



*Humane Society*  
of Manatee County

Compassion. Commitment. Community.

# Volunteer Handbook

Volunteers make everything we do possible.  
Let us know your interests and availability, and we'll find  
a volunteer position that is right for you.



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# Welcome to HSMC

As a volunteer for the Humane Society of Manatee County (HSMC), you have officially become a part of a community force. You will be working alongside other caring community members, as well as our dedicated and professional staff. As a volunteer, you play a key role in providing care and compassion for our animals during their stay at HSMC.

Being a volunteer is extremely rewarding, educational and fun. You can have a significant positive impact on the lives of homeless animals. Walking a dog, cuddling a cat, giving a blanket or simply a pat on the head will touch your heart and bring you back for more.

As a result of the volunteer program, dogs get walked regularly and cats are more socialized. Animals get placed in foster homes when they are too young to adopt, need to recuperate from injury or illness or just need a little more socialization. Most importantly, because of volunteers, many dogs' and cats' lives are saved. The HSMC's adoption shelter was created for the animals.

Thank you for giving us your time and for giving the animals your attention! While each of you may have different reasons for wanting to volunteer, all of you choose to volunteer at HSMC because:

- ❁ Your desire to care for the cats and dogs desperately needing positive human interaction
- ❁ Your wish to help find homes for animals that deserve a second chance
- ❁ You want to be a part of making our community more responsible for all animals
- ❁ You want to help save lives

Our goal is to continually expand community outreach programs and place more animals into loving homes. Our organization is proud to provide programs and services to Manatee County. Our many accomplishments could not have been achieved without the hard work and dedication of volunteers like you.

Your support as a volunteer is extremely important. This handbook has been prepared for you as a reference guide. It contains information regarding our policies & procedures, tools for dealing with the public and how to safely handle shelter animals. Please take the time to read this guidebook, the information provided will assist you in your partnership with the HSMC. Our staff members are always happy to help, so please do not hesitate to ask questions.

On behalf of our staff, volunteers, and Board of Directors: welcome to the Humane Society of Manatee County family! We sincerely thank you for making this important commitment to serve the HSMC.

# Key Staff at HSMC

## Staff Directory:

### **Volunteer Coordinator:**

Tisha Przybylski Ext 315 [Tisha@humanesocietymanatee.org](mailto:Tisha@humanesocietymanatee.org)

### **Event/Outreach Specialist:**

Nervely Sainvil Ext. 331 [Nervely@humanesocietymanatee.org](mailto:Nervely@humanesocietymanatee.org)

### **Shelter Supervisor:**

Tanya Kopp Ext 319 [Tanya@humanesocietymanatee.org](mailto:Tanya@humanesocietymanatee.org)

### **Shelter Manager:**

Monica Morgan Ext 304 [Monica@humanesocietymanatee.org](mailto:Monica@humanesocietymanatee.org)

## Volunteer Information

**Social Media Link:** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/HSMCvolunteers/>

**Volunteer Logistic Link:** <https://www.volgistics.com/ex2/vicnet.dll/?from=384533>

## Email Contact Information:

**Volunteer:** [Volunteer@humanesocietymanatee.org](mailto:Volunteer@humanesocietymanatee.org)

## Volunteer Hours:

Varies by role; see Volunteer Opportunities page



## Shelter Hours

Tuesday thru Saturday: 10am-4pm

## Shelter Closed on Holidays

New Year's Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day  
(Shelter may close early the day before holidays)

# About HSMC

## HSMC Organization History

The Humane Society of Manatee County was formed in 1970 through the courageous efforts of a small group of dedicated people who took a stand for the humane treatment of animals in Manatee County. Caring people housed the abandoned at their homes and administered around-the-clock care to the sick, injured, and newborn.

After years of struggle and never-ending fund raising projects, plus the assistance of a couple of "angels", HSMC moved into its current location on Tamiami Trail in November, 1978, exactly ten years after the original conception, thus becoming the area's first "no-kill" shelter.

This shelter still stands as a monument to all the volunteers and donors who have given so generously of their time, love, money, and expertise to the animals, thereby easing the pain and abuse of untold numbers of animals.

## Achieving a No-Kill Community

In 2007, HSMC's Board of Directors underwent a fundamental shift from the Humane Society's original mission of being a no-kill shelter to leading Manatee County in creating a No-Kill Community. This means a live release rate of no less than 75% or a save rate of 90% of all animals entering Animal Services. Planning began to open the county's first and only high-volume, low-cost spay and neuter clinic with the goal of preventing homeless animals from entering the shelter system. After being selected to operate an esteemed Humane Alliance clinic, HSMC's clinic opened in April 2009. Within two years of the clinic's opening, intake of animals at Manatee County Animal Services dropped by a dramatic 20%, equating to 1,000 less euthanasia in the same period. From October 2016 to September 2017, our clinic performed 5,402 spay/neuter surgeries, and our shelter adopted out 1,046 dogs and cats to loving homes.

HSMC continues to operate its no-kill shelter and adoption program and has spearheaded a highly effective partner-based TNR (Trap-Neuter-Return) program. HSMC has also implemented a "Pet Safety Net" program focusing on keeping pets in homes....all programs essential in creating a no-kill community.

In October 2011, Manatee County Animal Services and state government officially joined HSMC's mission to create a No-Kill Community, unanimously approving a plan to achieve a save rate of no less than 90% at the county facility. The Humane Society is proud to have led the way by forming partnerships with other animal welfare organizations, community leaders, and local pet lovers; all who were necessary in creating a no-kill community

## About Us

HSMC programs are focused on prevention and retention which include: low cost spay/neuter services, trap-neuter-return (TNR) for feral cats, Pet Safety Net resources to help you care for and keep your pet, rescue, and adoption of orphaned dogs and cats.

We are a community-based private non-profit organization that relies entirely upon donations to do our lifesaving work. Our funding comes from people like you. We receive no monies from any national organization or government entity.

We offer Four-Core programs to save lives:

1. Spay/Neuter: Low-cost and free spay/neuter clinic preventing overpopulation by stopping unwanted litters and animals entering area shelters
2. Adoption: Adoption, rehabilitation, and quality animal care of homeless pets who are then adopted into loving homes
3. Trap Neuter Return (TNR): TNR of feral cats made possible through partnership with Gulf Shore Animal League and Manatee County Animal Services.
4. Owner Support: Pet retention, pet owner support services, seniors for seniors, pet food bank, care and emergency help referrals

What is our relationship with other Animal Welfare Organizations?

The common goal for all animal welfare organizations is to end the killing of homeless animals in our community. HSMC does not have the ability or space to accept every animal into our adoption program. The solution lies in preventing animals from entering shelters and partnering with other animal welfare organizations to cover the many programs needed to achieve a no-kill status. It is essential to work together to save the lives of our community's animals. We have an excellent relationship with local rescues to reach this goal.



# Working with HSMC

## Schedule and Participate

Volunteer accountability is vital to HSMC's overall success. To ensure coverage of volunteer activities, all volunteers should schedule their time through their Volgistics account at least 24 hours in advance. The importance of scheduling your time helps to eliminate overflow and underflow in areas that may have too much coverage or too little coverage.

## Log Your Volunteer Service Hours

By signing in and out at the time of your shift on the dedicated iPad, your volunteer hours are automatically recorded in our system. Logging time is important for the shelter for grant purposes, community support, and program development as well as volunteer appreciation. The hour log can also be used to submit to schools, businesses and organizations for proof of completion of required volunteer service hours.

## Shifts

All volunteer shifts are in two hour increments. If you cannot volunteer for the whole two hours, still come in and work the time that you have available. Please schedule yourself through the on-line system and leave when you need to. If you need extra hours for service learning projects, work, school, or Bright Futures, sign in to other open shifts to accommodate your schedule and needs.

## Missing Shifts

Your support matters – the animals and the HSMC team are counting on you. Missing volunteer assigned shifts leaves spots available that could have otherwise been staffed by other volunteers. You can change your volunteer assignment on-line 24 hours prior to the assignment date and time if you find that you are unable to fulfill a previously scheduled activity.

## Daily Opening and Closing Time

All volunteers must be off the HSMC property no later than 4:00 pm each day, and will not be allowed on premise earlier than 10:00 am for scheduled volunteer activities, assigned through the on-line volunteer scheduling system. Several volunteer roles have earlier start times, these are the only exclusions because their mornings start at 8:00 am or 9am. Examples are Kennel Cleaners and Cat Condo Cleaners start at 8:00 am. Anyone who comes earlier than 8:00 am, and does not want to clean kennels will be asked to come back at 10:00 am for regular volunteer hours.

## Contact Information

It is important to keep your contact information up to date at all times. Therefore, volunteers should notify the Volunteer Coordinator of changes in address, phone number, emergency contact or email address in a timely manner.

## Media Relations

Volunteers are prohibited from speaking on behalf of HSMC to any representative of the media. All media questions are handled by our Executive Director, Rick Yocum – [rick@humansocietymanatee.org](mailto:rick@humansocietymanatee.org).

## Authorized Areas

Volunteers are permitted to access the public areas of HSMC at any time. Admittance is prohibited to restricted areas such as Staff Only, Strayville kennels, Cat Cottage, the ISO room and Puppy Ward. Some volunteer activities may include access to restricted areas, but only for the described volunteer activity during the assigned time period only. At no time are any volunteers allowed to walk through or spend time in unauthorized areas, unless they are escorted by a HSMC staff member.

## Euthanasia

Euthanasia is an unfortunate and rare occurrence at HSMC. This is our last option and we always strive to place an animal into a good home if available. Unfortunately, we will sometime obtain dogs and cats that are medically too sick/injured to save or behaviorally too big of a liability to release to the public. Thankfully, we have amazing resources, donors and volunteers to help ensure this number stays as low as possible.

## Disease Control

HSMC is responsible for ensuring public safety. As a volunteer at HSMC, you must be sure to wash your hands frequently as well as clean all animal handling equipment thoroughly to prevent the spread of disease in the shelter. Hand sanitizer stations are placed throughout the shelter and clinic.

If you are bitten or scratched, you must report the incident to the Volunteer Coordinator and/or staff member immediately. The animal may be quarantined for observation. A bite report will also be filled out and sent to the Environment Health Department.

You are responsible for your own personal health and are advised to seek medical treatment from your doctor.



# Code of Conduct

## Respectful Behavior

As a member of the HSMC team, you are a representative of HSMC's brand and image and are expected to conduct yourself in a professional manner. Be respectful and courteous in your interactions with the public and with staff. Disrespectful or unprofessional behavior, sexual harassment, threats, disparaging remarks, discrimination or vulgar language will not be tolerated and you may be asked to cease your volunteer work as a result of such conduct. This code of conduct applies to online and/or written material as well as personal interactions with staff, other volunteers, and members of the public.

## Non-HSMC Guests/Pets

Anyone who is not a registered HSMC volunteer is not permitted during your volunteer shift. All HSMC volunteers must first register online, complete the initial volunteer orientation, sign the volunteer agreement, and have approval from the Volunteer Coordinator to proceed with further activities. Volunteers with unapproved guests or pets will be asked to leave.

## Privacy Policy & Pertinent Information

Information pertaining to HSMC records or specific cases are strictly confidential and may not be discussed with others. Please refrain from offering the public information on fees or policies unless you have current, accurate information. When in doubt, refer the individual to HSMC staff. Volunteers are not to disclose any confidential information (contact, personal information, financial, etc.) of shelter customers or staff members. Only HSMC approved signage and messaging are allowed on premises and at HSMC events. Do not write notes or messages on kennel cards, on paper signs or affix any other signs or messages without prior approval from HSMC management.

## Dress Code

Anything that you wear will get dirty. When working with animals, you may be exposed to zoonotic communicable illness, ringworm, mange (scabies), fleas and/or ticks. As a HSMC volunteer, you are required to wear the following during each volunteer activity:

- ❁ **HSMC volunteer shirt** - It is imperative that all volunteers be dressed in HSMC apparel so that they are consistently recognizable to the public and staff. Only HSMC shirts are to be worn by volunteers while on scheduled activities.
- ❁ **Volunteer ID** – We do not issue name tags or badges; however we ask that you put your name on the right sleeve of your volunteer t-shirt in black ink. This can be done by using a permanent Sharpie, fabric marker, or fabric paint.

- ❖ **Long pants are required** – jeans, khakis or other long pants. No shorts, skirts, skorts, or other garments that expose portions of the leg to potential scratches or scrapes.
- ❖ **Comfortable close-toed shoes** – no sandals or flip flops.
- ❖ **Face Masks** – must be worn inside buildings when social distancing measures are difficult to maintain.

## Parking

The parking spots along the side of the adoptions building are for public guests only. All volunteers must park behind the play yards. Do not block fire lanes or park in unmarked areas – park in designated areas only. Cars parked in fire lanes or unmarked areas may be towed at the owner's expense.

## Smoking

Smoking is prohibited in all buildings and facility grounds. Volunteers who wish to smoke must do so behind the shed/garage in the back parking lot. While working at off-site events as a HSMC Volunteer, you may not smoke except when on breaks and out of public view.

## Drugs and Alcohol

Under no circumstances shall a volunteer work at our facility or off-site event under the influence of drugs or alcohol. If suspected of being under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol, you will be asked to leave immediately and will be subject to termination from the HSMC Volunteer Program.

## Cell Phones

While you are here, we want you to keep your focus on the animals in your care and the customers in need of assistance. HSMC prohibits the use of cell phones and mobile devices that create unsafe situations. If it is necessary for you to have your cell phone with you while volunteering, set the ringer to vibrate or silent, and use your cell phone in non-working areas only

## Animal Care

It is expected that HSMC Volunteers will treat all animals in the shelter's care with compassion and gentleness. Ask for assistance from HSMC staff when needed, and use caution at all times. Do not hand write messages on kennel cards – notify HSMC staff of any observations or information you feel may need to be noted for an animal. Volunteers are not to diagnose medical cases, remove sick animals from the shelter without permission from the shelter manager, or take any animals from the shelter without proper documentation and approval from the manager on duty.

## Injuries

You are responsible for your own health and welfare, mind all signs and safety precautions. If you are injured while at HSMC, you must notify the Volunteer Coordinator or Manager on Duty immediately to fill out an incident report.

## Comments and/or Critiques

Your point of contact regarding concerns and questions while volunteering at the shelter is the Volunteer Coordinator. Immediately bring any complaints or issues with HSMC policy to the attention of the Volunteer Coordinator for resolution. We want to resolve issues so that we can all work effectively as a team. Immediately report anything you interpret as harassment from staff, volunteers or the public to the Volunteer Coordinator or Manager on Duty to ensure your safety and the safety of everyone on the premises.

## Volunteer Term

Both you and HSMC are free at any time, with or without notice or cause, to end the volunteer relationship. Volunteers who commit minor violations of policy and procedures will be verbally counseled in an effort to achieve acceptable compliance. Such violations could include disruptive behavior, habitual absenteeism, misstatement of HSMC policies, etc. Continued violations could result in additional counseling or dismissal. Dismissed volunteers are not permitted entry to HSMC beyond the public interactions.

## Activities & Events

HSMC schedules and plans activities and events (on-site as well as off-site) for adoptions, awareness and other outreach initiatives several months in advance. As such, HSMC has established protocols, procedures, branding standards and assigned resources. Any and all activities and events, either on the HSMC premises or as represented as HSMC in the public must be coordinated, and approved by HSMC management at least 30 days in advance. Unscheduled or impromptu activities or events will not be supported or endorsed by HSMC.

## Volunteer Groups or Organizations

Any groups or organizations wishing to hold an event or group volunteer project must contact the Volunteer Coordinator in advance to make such arrangements. Groups will not be allowed to assemble at event or on-site to promote their business, cause or messaging without prior approval from HSMC Management.



# Volunteer Opportunities

## Dog Walker / Canine Coach



HSMC uses a stop light system for the dog walking program. Each dog is graded on this system based on the dog's temperament, how well it walks on a leash, and if it shows any signs of previous training.

Green Level dogs have little or no concerning behaviors and walk well on a leash. All new volunteers start as a Green Level Dog Walker. This provides adequate time for volunteers to adjust to walking a shelter dog and hone their dog handling skills.

For those who have an extensive background or previous work experience in fields of animal care may fast track to Yellow and Red Level Dog Walking. This will be on a case-by-case basis and must meet requirements satisfactory to Shelter Manager and Shelter Supervisor's training/testing (see Dog Walking and Handling handout for more details.)

## Dog Kennel Cleaner

Assist staff in cleaning and sanitizing kennels. After cleaning is complete, add new blankets and toys, and the "scent of the day" so our shelter dogs have a fresh start to their day. *8am to 10am; Monday – Sunday.*

## Feline Friend

Socialize and play with our adoptable cats in our free roaming cat room known as Meow Manor. A Feline Friend helps our cats stay stress free during their transition from shelter to home. In Meow Manor, volunteers are responsible for ensuring all cats are comfortable with being touched and pet; socialization of the more timid and docile by promoting play; and giving lots of love and cuddles. "Kitty City" is where you will find our kittens. Just like any young species, kittens love to play-play-play!

## Cat Condo Cleaner

Assist staff in cleaning and sanitizing cat condos. After cleaning is complete, add new blankets and toys so our shelter cats have a fresh start to their day. *8am to 10am; Monday – Sunday.*

## Office Angel

Prepare adoption folders/totes with brochures, pamphlets, and gift cards. Assist staff with filing post adoption folders, creating labels for folders, and other tasks related to administrative work.

Dog Gone Caller – Call post adopters and ask a series of pre-set questions to see how the dog is acclimating to their new home. Record the answers on the paper and make a notation on call log. If dog needs assistance with training and/or medical, make a copy of the form and give to an Animal Care staff member. Once a month. Must have pleasant phone voice.

Lost and Found – Listen to voicemails on a dedicated phone line and log into the Lost and Found Book. Call to check if person found their pet. Check other resources to help person further with their search.

## Photographer

Take photos of our shelter animals to capture their best attributes. Photos will be used for adoption spotlights, promotional material, and social media outlets.

## Linen Supervisor

Fluff and fold laundry, lots of laundry. Laundry accumulates every morning, so this is a daily task that can get out of control if not attended to. Assist staff by working industrial washers and dryers, fold, and separate blankets, towels, and bedding.

## Grounds Keeper

Assist staff and maintenance with various odd jobs and help upkeep the grounds and buildings. Various odd jobs can include, painting, mowing, weeding, and picking up debris around the property.

## Bo's Boutique

Assist in sorting and separating donations for resale in Bo's Boutique. Help price, repackage, and merchandise the items to make appealing for adopters to shop.

## Fostering

As a Foster parent for the HSMC, you will house, feed, and care for pregnant animals, nursing moms, underage dogs and/or cats. Some foster parents will assist in socializing animals not ready for adoption, including medical and behavioral cases. While fostering, HSMC will provide the food, blankets, crates, and whatever else you may need for your animals to thrive. Some animals require around the clock care. Unfortunately this type of care cannot be provided in a shelter environment. As a foster parent, it is your responsibility to administer medicines when needed and teach healthy home habits. Fosters are given appointment dates to bring their animals in for medical rechecks. Any notes on how they behave in the house can make finding them a forever home much easier. Whether it's a new litter of kittens that lost their mother to the busy streets, or elderly canines fed up with the loud youth around them, fostering significantly benefits dogs and cats alike!

## Event Assistant

Assist Event Coordinator at offsite events. Interact with general public, community outreach, and help showcase adoptable dogs and cats for adopters.

## Outreach/Community Support

Our Outreach program has many opportunities to help promote HSMC. Most positions involve the community but may vary depending on the season and need. Outreach is a very important role in educating our community. HSMC stands by our mission statement by being leaders and pillars in our community Manatee Chamber of Commerce awarded HSMC as the 2018-Non-Profit Organization of the Year!

## Coin Bank Captain

HSMC partners with local businesses throughout Manatee County to help raise monetary donations. Coin Bank Captains will report to the Event Coordinator on a monthly basis. They will check in on the business and swap out the banks when full. Creating new partnerships is also a component of this position. The coin bank program can bring in thousands of dollars in extra income for the shelter.

## Veterinary Center Assistant / School Clinical Hours

This position is for students in school looking to pursue a career with animals. We offer clinical hours as a sign off for school requirements only. Proper paperwork and documentation will be required.

## Shadowing Positions

HSMC offers a program where you can shadow the Veterinarians and Veterinary Technicians to see what a day-in-the-life is like. You will be able to watch but not participate in basic vaccination and wellness exams. Being ambitious is a welcoming trait at HSMC and we support our future Veterinarians.



# Volunteer Training

## **Volunteer Orientation**

Orientation provides an overview of the volunteer program and the operations of HSMC. This provides volunteers with the opportunity to better understand our mission and vision at HSMC. The orientation includes both class time (online) and a shelter tour.

## **Dog Walking Training**

To achieve the status as a K9 Coach for HSMC, volunteers must attend several training sessions which covers protocols and safety concerns as well as discussing frequently asked questions, scenarios, dog training techniques, tips and tricks, plus an introduction to dog behavior. Future classes to be announced.

## **Cat Cuddler**

To further your knowledge as a Cat Cuddler, volunteers must attend training which covers protocols and safety concerns as well as discussing frequently asked questions, scenarios, and an introduction to cat behavior. Future classes to be announced.

## **Cat Clicker Training**

What better way to make our cats more adoptable but to teach them high fives with clicker training. Future classes to be announced.

## **Animal Care Training**

Help assist staff by showing adopters the shelter animals. Future classes to be announced.

## **Neonatal Foster Care**

Newborn puppies and kittens require acute foster care including regular bottle-feeding. This class provides a solid introduction and Q&A for new neonatal fosters, especially during kitten season. Training is offered by the Foster Coordinator on a 1-on-1 basis, but large classes are held when needed. Future classes to be announced.

# CONGRATULATIONS!

**You have completed this portion of the Volunteer Orientation program at the Humane Society of Manatee County.**



**ATTEND TRAINING ON POSITIONS THAT INTEREST YOU:** We have many options on ways to get involved.

**SIGN UP ONLINE FOR OPEN OPPORTUNITIES SPOTS:** This ensures that volunteers are contributing at a time they know the help is needed.