

## LA Animal Shelter Volunteer Program

Friends Of The Shelter (FOS):



Serves the wider Northern New Mexico area by providing services in and beyond Los Alamos County. Our services include free spay/neuter programs, emergency veterinary funds for low income families, behavior modifications services, and fundraising. A lot of this stuff can be done without even seeing the animals, which is great for animal lovers with allergies!

- *Help organize a fundraiser:* we have two main fund raisers every year, the Dog Jog and annual calendar sales. We need lots of volunteers to make these events go right, even just on the day of. If you want to spend more time though, help us organize the event, make flyers, distribute flyers, recruit sponsors, design the T-shirts, keep track of registrants, design calendar pages...the list goes on and on!
- *Help us administer the emergency vet money:* process applications for funding, call vets, send checks, follow up on the animal's health.
- *Spay Day USA:* Help us distribute free vouchers for spay/neuter to pet owners around Northern New Mexico. Last year, fifty non-shelter animals were removed from the breeding pool this way. We're on the way to no more unwanted litters!
- *New volunteers:* help with orientation at the shelter, recruit volunteers from your neighborhood, church, school, etc.
- Help us think of new ways to raise money
- *Thanks-yous:* Help us write thank-you cards to our generous donors who make our organization possible.
- *Community Outreach:* Speak with church groups, schools, and children's organizations about animals -- help kids learn how to avoid hurting or getting hurt by animals, instill the importance of spay/neuter in your local groups, help us fight cruelty in our county through awareness.
- If you're an animal expert, help confused owners learn how to modify their pets behavior- this saves lots of animals from being taken to the animals shelter when they become obnoxious.

There are so many ways to help, with time commitments ranging from 15 minutes a week, to one day a year, to a day week and round the clock foster care! Whatever time you have brings us closer to our goals: no more homeless pets! Children over 16 are welcome to volunteer, as are younger children with parental supervision -- it's a great way to involve your family in the rewarding activity of volunteer work!



### Animal Shelter Volunteer Opportunities

The Volunteer Shelter Program (VSP) is a group of volunteers dedicated to improving the quality of life of the animals at the Los Alamos county Animal Shelter, and to making sure that those animals find good homes. The Volunteer Shelter Program is run in conjunction with the Los Alamos Friends of the Shelter (FOS), which is a Los Alamos-based non-profit organization whose focus is improving the lives of hurt and homeless animals throughout Northern New Mexico. Many, but not all, of the volunteers in FOS are a part of VSP. Both organizations are all-volunteer and are in great need of new volunteers. As a result of these organizations working together, the Los Alamos Animal Shelter has not euthanized any healthy, adoptable animals in the last seven years - a remarkable accomplishment for a county institution.

### Volunteer Shelter Program (VSP):

Serves the county animal shelter. Duties for volunteers with VSP are mainly, but not completely, on work with the animals at the shelter. There are two main groups of volunteers, one group for dogs and the other for cats, but this is mainly due to our volunteers' personal preferences and cross-over is encouraged! Volunteer activities include:

- *Kitty Brigade*: pick an evening every week to go by the shelter and make sure that the cats have food, water, and are generally in good health
- *Dog Brigade*: same as the Kitty Brigade, but check the dogs
- *Socialization*: all of our animals need love and attention at this scary time in their lives when they find themselves homeless. Some of these animals have not been around people much before, or have been mistreated, and need to learn to trust people again. Besides, it's been shown that petting animals lowers blood pressure!
- *Exercise*: Take a cat into our exercise pens and play a bit, or walk a dog. It's good for you and them!
- *Training*: Teach a dog how to sit, stay and lay down. You would not believe what difference this makes when people come to look for adoptable pets!
- *Bathing and grooming*: Clean animals are much more appealing to potential adopters -- you can help an animal find a home by finding the beautiful pet under the mud and matted fur.
- *Fostering*: take a dog or cat home with you until they find a home! Fostering is vital for animals with health needs (like diabetics), for young puppies and kittens who need feeding more than once a day, or for very shy animals who need to learn to trust people before they can be adopted out, or just to help reduce crowding at the shelter. Foster homes save lives!
- *Screen potential adopters*: Take phone calls at home about particular animals that are advertised in the paper -- this will let potential adopters decide whether the animal is right for them.
- *Transportation*: Drive animals to new homes, or to the vet for appointments, or just be on call for emergency transportation to the 24-hour vet clinic. Occasionally, we take puppies to a sanctuary in Colorado, where they always find good homes -- you can save many lives this way!
- *Temperament Testing*: go through a process with us to determine which animals are good for busy homes, homes with children, homes with other animals, etc.
- *Office Stuff*: Just answer the phone at the shelter for an hour when animal control can't be there - just telling people when we're open or whether we have puppies available can make a big difference. Help a person determine if their lost pet is at the shelter! Prepare the weekly shelter report that goes to LA Monitor -- this is a great way to advertise the animals we have for adoption. Make some posters to post around town showing the faces of adoptable animals. The library is an especially great place for posters -- we adopt a lot of animals this way!
- *Cleaning*: If you love housework, we have plenty! Sweep the floor, do some laundry, sanitize a kennel for the next occupant -- this keeps our animals clean and reduces the risk of disease.



## **Welcome to the LA Volunteer Shelter Program**

Thank you for your interest in the animals at the Los Alamos Animal Shelter. The volunteers take great pride in the work and dedication that we give the local shelter animals. We welcome new volunteers who share our same enthusiasm and desire to better the lives of the homeless animals in our community. Our mission is simple – to ensure the health, safety, and emotional well being of the animals while they are at the Shelter and to use our resources to find them new, permanent “forever homes”. Below you will find out about the various volunteering activities that we have, along with descriptions of a couple of specific areas where we need



*“The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated.”* Gandhi

**Contact Erica  
at 661-9060  
or Wendee  
at 662-3252  
for more information**

help.

Finally, you will find a set of our Shelter Rules – a handy list anytime you visit with our resident animals.



## **Volunteer Activities**

There is a wealth of things to do as a volunteer for the LA Animal Shelter. The level of involvement is left completely up to you and we welcome any level you are willing to give. You may be interested in coming by the shelter when you have time and visiting with the animals or only wish to be on our email list to stay abreast of shelter activities and issues. You might also want to be more involved and join one of our organized activities. If you'd like to be a casual volunteer and come in when you feel like it, it's very easy to do. Just be sure that when you arrive at the Shelter you sign a volunteer waiver prior to working with the shelter animals. All shelter employees and most volunteers can get this form for you, so just ask!

**Thank you for your interest!**



### Dog Brigade Committee

Volunteers sign up to go to the shelter and do the following:

- ♣ Check that each dog has a clean kennel and bedding
- ♣ Check that kennel dividers are open
- ♣ Check that each dog has water
- ♣ Check each dog's chart for any medicines that may need to be given
- ♣ Check that each dog appears healthy
- ♣ Take housebroken dogs out for a short break

Time commitment for weekly visits is entirely up to the volunteer anywhere from 10 minutes to 2 hours.

**The main goal of this team is to ensure that the daily needs of each dog have been met every day of the week.**

### LA Animal Shelter Rules

- Do not handle any animal with a "Quarantine" sign on the kennel.
  - New volunteers are strongly encouraged to coordinate their first visit with an experienced volunteer.
  - Children under 16 must be accompanied by an adult at all times. This should generally be a parent; volunteers are not expected to supervise children.
  - Read the information sheets on each animal before trying to handle it. Follow any specific directions for handling.
  - Remember that all these animals are stressed. If you see any signs of extreme fear or aggression, return the animal to the kennel immediately.
- Any time you can spend with any of the animals will make them more social, more confident, and more adoptable. We encourage anyone who works with a animal to write some comments on the volunteer comment sheets on the clipboards on each animal's kennel. This also helps other volunteers know that the animals have been handled regularly and not overlooked. Use the white boards for more general information such as which dogs are housebroken or if they need any medications.



### Adoption Committee

- ◆ Volunteers promote adoptions by doing one more of the following:
- ◆ Take animals to mobile adoptions scheduled about once per month
- ◆ Screen calls from potential adopters responding to classified ads
- ◆ Prepare and post flyers describing an animal available for adoption
- ◆ Foster animals to make sure that they get the attention, training, and medical care that they need
- ◆ Transport animals to new homes in New Mexico
- ◆ Transport animals to no-kill shelters in Colorado or Arizona

**The main goal of this team is to spread the word about wonderful animals looking for just the right home.**

## Thanks again for your interest!

Visit our website at [www.friendsoftheshelter.petfinder.org](http://www.friendsoftheshelter.petfinder.org)





# Welcome to the LA Animal Shelter Cat Room



## Volunteer Contacts

**General Volunteering:**  
Sally Wilkins – 662-2773  
sfwilkins@post.harvard.edu

**Cat Brigade Volunteer**  
**Coordinator:**  
Mary Timmers  
[mtimmers@hubwest.com](mailto:mtimmers@hubwest.com)  
672-9276 (H)  
667-9198 (W)  
470-6973 (C)

*"The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated."*

Gandhi

## Thank you for your interest!

Thank you for your interest in the animals at the Los Alamos Animal Shelter. The volunteers take great pride in the work and dedication that we give the local shelter animals. We welcome new volunteers who share our same enthusiasm and desire to better the lives of the homeless animals in our community. Our mission is simple—to ensure the health, safety, and emotional well-being of the animals while they are at the Shelter and to use our resources to find them new, permanent "forever homes".

Information about the various volunteering activities that we have and a set of our Cat Room Rules—a handy list for any time you visit with our resident felines—are given below.



## Volunteer Activities

There is a wealth of things to do as a volunteer for the LA Shelter Cat Room. Your level of involvement is completely up to you and we welcome any level you are willing to give. You may be interested in coming by the shelter when you have time and visiting with the cats and kittens or only wish to be on our email list to stay abreast of our cat room issues. You might want to be more involved and commit to



stopping by the shelter one day a week for a while, or finally, you might want to do a combination of these things. We hope the descriptions below will help you determine how you can help out the shelter felines and do it in a way that best suits you!

## General Volunteering

If you'd like to be a casual volunteer and come in when you feel like it, it's very easy to do. Just be sure that when you arrive at the Shelter you sign a volunteer waiver prior to working in the cat room. All shelter employees and most volunteers can get this form for you, so just ask!

You can also sign up to be on the Cat Room's email list by going to the following web site: <http://colab.org/mailman/listinfo/foscb>.



Finally, before heading into the Cat Room, make sure you've read and understand the Cat Room Rules before handling our resident felines.



## Cat Brigade Overview

The Cat Brigade came to life after several of the regular volunteers decided that, because of the irregular shelter hours and staffing at the Animal Shelter, we needed to have a “cat person” who would come by each day of the week and check on the resident cats to make sure that they were taken care of.

We have been fortunate to have a strong set of volunteers who have been willing to commit to spending time with the cats.

Since the Cat Brigade came into being, the Shelter staff has increased and there is a kennel worker in addition to the Animal Control officers, so most of the time, the basics like daily cleaning and feeding are

taken care of. When this worker is on vacation, the volunteers try to make sure that someone stops by daily to ensure that cleaning and feeding are taken care of that day—sometimes the officers are so busy with calls and the like that it’s hard for them to accomplish everything, so the Cat Brigade tries to arrange for a volunteer to stop by the shelter every day to check on things and help where. On their scheduled day, the Cat Brigade member does the following:

- Checks that each cat has a clean kennel and bedding
- Checks that each cat has food and water
- Checks each cat's chart or the medication chart in the office for any medicines that

may need to be administered

- Checks out the overall state of the cat and contacts either Mary Timmers (contact info is on the first page) or a shelter worker if one of the cats looks in need of medical attention

Additionally, although it is not required (but it IS the most fun!), most of the volunteers spend a good deal of time with each cat, giving them attention, grooming, and generally giving them basic socialization.

The time commitment for each weekly visit is entirely up to the volunteer. This can be anywhere from 10 minutes to 2 hours—whatever you have to give.



One other important function of the Cat Brigade is to maximize adoptions.

We do this in several ways. One way is to place ads in Los Alamos, Santa Fe, and even occasionally Albuquerque newspapers. Volunteers, especially those who know the cats, help to screen calls from potential adopters or help with transport to their new homes.

We also hold “mobile adoptions” to bring our cats to special events, like the Los Alamos craft fairs, or to public places in Los Alamos—in front of stores and the like—to get them more visible to the public. We always need volunteers to help transport the cats to these events, staff the tables, assist adoptions, and transport the cats and equipment back to the shelter.

Mobile adoptions are a great way for the volunteers to meet each other too!



## Cat Socialization

These important activities focus on the socialization, handling, assessment, and evaluation of cats' behavior and personalities. Most if not all of the Cat Brigade look at and evaluate these aspects of the cats at the same time that they are making sure the kennel conditions are good. Other volunteers are not able to schedule their time as rigidly, and come as time permits. Both approaches are great!

At any given time, some cats need extra socialization and some of the cats may be intimidating to people not used to more aggressive

cats. Unfortunately, many times, the cats at the shelter appear to be aggressive when they are actually scared and not used to the environment. We strongly encourage Cat Brigade volunteers to do only what they feel comfortable with and not feel that they have to handle cats they are uncomfortable with.

Any time you can spend with any of the cats is a real bonus. It's also perfectly fine if you discover that you have some favorites among the cats and want to spend more time with them.



### Cat Socialization (continued)

We strongly encourage anyone who works with a cat, either briefly or for longer times, to write some comments on the volunteer comment sheets on the clipboards on each cat's kennel or in the "pass-on book" on the front counter. You may feel that you are just repeating what others have said, but, in fact, the pattern of comments from several different people is as valuable as any particular note by itself. This also helps other volunteers know that the cats have been handled regularly and not overlooked.

The white board in the cat room with its list of cats is a very brief summary and mainly indicates if a cat has had a turn in the exercise pen, but doesn't give any information about personality or behavior.

Another activity that we have started trying to do more regularly is to write up a poster-like description of each cat to display on the kennel door. Sally Wilkins can use these for her shelter animal notebook at the front desk as well. This type of description really makes it easier for the Animal Control officers to help potential adopters, since they actually have relatively little regular interaction with the cats. We welcome any input or assistance in writing up these descriptions, and we often rely on our own experiences as well as the comments from other volunteers in writing these descriptions.

### Cat Room Rules

- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap before and after handling each animal—**this is very important!**
- New volunteers are strongly encouraged to coordinate their first visit with an experienced volunteer or to arrange an orientation session.
- Children under 18 must be accompanied by an adult at all times. This should generally be a parent; volunteers are not expected to supervise children.
- Read the information sheets on each cat before trying to handle it. Follow specific directions for handling.
- Remember that all these cats are stressed. Pay attention to what you are doing and to what body language the cat is signaling with. Don't assume that these cats will behave like your pet at home!
- If a cat wants to get down or away from you, let it. Do not try to restrain a struggling cat in your arms as you are likely to get scratched or bitten that way.
- Put only one cat at a time in an exercise area to minimize the possibilities of fights and transmitting disease. The only exceptions to this are cats that are already sharing a cage.



**Thanks again for your interest!**



