



# The Rescue Crew

SAVE A LIFE TODAY

## Volunteer Manual

## About The Rescue Crew

The Rescue Crew is a 401(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 help fill a need in the local rescue community for shelter animals facing eminent risk of euthanasia without rescue support.

**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.

**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.

## The Rescue Crew 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 Crews 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 if you need it.

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

## The Rescue Crew Values

### **Incorporate new ways of thinking**

- Reduce barriers to adoption
- Do our best to provide food of high nutritional quality, delivered to your door
- Use of any convenient vet, within reason
- Maintain a “Save where we serve” philosophy to our animal rescue efforts

### **Establish & maintain positive relationships**

- Strive to harness the creativity, passion and resources of our fosters, volunteers and partnerships through collaboration, open and honest communication and teamwork

### **Focus on public education**

- Inform the public about responsible pet ownership
- Educate the community about the importance of spaying and neutering of companion animals to reduce the pet overpopulation crisis

### **Appropriate and proper placement**

- 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 best ensure successful placement

### **Compassion and respect**

- We will always strive to demonstrate the highest 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

### **Be positive Influencers**

- We do this through our stewardship and advocacy of the animal rescue and welfare community, and
- By leading and influencing responsibly and respectfully

**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:

*(For more complete Role Descriptions of these opportunities, please see the Appendix Section of this Handbook)*

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

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 a 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 a private email address.
-  If you do not have computer access, we ask that you find a friend or family member who can help you with your communications with the volunteer department.
-  Facebook is our main access to volunteer opportunities as well as events. All volunteers should be members of The Rescue Crew T.I.P.S Facebook page.
-  Cover all your own expenses associated with volunteering for The Rescue Crew—many of them will be tax deductible.
-  Carry your own insurance coverage. The Rescue Crew does not carry health, medical, liability, automobile, worker's compensation or disability insurance coverage for any volunteer.

## 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 and Instagram) are the go-to channels for people who are interested in keeping up with The Rescue Crew and our many efforts to "Save A Life Today." 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 every precaution 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 flame wars 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 and welcome to use your own social media platforms 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 represent the organization. If you have any questions about this, please contact your Coordinator or member of the Board of Directors.

## Media Contact

Media relations can be complex. For that reason, we ask that, as a volunteer for The Rescue Crew, you don't speak for us with the media without prior permission from our Founder. Please send all media inquiries directly to Chris Maddox at [chris.maddox@rescuecrew.org](mailto:chris.maddox@rescuecrew.org). Please note that 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 do the same. Here are a few service guidelines that we kindly request you follow.

### **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 members, 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 Save a Life Today, it is crucial that you keep up-to-date with what's happening with us. 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.

The above are only guidelines to providing great service. Of course, no written standards can ever take the place of good judgment. When in doubt, remember that 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 may 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

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

-  If the person has witnessed animal abuse or neglect, tell him or her to report it to local authorities — the local police, animal control departments 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 The Rescue Crew.
-  If you are ever contacted about an animal in need of a new home, please direct them to Chris Maddox ([chris.maddox@rescuecrew.org](mailto:chris.maddox@rescuecrew.org)) or Laural Haessly ([laural.haessly@rescuecrew.org](mailto:laural.haessly@rescuecrew.org)).

## 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.

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 Chris Maddox ([chris.maddox@rescuecrew.org](mailto:chris.maddox@rescuecrew.org)) or Laural Haessly ([laural.haessly@rescuecrew.org](mailto:laural.haessly@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 giving them your time, energy and affection. 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."*

## **Appendix—Role Descriptions:**

- I. Vetting Coordinator**
- II. Intake Coordinator**
- III. Fundraising Committee Member**
- IV. Events & Fundraising Managers**
- V. Donation Recorder**
- VI. Crew Member Coordinator**
- VII. Creative Writing/Social Media & Marketing Coordinators**
- VIII. Bully Breed Representative**
- IX. Board Member**

### **Vetting Coordinator:**

Certified Vet Tech background is preferred, OR have previous experience working within the veterinary field. Vetting Coordinators assist the fosters and Crew Member Coordinators with the vetting needs of our foster animals. You will maintain proactive relationships with our Coordinators and foster ensuring medical and vetting needs of the animals in our care are being met. Responsibilities include tracking vetting due on animals such as vaccinations, alterations, HWT, flea/tick preventatives, microchip, etc. You will also be responsible to answer vetting related questions from the fosters, adopters and coordinators and assist in the scheduling surgeries with our partner clinics.

### **Intake Coordinator:**

The Rescue Crew focuses on the local most urgent animals in need that are facing imminent risk of euthanasia without rescue support. These animals are sitting in local impounds in shelters located within the Twin Cities metro area and beyond. We are looking for people who have the desire and ability to visit these locations on a regular basis to temperament test (we will provide you the tools and training necessary), and assist us in networking these urgent animals in need in hopes of finding them foster-based placement either with The Rescue Crew or other local foster-based rescue organization. Intake Coordinators may also assist in bringing the animals into the rescue by arranging for transport from the shelter to the rescue, arranging vetting while at the current shelter location, and lines up foster homes for these animals to be placed in when they arrive. This role can be one of the most rewarding, and crucial to the success of the animal getting out of a shelter alive, but can also be stressful and emotionally taxing. You will be working with various shelters and impounds, learning the processes for transferring animals to rescue and maintaining positive relationships with these crucial partners that we work with to help save the lives of companion animals at risk.

### **Fundraising Committee Member:**

Once established, the Fundraising Committee will meet minimally on a quarterly basis. The Committee will work with the Fundraising and Events Managers to develop fundraising ideas in support of our mission, and work to coordinate and lead these events. It's a fun and worthwhile opportunity, which will give you the opportunity to share your talents, fundraising ideas, meet and interact with fellow animal lovers and most of all, raise much needed funds to help us in our shared goal to "Save a Life Today."

### **Events and Fundraising Managers:**

The Events Manager will be responsible for reaching out and establishing relationship with key partners who are interested in supporting our mission and willing to allow us to host events to promote The Rescue Crew and/or allow us to bring in adoptable animals to meet the public to assist their adoption opportunities. You will collaborate with and/or lead our Adoption Day Hosts and Fundraising Committee members in collaborating, planning, organizing, promoting and executing on events in support of our mission.

### **Donation Recorder:**

This position will be responsible for tracking and thanking our donor base. You will receive notifications once donations are received and be responsible for inputting donor information and donation amounts into our database, thanking our supporters through email, letters and handwritten notes, providing tax receipts as necessary or requested, and adding donor information to our mailing list so we can keep in contact and update our supporters on current news and success stories. Thanking our donors and keeping them informed and updated as to our progress in meeting our mission will be crucial in our ongoing success and fundraising efforts.

### **Crew Member Coordinator:**

The Crew Member Coordinator is one of the most crucial roles in the success and positive public perception of The Rescue Crew. In many cases, you will be the face of The Rescue Crew. In this role you will be primarily responsible for providing support to our foster base—establishing and nurturing relationships with the foster homes and potential adopters to learn about their capabilities and animals they're interested in fostering, and their current foster animals in their care. You will also be contacting potential adopters to discuss their adoption interests and conducting post adoption conversations to follow-up with adopters in an effort to provide ongoing support and do our best to help ensure appropriate and proper placement of the animals we place to reduce potential risks of returns by providing proactive support and tips to assist individuals when bringing a new animal into the home.

**Creative Writing/Social Media and Marketing Coordinators:**

Will work mostly with the fundraising and events committee to help spread the word about upcoming events. Must have computer access daily and be very computer savvy. Must know how to use Facebook and create events, and will be in charge of creating events using [www.eventbrite.com](http://www.eventbrite.com) and posting events to our website. This position would also entail notifying local radio stations and television stations for our bigger events. Must have previous social networking experience for a company or organization.

**Bully Breed Representative:**

While The Rescue Crew helps save the lives of companion animals of all sizes, ages, breeds and conditions, we will always maintain a focus on helping one of the least adopted and most euthanized breeds in the country – the “pit bull-type” dog or “bully breed.” Having individuals who have significant experience with bully breeds who can assist in helping to educate fosters, adopters and the general public about the breed to overcome misperception and assist with appropriate and proper placement of pit bull-type dogs in prospective foster and adoptive homes would be the primary responsibility you would take on in this role. A passion and advocacy for this breed is a must.

**Board Member:**

Do you have professional experience in the non-profit world, animal rescue and welfare community, human resources, legal, financial, marketing, or other corporate or professional background you feel could lend itself nicely to serving on our Board of Directors? Our goal is to move towards the development of a collaborative, supportive and more independent Board—meaning individual not necessarily involved in the day-to-day management and operation of The Rescue Crew, but providing the necessary oversight, leadership, fiduciary responsibility and developing and supporting our longer-term goals for growth and financial stability.



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