

# DOG PLAY GROUPS

## RUNNER TRAINING

information adapted from [www.dogsplayingforlife.org](http://www.dogsplayingforlife.org)

# PURPOSE BEHIND PLAY GROUPS

*Before we can expect a sheltered animal to cope and thrive, we need to satisfy them at some level.*

## Who can be a Runner?

- Any dog walker with at least 10 hours & has completed this training
- Blue dot restrictions **do** apply, so if you have not completed the blue dot training, you will not handle blue dot dogs

# Play Groups: Worth the Time & Effort

Enrichment, Assessment, Training, Adoption Enhancement

- For dog-to-dog issues, a socially healthy dog can be much more effective than trainers/humans
- Higher receptivity to training due to the mental and physical outlet of play groups
- What may be considered inappropriate play with a person can be natural between dogs
- Enhanced quality of life for a shelter dog
- “Packs” create a more natural environment for overcoming fear, anxiety, and reactivity.



# Benefits vs. Risks of Play Groups

## Determining sociability more accurately

- Assessments on leash and/or behind a barrier are not necessarily predictive.

## Physical outlet, exercise & mental stimulation

- A 30 minute romp can be equivalent to a 2 hour walk!
- Mental energy is burned through intensive social interaction.

## Natural environment for “pack” animals

- Pack-like bonding vs. social isolation can minimize behavioral deterioration.
- Rapid behavior modification can be accomplished.
- Best NOT to create mini-packs within one common territory.
- Time for Dog-to-Dog interactions, which means we keep human interactions to a minimum. Dogs should be focused on each other, not us.

## Resources maximized

- Two people can attend to more dogs in group than handling individually.
- No less than 2 people in yard for 3+ dogs.

# Benefits vs. Risks of Play Groups

## Reduction of Barrier Reactivity (BR) & On Leash Reactivity (OLR)

- Healthy contact can reduce perception of threat

## Better Roommate matches

- After playing together, dogs generally cohabitate in kennels more smoothly \*\*\*

## Better Adoption Matches

- Many dog interactions go more smoothly from the social experience that play groups provide while sheltered \*\*\*

**\*\*\* NOT a guarantee that territorial or resource guarding issues will not surface in the home! \*\*\***



# HSHV Dogs Having Fun & Playing!



# GETTING READY FOR A PLAY SESSION



# Roles Within the Play Groups

- Lead Handler: Manage/direct the play group session. Decides who comes in and goes out. Controls the gate. Reviews any notes before session, provides a “briefing” to everyone in the play group. May delegate working the gate to the handler, but still decides who comes in and with what equipment.
- Handler: assistant to the Lead. An extra set of eyes on the dogs. Takes direction from Lead Handler on when to use interruption/correction tools. May be asked to take notes during the play session.
- Runner: Transporter of dogs to and from the play yard. Timing of when and which dogs to bring to and from the play yard is decided by Lead Handler. Runner waits for direction from Lead Handler.

# Behavior Team-Before the Session Starts

- Compiles the potential play groups after reviewing prior notes and current dog population
- Assembles two-way radios and provides brief instructions to both runners and handlers
- Provides supply of “Come See Me in the Play Yard” cards to volunteer runners
- Leads the pre-session and/or a post-session review with team (i.e. who is doing what, anticipated dog line-up, other considerations for the session)
- A binder is kept with all session notes on dogs-this is mostly done by handler and the lead handler, but runners might be asked to take notes on occasion

# Volunteer Runners-Before the Session Starts

- Pick up any leftover toys in the play yard. Remove and take to the dog kitchen for washing
- Prep dog pools with fresh water from the hose
- Carry “Come See Me in the Play Yard” signs in apron/pocket
- Carry your two-way radio, use according to guidelines
  - Emergency or urgent needs – use “STAT” after your request to the specific manager/department and your current location.  
Example, “Adoption Manager to play yard STAT”.
  - As communication will be heard by the public, every user must communicate in a professional manner. Two-Way Radios must not be used for chit chat, jokes, or other inappropriate and non-work related communication.

# Before the Session Starts: In Pictures



Have Your Radio and  
"Come See Me" cards  
in your apron/pocket  
ready to go

<b>Stray</b>		FOH Location: as of 2016-07-13 17:50:09.820
<b>Chill Time</b> Stage Review Date 7/15/2016		Date/Initials When New Arrival Exam DONE
Intake Sub-Type Stray with ID	Arrival Date 7/5/2016	Emancipation Date 7/12/2016
Species: Dog		<input type="checkbox"/> Time to Adjust
Gender: Male	Spay/Neuter?: Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Scanned 982000365837079
Primary Breed: Terrier, Pit Bull	Primary Color: Black	
Age: 4 years	Adult (1yr+)	Weight: 47.60 pound
Collar:		
Declawed? No		
<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>		
Animal # A30453840	Name: Dyson	

For Holding Locations -  
outside kennel card to  
identify dog

# Volunteer Runners: Getting the Dog From Kennel to Play Yard

- The Handler will let you know which dog to get

## Walker Guidelines:

- Only Blue Dot Walker/Runners can take blue dot dogs to the play yard
- Only Blue Dot Walker/Runners can take non-available Holding dogs to the play yard
- Any Runner can take non-blue dot dogs from the general adoptable area
- Any Runner can take available non-blue dot Holding dogs to the play yard

# Volunteer Runners: Getting the Dog From Kennel to Play Yard

- On the walker log, note your name and “PG” next to it to indicate “play group”
- Drop a “Come See Me” play group card into the kennel card sleeve
- Leash up the dog from outside the kennel (exceptions: kennels 26-29 which indicate where to exit from)
- If a dog is using a harness or other walking tool, do not place it on the dog, you may use the leash wrap technique for ease in walking a dog to the yard.



# Dog Entering the Play Yard

- Enter staging area, close gate behind you.
- If your dog is joining other dogs, Handler will want them to “meet” at the gate.
- Lead Handler will let you know if they want a leash on the dog.
- Wait in staging area until Handler opens gate. If dog is leashed, let go and gently toss leash into yard with dog.

**Do not enter yard unless instructed**

**Pay attention to the Handler – s/he will give directions as needed.**

# Dog Exiting the Play Yard

(Same Walker Guidelines apply as getting dogs)


- Enter staging area, closing gate behind you.
- Wait until Handler opens the gate to allow the dog out of the yard and into staging area.
- If dog is leashed, take the leash from the Handler.
- Place kennel/walking leash back on dog, leash wrap if that is what the dog uses.
- Clip yard leash on the fence
- Exit staging area, closing gate behind you
- Return dog to kennel (general adoptable area or holding)

# Tips for When in the Holding Area

- Use the middle exterior door from the courtyard to enter – access code is the standard volunteer door code 4295#. This code will work for the middle door only.
- Only interact with the dog you are instructed to get for the Play Group.
- In general
  - Dogs in Holding may not have had any kind of behavioral evaluation and so we do not know how safe they are around other people and dogs.
  - Even though they are under our care, until they are emancipated, they may not legally belong to HSHV.
- Always have a calm demeanor. Keeping the human noise down is very important.
- When you are in Holding, you are not authorized to enter the Animal Intake Department or Clinic.

# Holding Area – Walk Log

The Holding walk log is a white board hanging on the wall. It isn't the same paper log as in Adoptables. Looks like this ...

 Humane Society of Huron Valley

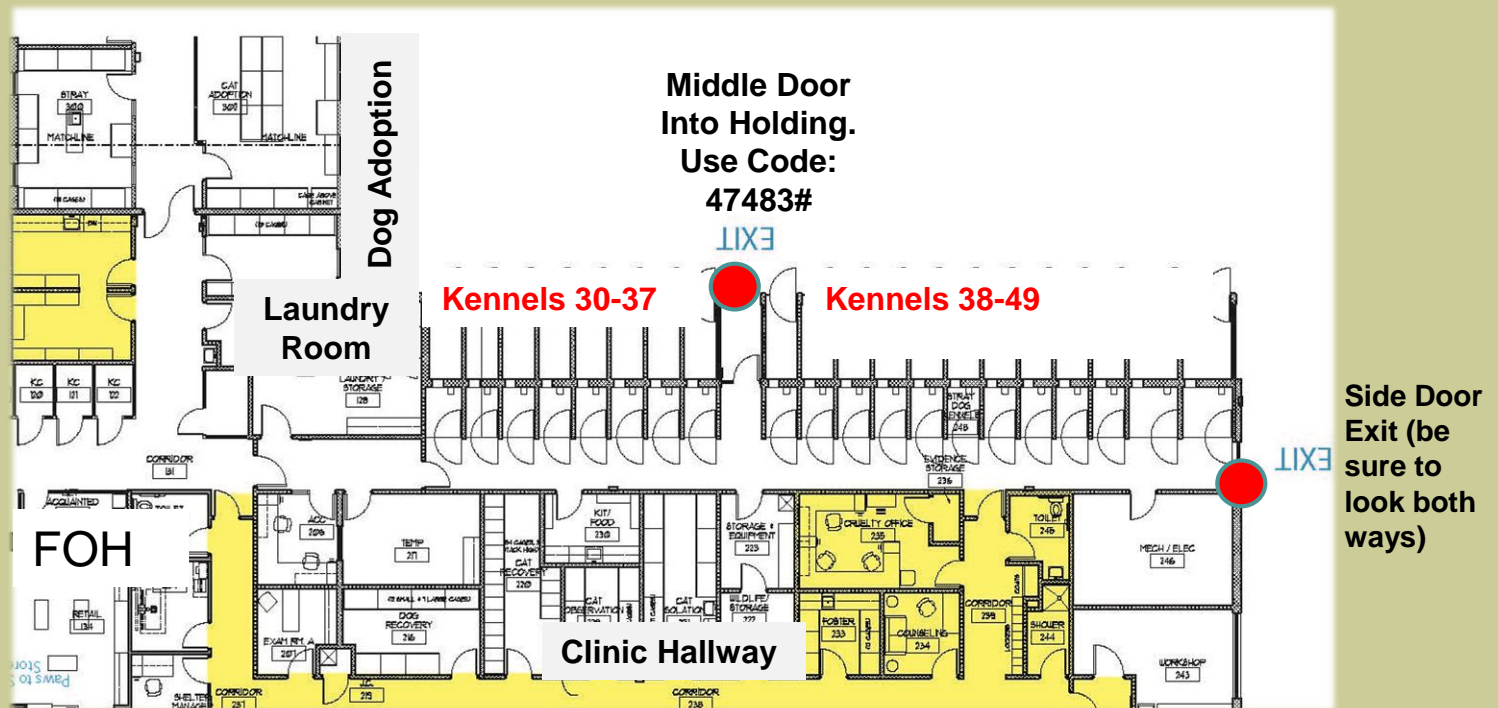
**Dog Holding - WALK LOG - July 14 - 2016**

NO Walk	HT	Cage	Name or Log # Spot	Special Diet w/d	Walker	#1 Walk 9:00	Walker	#2 Walk 12:00	Walker	#3 Walk 5:00	Special Instructions
		30	32148573		TOM	8:20	ELLEN	1:05			
	?	31	Storm								New 3:39 P.M.
		32	32146619		TOM	8:40	ELLEN	1:30			
		33	32145810								
		34	Ripsu	NEW		9:25am					
		35	32134603		TOM	9:05	Carman	3:10			
		36	Jimmy			10:27	Carman	3:35			
	✓	37	Tia								New 3:00 P.M.
	✓	38	Punch Williams		K9	7:39	ELLEN	12:00			
		39	Dyson		TOM	9:25	JD	2:55			
		40	freedom		Brian M.	7:15	Carman	3:40			Potty breaks only
		41	Harley		K9	8:20	ELLEN	1:50			
		42	Alcha		Brian M.	9:35		3:35			
	✓	43	SALLY		Brian M.	8:55	ELLEN	12:35			
		44	32148531		TOM	10:25		3:42			
		45	SOL		K9	8:44					
	✓	46	P.D.		K9	8:00	ELLEN	12:45			
		47	Ange								
		48	Elton		TOM	9:40					
		49	Diesel			8:37					Staff only!!

HT indicates will not eliminate in the kennel inside or outside.

# Holding-Exiting the Kennels

- You will still exit the kennel from the inside door.
- Because space is limited, exit either the middle or side door that minimizes stress to the dog



# CPR: WHAT IS IT? WHAT ARE THE STEPS?



# CPR: Continue Play Recovery

## When & Why it's needed

- Bad play experiences (fight or scuffle) can happen when a dog is
  - nervous or doesn't fit into a group
  - too offensive (seeking to aggress)
  - intolerant of others
  - selective and just didn't enjoy the particular other dog(s)
- The victim dog needs to decompress & recover – end on a positive note, before returning to their kennel
- CPR time decreases potential, future defensive behaviors
- An average CPR session lasts 20-30 minutes

# CPR: Steps to Take After a Dog Has a Bad Play Experience (fight or scuffle)

## The Lead Handler will always direct the CPR

### Ways to incorporate CPR

- The offensive dog is removed from the yard; the remaining dogs keep playing so they will be able to have another positive experience
- With the victim dog, add a social dog to provide positive play time or a solo play session (this could be in the upper or lower play yards)
- Take the victim dog for a calm walk and spend extra play time in their kennel
- Provide positive play, but resist overly comforting the victim dog

Remember, serious fights are rare and the benefits of play groups outweigh the risks.

If there is a dog fight, your main job is to remain calm and take any directions as needed from staff, Lead Handler, or Handler.

# Next Steps

- Watch the demonstration video that accompanies this training...
  - On Volunteer Resource Page –  
PlayGroupRunnerDemonstration.MP4
- Sign-Up for a Runner Shift! You are good-to-go!

# BEHAVIOR TEAM: LEAD HANDLERS

**Tareasa**



**Kyle**

