Angels of Assisi
Volunteer Handbook
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Angels of Assisi Volunteer Experience

Angels of Assisi wants you to have an enjoyable, safe, fulfilling, and rewarding volunteer experience that also helps the homeless animals of the Roanoke Valley. With that in mind, the following volunteer policies have been adopted to ensure that the volunteer experience is of mutual benefit to all involved — staff, animals, the community, other volunteers, and you.

About the Handbook

This handbook summarizes many of the policies and procedures of the Volunteer Program of Angels of Assisi. The Volunteer Coordinator is responsible for administering all policies described in the handbook and can provide further information or clarification upon request.

The Executive Director, Volunteer Coordinator, Angels of Assisi Staff, or their designees reserve the right to modify, rescind, delete, or add to the provisions of this handbook at any time. We will strive to provide you with notification of any changes in a timely manner.

Nothing in this handbook creates a contractual relationship or employee relationship between the volunteer and Angels of Assisi.

Angels of Assisi Mission and Goals

We are a private nonprofit organization based out of a no-kill, limited-admission animal shelter and low cost veterinary clinic in Roanoke, Virginia. Our greatest source of funding is revenue from clinic services as well as personal and corporate donations.

With community support, accomplishments to date include:

- 90,000 low cost spay and neuter surgeries
- 12,500 low cost wellness visits
- 4,500 feral cat sterilizations
- 9,800 adoptions
- 1,200 animals rescued from puppy mills, animal control seizures, and hoarding cases

Mission

To bring about a time when there are No More Homeless Pets. We do this by demonstrating and promoting exemplary animal care and building community programs and partnerships.

Our mission is to two-fold - to increase awareness that companion and farm animals are not objects for human use but are living, sentient creatures deserving respect and kindness. Angels of Assisi is also dedicated to providing much needed services to pet owners to make caring for their pets easier and lasting relationships are formed.
Goals

1. Expand our ability to reach people everywhere with our message.
2. Develop and implement world-class standards for animal care.
3. Create a positive, inclusive working environment.
4. Build a great organization and infrastructure to support our mission.
5. Accelerate our efforts to make Roanoke a no-kill community.
6. Inspire positive action on behalf of animals.

Our Staff Commitment to You

The paid staff members of Angels of Assisi value your contributions and service to our mission. We want your experience with us to be positive and fulfilling. So, we strive to:

1. Provide adequate information, training and assistance for you to be successful in meeting the responsibilities of your position.
2. Provide guidance, goals and feedback to you.
3. Respect your skills, dignity and individual needs.
4. Be open-minded and receptive to your comments and suggestions.
5. Treat you as a valued team member along with staff, jointly responsible for accomplishing our mission and goals.

Overview of Volunteer Positions

Adoption Ambassador
Assist adoption specialists and show the public the available animals and assist them with the adoption process. This is a rewarding way to help our pets find their forever homes.

Dog Walkers
This is the perfect opportunity for hikers, walkers, and runners to take a shelter dog with you while you enjoy the outdoors. Volunteers who have been through the dog walking orientation are able to take a shelter dog off-site to spend time away from the shelter. Stop by and walk a dog on your lunch break! Dog walking orientations are one on one with our dog trainer. Email Bobbie to get one set up, bwiggins@angelsofassisi.org
Kennel Assistant
Assist the kennel staff with cleaning of cages/kennels and general cleaning of the shelter as needed. Help with this is needed every day beginning at 9AM.

Events
Help with off-site or on-site events, fundraising, or community outreach. Volunteer can help distribute information at a table, take a cat or dog to an adoption event, or help set up and tear down.

Pets for Life
Pets for Life is our community outreach program where we target low income neighborhoods that have little to no access to vet care. Teams of staff and volunteers will canvass the neighborhood weekly with different pet products and assistance, as well as events such as rabies or microchip clinics.

Photographer
Pet photographers help to keep our website up to date with all of the pets we have available for adoption. Help get the animals more exposure and into their adoptive home sooner!

Have another way you’d like to help? Let us know!

Youth as Angels of Assisi Volunteers
Angels of Assisi welcomes the participation of willing minors in some of our volunteer positions. Volunteers under the age of 16 must be accompanied by an adult 18 or older. Volunteers must be 18 or older to walk dogs off-site.

Your Volunteer Commitment
There are no weekly or monthly time requirements to volunteer at Angels of Assisi.
Most opportunities (except Adoption Ambassadors and Events) do not require advance notice to volunteer.

As an Angels of Assisi volunteer, you commit to the following:

Communication
• Follow general “netiquette” (polite communication via email, Internet, Facebook, etc.) guidelines. If you receive an email that you feel is inappropriate and you believe you have received it in conjunction with your involvement with Angels of Assisi, please forward the email and other details about the communication to your staff supervisor.

• Use common sense when communicating with anyone online. A good rule of thumb is to avoid revealing anything about yourself online that you would not feel comfortable revealing to a stranger you met on the street (e.g., do not use last names when identifying people in photographs).
Constructively share ideas, concerns and suggestions with Angels of Assisi paid staff, when appropriate, to help increase the effectiveness of the program.

Accept constructive feedback on your performance. In the event of unsatisfactory performance or poor attendance, Angels of Assisi has the right to dismiss volunteers. The Volunteer Coordinator or their designees can terminate this relationship at will.

Adhere to our Confidentiality and Nondisclosure Policy (see page 9).

Your Service Assignments

Stay within the parameters of your volunteer position(s).

Understand that all content developed by any volunteer as an Angels of Assisi volunteer is the property of Angels of Assisi. This includes, but is not limited to, all graphics, Web pages, narratives, research, compilations, instructional texts, text, photos, videos, writings, computer programs, spreadsheets, summaries, and recordings. It also includes any royalties, proceeds, or other benefits derived from these materials. Volunteers will receive appropriate credit for their submissions.

Grant Angels of Assisi rights in all photographic images, video, and audio recordings of you made during the course of your assignment.

Follow the dress code outlined by the Volunteer Coordinator or their designee when representing Angels of Assisi at functions, meetings, and events.

Return all Angels of Assisi property when your volunteer service with us ends.

Expenses and Insurance

Cover all your own expenses associated with volunteering for Angels of Assisi. In certain instances some expenses will be reimbursed, but you must receive approval in writing (i.e., email) from your staff supervisor or volunteer coordinator before Angels of Assisi will reimburse you for any expense.

Carry your own insurance coverage - Angels of Assisi does not carry health, medical, liability, automobile, worker’s compensation, or disability insurance coverage for any volunteer.
Volunteer Benefits

We want you to know how much we value your contributions to the organization. Depending on where you decide to volunteer your time and talents, you may:

- Receive formal and informal recognition from Angels of Assisi paid staff.
- Be provided with opportunities to move into leadership volunteer roles as appropriate.
- Receive special invitations to events and conferences sponsored by Angels of Assisi.

Your mileage costs and other expenses relating to your volunteer work may be tax-deductible. Please consult with your tax professional for more information.

Representing Angels of Assisi

As a volunteer for Angels of Assisi, what you say and do reflects on Angels of Assisi as a whole. We know volunteers may have a variety of beliefs and values when it comes to animal welfare issues, and we accept this diversity of thought.

Angels of Assisi has set its own official policies regarding animal welfare issues. If Angels of Assisi takes a stand on an issue, volunteers are expected to support that view while acting as an Angles of Assisi volunteer.

If there is an issue on which Angels of Assisi has not taken a position, volunteers are expected to remain neutral on the matter while representing Angels of Assisi. Any personal comments should be clearly identified as personal comments that don’t reflect the views of Angels of Assisi.

Volunteers may contact organizations or individuals on behalf of Angels of Assisi, as appropriate to your volunteer position. Volunteers must not obligate Angels of Assisi to any action or financial commitment or sign any contracts on behalf of Angels of Assisi.

Volunteers are authorized to act as representatives of Angels of Assisi only to the extent authorized in their position descriptions.

Media Contact

Media relations are complicated, even for those trained in this area. Therefore, Angels of Assisi volunteers are not authorized to speak for Angels of Assisi with the media without prior permission from their direct supervisor. Send all media inquiries immediately to your supervisor. Note that media inquiries are extremely time-sensitive and should be acted upon as soon as they come in.
Standards of Conduct and Customer Service

We uphold the highest standards of conduct and service when representing Angels of Assisi. As a volunteer, you will be held accountable to these standards. Of course, no written standards can ever take the place of good judgment and common sense.

Be Professional. All volunteers are expected to present an image that is both professional and appropriate to their working conditions. Remember, you represent Angels of Assisi and the first impression you create may be a lasting one.

- Volunteers must be clean and well-groomed. Hair must be clean and neatly groomed.
- Logo wear is encouraged to be worn and must be visible at all times when representing Angels of Assisi in public.
- Eating, drinking, and gum-chewing are not recommended at event booths when visitors are present. No volunteer should ever smoke, drink alcohol, or use drugs when representing Angels of Assisi in public.
- Booth/exhibit areas must be kept neat and free of debris. Literature should be displayed neatly and be easily accessible.

Be Responsible. Service begins and ends with individuals. While you cannot control what others do, you can guarantee the quality of your own individual contacts. Each individual can potentially make or break the chain of great service. Responsibility is the key to this process.

- Provide accurate and timely information.
- Ask for help from paid staff when you need it.

Be Positive. Approaching your assignment with enthusiasm and dedication will carry across to members, potential members, and staff. A positive attitude is contagious.

- Raise concerns and share ideas in a positive fashion; focus on solutions, not problems.
- Respond positively to complaints; never argue with anyone or dismiss their point of view.
- Offer additional services and information; add value to each interaction.

Be Friendly, Courteous and Helpful. Common courtesy goes a long way toward making a positive impression on our current and potential members.

- Smile when someone approaches you at an event or function.
- Say “please” and “thank you” and use the person’s name whenever possible.
- Practice active listening: Give your undivided attention to the person you are speaking with.
- Treat each person with kindness, and as an individual.
- Don’t use slang and technical jargon or terms that the other person may not understand.
Be Knowledgeable. To fulfill our mission, it is crucial that we keep up-to-date with what’s happening at Angels of Assisi. The public sees you as someone who represents Angels of Assisi, and they expect prompt, courteous, and accurate responses to their questions and concerns, regardless of your individual specialty or field of knowledge.

- Stay up-to-date on Angels of Assisi programs and services.
- If you don’t know the answer to a question, be responsible for finding the answer. Ask your staff supervisor and find out the answer for future reference.

Guidelines for Networking

Angels of Assisi’s reputation must be protected if we are to continue to help others promote animal welfare. So, in your dealings with the public, it’s better to be overly cautious than to accidentally cause damage. If someone asks you a question about Angels of Assisi and you’re not absolutely sure of the answer, or you feel your response might be misunderstood, pass on the inquiry to your staff supervisor. The animal welfare field contains some complex issues, and it’s better to be safe than sorry.

Here are some additional tips:

- All inquiries from the media must be forwarded to your supervisor. Most staff is not allowed to speak on behalf of Angels of Assisi to the media.

- When speaking about an Angels of Assisi event, program or service, give out only the information that you are sure of. It’s OK not to know all the answers. If the person asking the question wants more detailed information, refer him/her to the Volunteer Coordinator or other Angels of Assisi staff person.

Requests for Animal Help

As an Angels of Assisi representative, you may be asked by people in your community for help with specific animal situations. Here are some ways to handle these requests:

- Individuals wishing to surrender animals can visit our website, www.angelsofassisi.org, and fill out a surrender request form. When a cage or kennel is available, Angels of Assisi paid staff will contact the person to bring their animal. Requests for surrender cannot be handled over the phone.

- If the person has witnessed animal abuse or neglect, tell him/her to report it to local authorities — the local police or animal control department. Encourage people to report the abuse not only to help the animal in distress but also to make local officials aware of the severity of the problem.

- If you anticipate that the situation will become very public or you are contacted by the media or a high-ranking official, notify Angels of Assisi staff to get further instructions.
Confidentiality and Nondisclosure Policy

Volunteers are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all proprietary or privileged information of Angels of Assisi to which they are exposed while serving as volunteers. Failure to maintain confidentiality will result in termination of the volunteer’s relationship with Angels of Assisi.

The volunteer agrees and understands that any breach of this confidentiality clause will cause Angels of Assisi immediate and irreparable harm. Volunteers agree that Angels of Assisi is entitled to injunctive relief or a preliminary injunction if this confidentiality clause is breached. The volunteer agrees that Angels of Assisi does not need to post a bond if Angels of Assisi asks a court for a temporary injunction or interlocutory injunctive relief.

Sexual Harassment Policy

Angels of Assisi is committed to providing a work environment that is free from harassment and unlawful discrimination. In accordance with all federal, state and local laws, Angels of Assisi expressly prohibits discrimination or harassment based on race, color, religion, creed, gender, pregnancy, age, national origin, ancestry, physical or mental disability or handicap, citizenship, marital status, sexual orientation, military or veteran’s status, or any other protected classification.

Angles of Assisi expressly forbids and will not tolerate any actions (e.g., words, jokes, comments, or gestures) that unreasonably interfere with a person’s work performance or create an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment.

Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature where:

- Submission to such conduct is made a term or condition of volunteering, either explicitly or implicitly.
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct has the purpose or effect of creating an offensive, hostile, or intimidating work environment

Anyone engaging in sexual or other unlawful harassment will be subject to corrective action, up to and including termination of volunteer service or employment.

If you believe you are the victim of harassment or have witnessed harassment of any kind, immediately notify the Volunteer Coordinator.

Angels of Assisi will not tolerate any retaliation, harassment, or intimidation of any employee or volunteer who makes a complaint under this policy or who assists in a complaint investigation. Any retaliation, harassment, or intimidation will result in corrective action, up to and including termination of volunteer service or employment.

Investigation of reports of harassment will be conducted in cooperation with the Executive Director. These investigations will be kept as confidential as is practical. Following the investigation, the volunteer who filed the complaint will be informed of the findings and the action taken. If, as a result of the investigation, Angels of
Assisi determines that an employee or volunteer has engaged in harassment or illegal discrimination in violation of this policy, Angels of Assisi will take appropriate corrective measures. Such action may range from counseling to immediate termination or possible legal action.

**Transporting Animals on Behalf of Angels of Assisi**

Some volunteers agree to be available to transport animals on behalf of Angels of Assisi. (These volunteers are generally assigned the task by an Angels of Assisi staff member associated with a project or initiative.) If you plan to volunteer for this task, you must provide proof of your current driver’s license and automobile liability insurance to the volunteer manager. This is usually done by submitting a copy of your driver’s license and automobile insurance card. Angels of Assisi does not provide any liability insurance for animal transporters, nor can we reimburse for gas or mileage.

When transporting a rescued animal, please do not bring your personal animals with you, since you can’t be sure how the animals will respond to each other. Also, the animal you are transporting may have an illness or other medical condition.

On occasion, we will pass along requests from other rescue groups for assistance with a transport. If you are available, please understand that, in taking the assignment, you are volunteering for the requesting rescue group and not Angels of Assisi. You will then be subject to their policies and procedures.

**Potential Causes for Dismissal from Volunteer Service**

There are several reasons that may be cause for dismissal from volunteer service:

- Animal neglect or abuse
- Breaking of confidentiality
- Failure to adhere to policies or follow procedures
- Inappropriate drug or alcohol use
- Inappropriate or unprofessional conduct
- Lack of teamwork when required
- Misrepresentation of Angels of Assisi
- Theft
- Violence or implication of violation
- Other issues, as identified by Angels of Assisi staff

**Contact**

If you have any questions, please contact the Volunteer Coordinator, John Nicholson.

Email: jnicholson@angelsofassisi.org
Phone: 540.344.8707 ext. 2 (please allow 24-48 hours for a return call)