help animals who are ill or injured. Some animals, however, fail to thrive no matter what medical care we offer them and, as a result, they may have to be humanely euthanized. Other times when euthanasia would come into play are aggression to the point where an animal is unsafe to place in a home and life threatening injuries or illness.

To help provide the best care possible for the animals that come to our shelter, **Champion's Fund** was created in 2008 to help cover the cost of unexpected medical bills. Named for Champion, a German shepherd who needed surgery on a leg that never healed properly from a break, Champion's Fund helps dozens of animals each year. Some of these animals come to us from other shelters where, because of the cost of their medical needs, they are going to be euthanized. At CVHS, these animals are given the appropriate medical care and then adopted into loving homes. Champion's Fund is responsible for greatly reducing the number of animals euthanized at CVHS due to injuries that, in the past, would've been considered untreatable.

### ***Adopting an Animal at CVHS***

As part of our mission, we strive to place each animal into a home that best fits that animal's needs. To make the best match for adopters and animals, we like to start by finding out as much information as possible about the animals in our care. When an animal is surrendered to us, the former owner is asked to complete an animal profile that details the animal's personality. This information is then used to help find the best adopter.

All dogs that enter the shelter, regardless of their backgrounds, are put through a process called temperament testing prior to being put up for adoption. The tests include such things as pulling a food dish away with a fake hand, seeing how the dog responds to being left alone in a room, and learning whether the dog is shy or social when it comes to playing. The results of the tests are then used to create a personality profile about each dog that help adopters determine which dog would be the best match for them. A dog who is nervous and working on food aggression, for example, would probably not be the best match for a family with young children who might not understand the dog's boundaries.

Any dog that has not been temperament tested is considered "Staff Only". As a volunteer, you will never be working with animals that have not already been cleared for the adoption floor.

If a dog has learned any commands or will need further training from his new owner, that information is also included in their personality profiles. In addition to learning more about each animal's personality, we also want to make sure they are up-to-date on all their shots before going into a new home. Finally, every animal is spayed or neutered before leaving the shelter.

Once an animal is on the adoption floor, potential adopters are required to fill out adoption applications before they are able to handle any of the animals. Safety for the animals and the adopters is a priority and, for that reason, we cannot have anyone opening cages or handling animals without prior approval from the adoption counselors. Anyone wishing to adopt a dog is also asked for their license and car keys before they are able to take a dog outside.

If someone is ready to adopt an animal, they must complete the adoption process with an adoption counselor. Counselors will review any notes about the animal with the adopters and, if the adopters currently have animals at home, the counselors will confirm with the adopters' vets that the current animals are being kept up-to-date with their required vaccines. If a home is a good match for the animal, the adoption will be completed.

If you or anyone you know is interested in adopting an animal, please speak directly with one of our adoption counselors. Remember that CVHS does not "hold" animals for anyone. If someone else submits their application and completes the adoption process before you do, the animal will go home with them.

### ***Spaying and Neutering***

At CVHS, we spay or neuter every animal before it is adopted. For many years, we added \$50 to the adoption fee of any animal that was not fixed then refunded that \$50 when the adopters sent in a spay/neuter certificate. Because it was impossible to ensure that every animal was being fixed once they were adopted, CVHS changed its approach. As of August 2009, every animal in our shelter has been fixed before adoption. This is possible thanks to the generosity of local veterinarians who spay and neuter shelter animals at little or no cost.

### ***Transport animals***

CVHS often has more kennels than dogs. To make good use of the empty kennels, we transport dogs from overcrowded shelters to our own. These dogs, often from the south, are about to be euthanized because of time and space limits at the shelters they come from. At CVHS, these dogs are given a second chance at adoption.

## ***VOLUNTEER PROGRAM***

We are delighted to have you join our volunteer family! To help us achieve our mission, we rely on volunteers who unselfishly give of their time, and their hearts, to help animals in need. We are so glad that you have decided to donate your time to our cause, and we will do everything we can to ensure that your experience here is rewarding, productive, and educational.

At CVHS, we consider volunteers to be unpaid staff members. As such, you must adhere to all policies and regulations set forth in this handbook and the volunteer agreement. In return, we will honor your volunteer agreement by providing you with the proper training, mentoring, and support while you perform your volunteer duties.

Please read the following rules and guidelines and contact the Volunteer Coordinator if you have any questions or concerns.

From all of us at Cochecho Valley Humane Society, thank you for your contribution to the organization!

### **Getting Started**

The very first step towards becoming a volunteer is to complete a volunteer application. Applications are required for all volunteers. This includes parents supervising children less than 16 years of age and caregivers with clients. Once the Volunteer Coordinator receives your application, you will be contacted with the next available orientation date. Orientation will provide you with an overview of the CVHS volunteer program and will give you an opportunity to ask any questions you might have.

After orientation, the Volunteer Coordinator will set up a time to meet with you for a tour of the shelter. Tours last approximately 30 minutes and will give you a chance to see what happens in each of our animal care areas each day. After you have attended your tour, you are ready to get started!

In order to maintain consistent scheduling, we ask that you commit to one hour of volunteer work per week and that your shift be regular- the same time and day each week. This allows us to create a volunteer schedule that the staff can rely on- they know how many volunteers to expect for help, and they can feel confident that the volunteers are knowledgeable in their areas.

\*If you cannot commit to a regular weekly shift, please be sure to keep the Volunteer Coordinator informed of when you plan to come in each week. An email with the dates and times you'll be in is sufficient.

## Scheduling

Volunteers are needed during the following times every day of the week:

Sunday, Monday, Wednesday: 8:00am-4:00pm

Tuesday, 8:00am-5:00pm

Thursday: 8:00am-6:00pm

Friday and Saturday: 8:00am-5:00pm

## Volunteer Policies

**COMMITMENT:** We request that in-shelter volunteers to commit to a minimum of one hour a week to maintain consistency. You are expected to be in attendance for your scheduled shift each week. You must contact the Volunteer Coordinator if you cannot make your scheduled shift. If you repeatedly fail to show up to your shift without contacting the Volunteer Coordinator, it will be assumed you do not wish to volunteer anymore. If you cannot commit to the same schedule each week, please speak with the Volunteer Coordinator about setting up a flexible schedule.

If you will be taking a break from the volunteer program (e.g. school vacation) and will be returning at a later date, please let the Volunteer Coordinator know that you will be gone for an extended period of time. Any volunteer who leaves the volunteer program for a year or more is required to fill out an updated volunteer application and attend an orientation session for a refresher of CVHS's policies.

### **AGE LIMITS:**

In accordance with Federal and New Hampshire Labor Laws, volunteers ages **16 and 17** must present a signed permission slip prior to volunteering. Volunteers ages **14 and 15** may volunteer only while accompanied by a parent or other chaperone at all times. A request for child labor form must be obtained prior to volunteering. **Children under the age of 14 are not eligible to become volunteers. (No exceptions)**

### **SUPERVISING OTHER VOLUNTEERS:**

If you are volunteering as a supervisor for another volunteer, you are responsible for being with that person **at all times**. This includes parents with volunteers less than 16 years of age, teachers with students, and caregivers with clients. Supervisors must go through the application, orientation, and training process before they are able to monitor other volunteers. Supervisors are expected to perform the same tasks as the volunteers they are monitoring and are responsible for making sure the volunteers in their care are adhering to CVHS's policies.

**VOLUNTEERING FOR COMMUNITY SERVICE:**

CVHS will happily sign off on any school or work community service requirements. It is the volunteer's responsibility to keep an accurate record of completed volunteer hours and to obtain any necessary paperwork. **CVHS does not accept volunteers wishing to complete community service for court.**

**CONFIDENTIALITY:**

Volunteers may be entrusted with sensitive and confidential information while at CVHS. Information relating to CVHS employees, volunteers, customers, and donors is strictly confidential. Volunteers may not disclose or make private use of such information during their volunteer time at CVHS or any time thereafter. **It is not appropriate to relay information regarding pets that are not yet available for adoption to anyone outside of the organization.** The pet may still belong to someone, or may have to be euthanized due to illness, injury, or aggression. It is unpleasant for staff members to have to answer questions about the availability of a pet that is no longer with us. Volunteers should voice all concerns regarding the public to the Volunteer Coordinator in private. Any questions from the press or public should be directed to a staff member. **Any violation of the confidentiality policy could result in volunteer termination.**

**SAFETY:**

CVHS is vitally concerned with the safety of its volunteers. Although occasional accidents may occur, freedom from accidents is of the utmost importance to CVHS. Safety consciousness is part of a volunteer's job. CVHS has developed general health and safety rules for employees and volunteers working in the shelter. These rules have been developed in response to specific hazards in the daily operations of the shelter:

- Everyone is expected to cooperate in maintaining general cleanliness and order. Please pick up after yourself and never leave equipment or materials in front of exits, aisles, stairways, heaters, or fire protection equipment. **It is extremely important to keep the area around the heaters free from any objects- it may easily catch fire.**
- Get instructions on how to perform a task properly before you attempt to do it.
- Report all injuries, no matter how slight, to a staff member immediately. Remember- neglected small wounds can cause serious infection.
- Do not attempt to lift or push objects (or animals) that are too heavy for you. Ask for help when you need it!
- Anyone volunteering in the shelter must wear close-toed, skid-resistant shoes. **Flip flops are not acceptable footwear for volunteering in the shelter.** Anyone who is not wearing the proper footwear will be asked to leave.
- Horseplay, throwing things, and other antics that can endanger other people or animals are prohibited.

- Anyone known or observed to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol will not be allowed to volunteer. They will also be subject to immediate discipline up to, and including, dismissal.
- All volunteers must learn the location of exits and the nearest fire extinguisher.
- All signs regarding “staff only” rooms and animals must be obeyed. Anyone disregarding “staff only” signs may be dismissed from the volunteer program

**SIGN-IN PROCEDURE AND NAMETAGS:**

It is very important that volunteer hours are recorded for recognition purposes and community service requirements, as well as for grant requests. Make sure to record your hours during each volunteer shift. The volunteer sign-in book is located in the administrative building. If you will be volunteering from home or from another site, please request a volunteer time tracking sheet to record your hours. Nametags are to be kept with you, not left at the shelter. Please be sure to wear your nametag at all times so the staff and other volunteers can distinguish you from members of the general public.

**INCLEMENT WEATHER AND HOLIDAYS:**

On recognized holidays (see page 2 for a complete list), we operate on an abbreviated schedule with a skeleton crew. Any additional volunteer help is greatly appreciated. Volunteers wishing to help on holidays must already be trained members of the volunteer program. In the event of inclement weather, the shelter may close down once the animals have been taken care of for the day. Please call ahead to find out if the shelter is open before making a trip in bad weather. Do not endanger yourself to get to the shelter if the weather is bad.

**CANCELLING A SHIFT:**

If you are unable to work your scheduled shift, please contact the Volunteer Coordinator and let her know as soon as possible. You can reach the Volunteer Coordinator either by calling 603-749-5322 ex. 111 or by emailing [volunteerc@cvhsonline.org](mailto:volunteerc@cvhsonline.org). After repeated absences without alerting the Volunteer Coordinator, it will be assumed that you do not wish to volunteer anymore. If you cannot make it into the shelter for your normally scheduled shift, you are not expected to make up for lost hours.

**RESIGNATION:**

If you plan to resign from your volunteer position, please contact the Volunteer Coordinator so we may personally thank you for your time, skills, and commitment. We also want to be sure that you are not leaving due to any unresolved conflict that we may address.

**GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE:**

If you are having a problem with the specific department or program in which you are working, or with a specific staff member or volunteer, please speak to the Volunteer Coordinator in private. Differences of opinion are inevitable, but problems can usually be resolved and suggestions for improvement are always welcomed.

**VOLUNTEER TERMINATION:**

The Volunteer Coordinator has the right to deny or terminate a volunteer as a result of any circumstance in which continued service would not be in the best interest of the organization, animals, volunteer(s), or staff. Possible grounds for termination include, but are not limited to: gross misconduct or insubordination; being under the influence of drugs or alcohol; theft or misuse of CVHS equipment or materials; abuse or maltreatment of animals, staff, or other volunteers; failure to adhere to organizational policies and procedures; and behavior which is deemed to be detrimental to the overall mission or success of CVHS. Unless a situation calls for immediate dismissal, volunteers will be given every opportunity to correct any problems that might exist and will be given two warnings before being dismissed from the volunteer program. Aside from the Volunteer Coordinator, the Manager of Shelter Operations and Executive Director may also dismiss volunteers from the program.

**OFF-LIMITS AREAS:**

Certain areas and tasks are off-limits to volunteers.

- **Answering Phones or Handling Adoptions:** should a member of the public approach you while you are working with an animal, redirect them to a staff member. Volunteers should not be interacting with the public unless absolutely necessary.
- **“Staff Only” areas:** There are many areas in the shelter that are labeled as “staff only”. These areas include: the surgery room, incoming animal rooms, and isolation areas. These rooms are listed as “staff only” for the safety of our volunteers and animals.
- **Handling “Staff Only” animals:** Volunteers are not allowed to handle animals that are not available for adoption and have not been screened for health and/or temperament. Always check with a staff member before handling any animal about which you feel uncertain. New animals may not be up-to-date with their vaccines, including rabies, and may react aggressively to new people until they adjust to the shelter.
- **Assisting with dog introductions:** When adopters wish to add to the number of dogs in their home, they must first complete a dog introduction with a staff member. This allows us to see if the current dog(s) and new dog(s) will be a good match before they are homed together. Dog introductions are not always successful and, as a result, should only be handled by trained staff members who are prepared to break up a dog fight if one breaks out.
- **Dog Play Yard:** Several times a day, the staff members bring the dogs into the play yard so they can run around off leash and enjoy time with their play

groups. Because dogs can be unpredictable in a shelter environment, only staff members are allowed into the shelter play yard. Should a dog fight break out, only trained staff members should be on hand to break the fight up.

**Anyone who does not abide by these rules may be dismissed from the volunteer program.**

#### **ALCOHOL AND DRUG USE:**

Possession, sale of, distribution of, or being under the influence of illegal drugs on CVHS premises, or while on duty for CVHS, is prohibited and will result in immediate dismissal. Intoxication and/or consumption of alcohol while on duty will also result in termination.

#### **SEXUAL HARASSMENT:**

CVHS will not tolerate sexual harassment of any volunteer, employee, customer, vendor, or other person. Conduct considered to be sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that interferes with an individual's work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment. All complaints of sexual harassment should be referred immediately to a staff member who will take your report directly to the Executive Director for investigation. Confidentiality will be maintained to the highest extent possible, consistent with the need to conduct a prompt and thorough investigation of the complaint. Retaliating or discriminating against a volunteer for complaining about sexual harassment is illegal and prohibited. Any instance of sexual harassment, any act of retaliation against a volunteer for complaining about sexual harassment, or any failure to cooperate in the investigation of a sexual harassment complaint may result in termination.

#### **EUTHANASIA:**

At CVHS, we accept all dogs, cats, and small animals that need shelter regardless of their adoptability. Although **we never euthanize due to lack of space or the amount of time an animal has been at the shelter**, situations do arise when euthanasia is the best avenue for an animal. Some animals, for example, are too seriously ill to be treated and must be humanely euthanized so they do not suffer. As a volunteer, you will never be asked to be involved in this process. We do, however, consider you to be part of the CVHS family and feel that we should be honest and open with you regarding the animals and operations of the shelter. We realize that euthanasia can be stressful for volunteers. If you ever have a question about euthanasia, please ask a staff member. Again, please remember that all animals have a safe place at CVHS until they find their forever home. Humane euthanasia is a last resort for animals whose illnesses are untreatable or who are too aggressive for safe placement in a home environment.

#### **FRIENDS, FAMILY, AND PETS:**

Children, friends, and family of volunteers are **not** permitted to accompany you while you are working at the shelter unless they, too, have been through orientation and

training. This is due to health, safety, state regulations, and insurance coverage. **Volunteers are not allowed to bring pets with them while they are volunteering.**

**SMOKING:**

CVHS is a smoke-free environment. Remember that CVHS is housed in a 130-year-old structure that will not stand up against a fire. For the safety of our animals, please do not smoke anywhere near the building.

**CONDUCT:**

Volunteers are expected to conduct themselves professionally and with courtesy toward others. Volunteers are ambassadors for Cocheco Valley Humane Society and, as such, are asked to adhere to and protect our organization's mission and follow all program policies and procedures. Harassment of any kind or abusive behavior, whether verbal or physical, toward animals or people is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. We rely on everyone on our volunteer team to hold to the same standards as our staff. Volunteers are expected to respect all staff members and whatever decisions they make. Volunteers must understand that a staff member's primary concern is for the safety and well-being of the shelter animals. It is inappropriate to challenge or undermine the authority of the staff members.

**DRESS CODE:**

CVHS wishes to ensure the safety of its volunteers and provide a professional customer service experience for all the community members who interact with our organization. Volunteers who arrive at CVHS wearing inappropriate clothing may be sent home. The following appearance guidelines apply to all volunteers:

- For safety reasons, no open-toed shoes, sandals, or high-heels are allowed. For shelter work, shoes must have non-skid soles (like sneakers). This policy will be enforced. **No flip flops!**
- Clothing should be comfortable and fitted. When working in the shelter, please wear long pants. During the summer months, longer shorts are acceptable - no short shorts are allowed. Dresses and skirts are not permitted when working in the shelter. Remember that animals have nails and when jumping up to say 'hello' they may accidentally scratch you.
- Nail jewelry is not permitted.
- For all animal-handling volunteers, no long, dangly, or hoop earrings are allowed. Remember that long jewelry can easily become tangled with animals resulting in injury to both you and the animal.
- Clothing must be professional and appropriate - blouses with low necklines, spaghetti-strap tank tops, and other revealing items of clothing are not allowed. Nothing shorter than short sleeves will be permitted. Cats and rabbits tend to cling to you with their nails when being held, so you will want to have a barrier between your skin and their nails.

- CVHS is an animal welfare organization promoting the proper care of animals. For this reason, volunteers may not wear clothing or accessories with slogans that contradict our mission. For example, you may not wear anything that promotes dog fighting.

### Volunteer Opportunities

From direct animal care in the shelter to fundraisers and special events, there is a volunteer opportunity available for everyone. Every moment you spend with one of our animals makes a big difference in his or her quality of life. Together, we can make a pet's stay a comfortable and positive experience. In turn, you get the satisfaction of knowing that you are improving the quality of life for many homeless, abused, or neglected animals.

#### **In-Shelter Animal Care:**

Our shelter's daily operations require a great deal of work. In-shelter volunteering involves direct animal care (cleaning, feeding, and caring for dogs, cats, and small animals), general shelter care (washing food dishes, doing laundry, scooping poop, etc.), and animal socialization (spending time with cats, and small animals, and walking/training dogs). If in-shelter volunteering is something that interests you, be prepared to perform a variety of different tasks. This is a good way to spend time directly with the animals and make the small contributions that make their lives a little sweeter. Something as simple as talking quietly with a nervous rabbit could make the difference between them learning to trust people and hiding at the back of their cage when potential adopters come to look at them.

In-shelter volunteers may arrive as early as 8am each morning and can stay until whatever time the shelter closes for the night. Volunteers who wish to work with the animals between 8am and 11am must understand that cleaning is our number one priority. After 11am, volunteers may socialize with the animals. Although volunteers are needed throughout the day, our greatest need will always be before 11am when the staff members are trying to clean the shelter before we open.

#### **Special Events:**

On almost a weekly basis, CVHS participates in special events outside of the shelter. Some of these events are fundraisers designed by our staff members to raise money for the shelter, and some are events organized by outside parties that we attend in order to promote the shelter in our community and raise awareness for homeless animals. In either case, we depend greatly on volunteer help to run these events. Each of these events requires many people to perform various duties: selling retail items, answering questions from the public, handing out literature, etc.

CVHS organizes two major events each year. At the end of March, we hold our **Creature Comforts Dessert Tasting and Silent Auction**. This delicious event features between ten

and fifteen local dessert vendors and over 100 silent auction items. Volunteers are needed to monitor the silent auction tables, supervise dessert tables, assist with bidder registration and check out, and sell raffle tickets.

At the beginning of June, we hold our pledge walk for the animals called **Tails to Trails**. Tails to Trails includes, not only the walk for the animals, but local crafters, demonstrations, and a fun dog show. Our largest event of the year, the dog walk requires the help of nearly 75 volunteers. Volunteer jobs include helping with set up and break town, registering walkers, selling retail items and raffle tickets, and registering participants for the dog show.

In addition to these two fundraisers, CVHS also does countless other outreach events throughout the year. These events include pet photo fundraisers, offsite adoption events, a Christmas fundraiser at JC Penney in the Fox Run Mall, and participation in local festivals. In 2011, CVHS formed a partnership with **Haunted Overload**. Haunted Overload is a creepy walk through the woods on the grounds of DeMeritt Hill Farm in Lee, NH. As part of our partnership with them, CVHS will receive 10% of the attraction's profits. Staff and volunteer are encouraged to take part in the haunt either as actors or behind the scenes.

At a lot of our outreach events, we like to involve some of our animal volunteers. Drawing attention at many of our events, our **Doggie Kissing Booth** features volunteer owned dogs that range from miniature Dachshunds to Doberman Pinschers. We are always in need of kissing booth dogs. Dogs do not need to be great kissers, but must be friendly with people – especially children, who often want to give hugs and kisses.

All volunteers will receive information about upcoming events and volunteer opportunities through email updates from the Volunteer Coordinator. Since training is not required to assist with many special event volunteer jobs, this is a great opportunity for friends and family members to join you for a day of volunteering.

#### **Foster Care:**

Some of the animals we care for require more attention than we can offer them and would fare much better in a home setting rather than in a shelter. Dogs and cats that are pregnant, injured, ill, or suffering from behavioral problems require a peaceful place to rest and recover, as well as lots of personal attention. For these animals, we are pleased to be able to offer foster care in which an animal with special needs can go to the home of a foster care volunteer for a specific period of time. If you have a little extra space in your home and your heart, consider becoming a foster care volunteer and give animals with special needs the extra care and attention that will help them flourish.

To begin fostering animals, an application and training are required. Although members of the household can be of any age, the primary caregiver for the animals must be at least 21 years old. CVHS provides any necessary food, medication, bedding, toys, crates,

etc., while foster parents provide the love and attention the animals need in order to be successfully placed in a new home. Knowing that you've directly made the difference in the life of animal is what makes the foster care program so rewarding.

**Humane Education:**

The Humane Education program gives us the opportunity to teach the community about the safe and humane treatment of animals. This program involves traveling to area schools to give presentations to children of various ages, as well as leading tours at CVHS for groups of children who want to learn about the functions of a humane society. Although a majority of the work we do is with children, we do offer humane education programs for groups of any age. Previous presentations, for example, include high school animal behavior classes and retirement communities.

We encourage anyone who has experience with public speaking, or who enjoys spending time with children, to apply for this program and help reach children at as young an age as possible to spread the word about the importance of being kind to animals. Extensive training for this program is required including shadowing other humane education presenters and gradually learning to lead a program alone. Kissing booth dogs are also welcome to take part in this program so children may learn hands on how to properly greet a dog.

Run by just one volunteer for many years, our humane education program has grown enough in the past few years to require the additional help of more humane educators. Presentations typically take place on weekdays between 7am and 3pm, though night and weekend opportunities are sometimes available.

**Committees:**

Our dog walk and dessert tasting events would not be possible without the help of committee members. Committee members assist the development staff with all aspects of planning the events, including recruiting vendors, determining event logistics, soliciting donations, and advertising the event. Prior event experience is not necessary but is a great help.

**Donation Banks:**

CVHS has many donation banks at local stores and businesses. Some of these businesses include Fiddlehead Farms, Calef's Country Store, and Christmas Dove. Raising more than \$10,000 a year in spare change, the donation banks must be emptied regularly by a team of volunteers. Volunteers are responsible for specific banks and must check on those banks every 2-4 weeks. Money from donation banks should be delivered to the shelter at least once a month. If you are interested in helping collect money from donation banks, let the Volunteer Coordinator know of your interest and what town(s) you are able to pick up banks from. If you know a local business that would accept a donation bank, please talk to the Volunteer Coordinator.

### **Common Hazards at CVHS**

Because of the nature of our work, and the condition of our old building, there are some specific physical hazards that you should keep in mind. The following are precautions to be taken by volunteers to prevent injury:

- When being walked, all dogs must wear properly fitted collars so the handler can maintain control at all times
- Dog walkers must wear appropriate shoes with traction to avoid slipping and being dragged
- Animals over 40 lbs should not be lifted without assistance
- In the event of a dog fight, volunteers shall not use their bodies or limbs to break up a fight, but shall seek assistance from a staff member
- If bitten by an animal, volunteers must report the incident immediately to a staff member
- Large and/or exotic animals shall be handled only by animal care staff members
- It is possible to transmit diseases or parasites from shelter animals to your pets at home. After volunteering in the shelter, change your clothes and wash your hands before greeting your pets.
- CVHS maintains a stocked first aid kit in the shelter lobby, in the conference room, and in the treatment room

### **Helping Animals Adjust to Life at the Shelter**

Although volunteering at an animal shelter is a rewarding experience for both volunteers and animals, adjusting to shelter life can be difficult and very stressful for the dogs, cats, and small animals that are under our care. There are many things that volunteers can do (or avoid doing) to make their stays more comfortable.

Although it may be your first instinct to comfort and console an animal that is staying at the shelter, it is equally important to understand that many animals would prefer to be left alone when adjusting to a new and unfamiliar environment. It is especially important to be sensitive to animals that have only been in the shelter for a few hours or days. Please do not let your feelings of compassion override caution as you might put both yourself and the animal at risk.

Animals love routine and habit, so changes in their routine can make them very anxious, fearful, and/or aggressive. Coming to live temporarily in a shelter is a major life change that can be completely overwhelming for an animal. Everyone they meet is a stranger, the shelter is noisy and stressful, and they no longer have the comfort of their owners. All of these changes can feel very threatening. Frequently, dogs, cats, and small animals will retreat to the farthest corners of their kennels or cages, which is perfectly normal.

When an animal feels threatened and chooses to hide or retreat, that is a sign that the animal is not in the mood for company or socialization. No matter how good your intentions, trying to reach out to the animal can feel like a confrontation. Any animal, regardless of size or appearance, can bite. Reaching your hand toward an animal that has no place to go can cause the animal to enter the “fight or flight” state of mind. Since there is no place for the animal to fly to, the only option left to them is to fight.

**Please remember that if an animal bites, for any reason, its ability to be placed in a new home is severely compromised.** In some cases, the law may require that the animal be euthanized, even if the bite occurred because of a mistake that a person made. For the sake of the animals, and your own safety, please don't attempt to force an animal to socialize with you.

The following guidelines are designed to help you better understand how to communicate with the animals and reduce the stress they may be feeling:

- Avoid direct eye contact with dogs. To animals, direct eye contact can mean that you want a confrontation. Avert your eyes toward the floor, lower your head slightly, and speak softly.
- Approach kennels and cages slowly - do not walk directly up to an animal at a fast pace. If you approach slowly, the dog or cat will be less afraid that you want to compete with them for power and they will feel less threatened by you
- Do not stick your fingers through the gates of kennels. Instead, place your flat palm on the gate and allow the dog or cat to sniff you.
- Always speak softly to shelter animals. Raised voices heighten excitement and tension that was probably high already.
- Use caution when handling cats, and always release the cat if it begins to squirm or scratch. Many serious bites and scratches occur because a person tried to hold onto a cat that no longer wanted to be touched. Remember, you may be the tenth person to handle the cat that day and he/she may have had enough.
- Remember that we are all here to do what is best for the animals. Please do not operate under the belief “I don't care if I get scratched or bit” as this is not in the animals' best interest. If an animal injures anyone – for any reason – it must be removed from the adoption floor for re-evaluation. Any time off the adoption floor adds to the time an animal stays at the shelter waiting for its forever home.
- Respect signs that say “Staff Only”, “Will Bite”, or “Do Not Handle”. We never put those signs up without a reason and, should you ignore them and get bitten, the animal's chance of adopt is severely reduced.

### General Contact Information

Cocheco Valley Humane Society  
262 County Farm Road  
Dover, NH 03820

(603) 749-5322 – Main Shelter Line

(603) 749-3484 - Fax  
[www.cvhsonline.org](http://www.cvhsonline.org)

To contact the Volunteer Coordinator's office:  
(603) 749-5322 ex. 111  
Email: [volunteerc@cvhsonline.org](mailto:volunteerc@cvhsonline.org)