

We **Save** Lives
Every Dog-Gone Day.
Ask Meow!



The **Rescue** Crew
SAVE A LIFE TODAY

Volunteer **Manual**

About The Rescue Crew.

The Rescue Crew is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit Minnesota-based animal rescue organization which strives to prevent the unnecessary euthanasia of companion animals in need by finding them loving forever homes. We were created specifically to fill a need in our local communities to help shelter animals facing imminent risk of euthanasia without rescue support.

Our Vision.

We envision the day where every adoptable companion animal has the opportunity of finding a responsible, loving home. A world where pets are no longer mistreated, abused or abandoned.

Our Mission.

We are here to help save the lives of companion animals in need. Those who are homeless; the abused or abandoned; the neglected and unloved, and to show them human compassion and kindness, ultimately helping them become valued family members in a loving home.

The Volunteer Experience.

Volunteers come from all walks of life, generously giving their time to apply their passion and skill to help save the lives of animals in need. When you volunteer with The Rescue Crew, you're giving the animals one of the greatest gifts of all — your time. Whether you're spending one-on-one time with the animals, helping out at events or assisting in some other way, you're helping the animals to feel loved. For that, everyone here at The Rescue Crew is incredibly grateful—especially the animals. We wish you an enjoyable, safe, fulfilling and rewarding volunteer experience!

About this Handbook.

This handbook summarizes many of The Rescue Crew's volunteer policies, procedures and opportunities. The Rescue Crew Board of Directors is responsible for administering the policies described in this handbook and would be happy to provide you with further information or clarification should you request it (board@rescuecrew.org).

Nothing in this handbook creates a contractual relationship or employee relationship between you, the volunteer, and The Rescue Crew.

Our Values.



Embrace new ways of thinking.

We embrace new strategies and ideas that could enable us to better serve companion animals and achieve our vision of finding loving, responsible homes for every adoptable dog and cat in need.



Establish & maintain positive relationships.

We attempt to harness the creativity, passion and resources of our fosters, volunteers and partnerships through collaboration, transparency, open and honest communication and teamwork.



Be positive influencers.

We work to inform the public about responsible pet ownership and educate the community about the importance of spaying and neutering pets to reduce the overpopulation crisis. We do this through our stewardship and advocacy of the animal welfare community and by leading and influencing positively and respectfully.



Appropriate and proper placement.

We strive to understand as much about each animal in our care in terms of temperament, personality and needs as we know about our foster and adoptive homes to do our best to help ensure successful placement of companion animals.



Demonstrate compassion and respect.

We strive to always demonstrate a high level of compassion and respect for both the companion animals in our care as well as the community we serve and the individuals and organizations we interact with

Everyone representing The Rescue Crew is expected to uphold these Core Values.

Our Commitment to You.

The Rescue Crew will strive to:

- Provide you with adequate information, training and assistance so you can be successful in your volunteer position.
- Provide you with guidance, goals and feedback.
- Respect your skills, dignity and individual needs.
- Be open-minded and receptive to your comments and suggestions.
- Treat you as a valued team member.

Volunteer Opportunities.

The Rescue Crew can use your talents and experience in anything from administrative work, providing animal care and enrichment, vetting assistance, help with transporting animals or supplies, marketing, taking photographs and writing biographies for our animals to help find their forever families... and the list goes on.

Some of our primary needs and opportunities include:

- Vetting Coordinators
- Intake Coordinators
- Fundraising Committee Members
- Events and Fundraising Coordinators
- Donor Management
- Crew Member Coordinators
- Application Processors
- Creative Writing/Social Media and Marketing
- Managers Bully Breed Representatives
- Board Members

Complete job descriptions for these and other volunteer opportunities can be found on our website at www.RescueCrew.org.

Just a friendly reminder: When you work closely with animals, you can sometimes be bitten, scratched or injured in another way. Your safety is always our priority, but if you do happen to get hurt, please let us know immediately.

Your Volunteer Commitment.

When you serve as a volunteer for The Rescue Crew, we ask the following of you:

- Have regular access to the Internet and email.
- Facebook is our main access to volunteer opportunities as well as events. All volunteers should be members of The Rescue Crew Fosters and Volunteers Facebook Group.
- Cover all your own expenses associated with volunteering for The Rescue Crew—many of them will be tax deductible. On an exception bases, and with prior Board approval, we may reimburse certain expenses.
- Carry your own insurance coverage. The Rescue Crew does not carry health, medical, liability, automobile, worker's compensation or disability insurance coverage for volunteers.

Representing The Rescue Crew.

When you're serving as a volunteer for The Rescue Crew, what you say and do reflects on The Rescue Crew as a whole. We know volunteers may have a variety of beliefs and values when it comes to animal welfare issues, methods of training, and what is and is not acceptable in owning and caring for a companion animal. We sincerely accept this diversity of thought. But, if there is an issue on which The Rescue Crew has not taken a position, you should remain neutral on the matter while representing us. Any personal comments you make should be clearly identified as yours and yours alone.

Social Media.

Online communication tools such as newsletters and social media platforms (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and TikTok) are the go-to channels for people who are interested in keeping up with The Rescue Crew and our many lifesaving efforts. For that reason, and because your behavior as a volunteer reflects on us, please use good judgment whenever you contribute to our social media pages, as well as your own personal social media posting. We encourage volunteers to join online conversations and spread the word about The Rescue Crew and the animals, but you should never speak as an official representative of us.

When you are engaging with others via social media on behalf of The Rescue Crew, please keep in mind the following:

- **Be transparent:** Identify yourself as a volunteer of The Rescue Crew.
- **Be accurate:** Make sure you check your facts with a board member or other individual in a leadership capacity who's involved with the issue before posting. Take precautions to gather the most current information available. Be the first to acknowledge and correct your own mistakes.
- **Provide resources:** Link back to our website whenever you can so that people can see where your information is coming from.
- **Be considerate:** Please do not use profanity, derogatory language or personal attacks, or engage in any other inappropriate conduct.
- **Be real:** Do not just copy and paste press releases or website content. Take talking points and put them in your own words. (The one exception is when you are quoting someone or using an official statement.)
- **Be professional:** Do not allow legitimate online explanation of a position or debate to devolve into personal attacks, fights or fan flames that would reflect poorly on you or The Rescue Crew. If you have any doubts about the appropriateness of your involvement in an online discussion, please disengage or do not get involved in the first place. Pass along the link or disparaging information to the appropriate representative of The Rescue Crew.

You are encouraged to use your own social media to help promote adoptable animals, events, volunteer opportunities, advocacy, outreach and more. However, The Rescue Crew volunteers are prohibited from starting any new social media properties that specifically represent the organization.

Media Contact.

Media relations can be complex. For that reason, we ask that you don't speak for us with the media without prior permission from the President or other Board member. Media inquiries should be directed to our Board of Directors at board@rescuecrew.org. Media inquiries are extremely time-sensitive and should be forwarded as soon as they are received.

Standards of Conduct and Customer Service.

The Rescue Crew upholds the highest standards of conduct and service for the sake of saving the lives of animals. When you are serving as a volunteer, we ask that you please follow these guidelines:

Be Professional.

As a Rescue Crew volunteer, please present an image that is both professional and appropriate to your working conditions.

Remember, you represent us and the first impression you create may be a lasting one. Keep the following in mind:

- You should have a well-groomed appearance.
- 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 The Rescue Crew in public.
- Booth and exhibit areas should 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, so you should strive to provide accurate and timely information. And don't be afraid to ask for help when you need it.

Be Positive.

A positive attitude is contagious. Approaching your assignment with enthusiasm and dedication will positively impact community members, potential and potential volunteers, fosters and adopters. Some other tips:

- Raise concerns and share ideas in a positive fashion; focus on solutions, not problems.
- Respond positively to complaints; never argue with anyone or dismiss someone's 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 favorable impression on our current and potential fosters, volunteers, adopters, donors and the general public.

Remember the following:

- A smile goes a long way. Smile when someone approaches you at an event or function.
- Use the person's name whenever possible, and don't forget good manners.
- Practice active listening: Give your undivided attention to the person with whom you are speaking
- Treat each person with kindness, and as an individual.
- Please don't use slang and technical jargon or terms that the other person may not understand.

Be Knowledgeable.

To help our lifesaving efforts, it is crucial that you keep up-to-date with what's happening. The public sees you as someone who represents The Rescue Crew, and they expect prompt, courteous and accurate responses to their questions and concerns, regardless of your individual specialty or field of knowledge. If you don't know the answer to a question, please ask.

These are only guidelines to providing great service. Of course, no written standards can ever take the place of good judgment. When in doubt, remember the Golden Rule: "Treat all living creatures as we ourselves would wish to be treated."

Attendance Policies and Procedures.

When you commit to a volunteer position, you become a valuable member of our team and play an important role in the success in the mission of The Rescue Crew. For that reason, we ask that you please do not make a commitment that you may be unable to fulfill, or take on responsibilities for which you feel unqualified.

Cancellations and "no shows."

We understand that life happens and you may not always be able to make it to your volunteer commitment. If you are not available to complete the volunteer opportunity for which you have stepped up for, please let someone know as quickly as possible.

If you can't perform the duties of your volunteer position or meet required deadlines, and you don't notify someone in advance, your participation in the volunteer program could be adversely affected. We encourage you to try to avoid this situation; by not fulfilling your commitment, you will miss out on some wonderful opportunities to help homeless pets.

Causes for release from volunteer service.

Here are some potential causes for release from volunteer service:

- Breaking of confidentiality.
- Failure to adhere to policies or follow procedures
- Inactivity.
- Inappropriate drug or alcohol use.
- Inappropriate or unprofessional conduct.
- Excessive “no-show” for volunteer opportunities.
- Not fulfilling the duties of the volunteer position.
- Misrepresentation of The Rescue Crew.
- Theft.
- Violence or implication of violence.
- Not demonstrating the values of The Rescue Crew.

Grievance Procedure.

If you have any questions or challenges regarding your volunteer assignment, please bring them to the attention of The Rescue Crew's Board of Directors (board@rescuecrew.org). Every effort will be made to provide you with an opportunity to raise your questions in confidence and without fear of reprisal or discrimination. Every effort will be made to investigate in a timely manner and settle the issue on a fair and equitable basis.

Requests to Help an Animal.

As a representative of The Rescue Crew, you may be asked by people in your community for help with specific animal-related situations. Here are some ways to handle these requests:

- If the person has witnessed animal abuse or neglect, tell them to report it to local authorities — the local police, animal control department or humane society.
- 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, please notify a board member at board@rescuecrew.org.
- If you are ever contacted about an animal in need of a new home, please direct them to our Intake Team by emailing Intake@rescuecrew.org with as much detail as possible.

Conflicts of Interest.

As a volunteer for The Rescue Crew, you should avoid any outside activity that could negatively affect the independence and objectivity of your judgment, or interfere with the timely and effective performance of your duties and responsibilities, or that could discredit The Rescue Crew or conflict or appear to conflict with our best interests. The success of The Rescue Crew rests on its reputation and the goodwill of its many supporters and volunteers.

If you are asked to take part in an activity that conflicts with the vision and philosophies of The Rescue Crew, or if a potential or actual conflict of interest arises, please contact your immediate supervisor/manager or a member of the Board of Directors (board@rescuecrew.org).

Sexual Harassment Policy.

The Rescue Crew is committed to providing an environment that is free from harassment and unlawful discrimination. In accordance with all federal, state and local laws, The Rescue Crew 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.

The Rescue Crew expressly forbids and will not tolerate any actions (e.g. words, jokes, comments or gestures) that unreasonably create an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment. Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature where.

Thank You!

Volunteers like you are one of the keys to helping to save the lives of countless animals in need. Thank you so much for caring about the animals and for donating your time, energy and skills to help. We wish you a long, happy and rewarding relationship with The Rescue Crew!

Although volunteering can be a lot of work, it is a wonderful gift you can give to animals in need, and a very rewarding experience. It's only because of individuals like yourself - those willing to help us in our endeavor to help urgent animals in need, that we can continue in our shared goal to "Save a Life Today."



The **Rescue**Crew
SAVE A LIFE TODAY

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