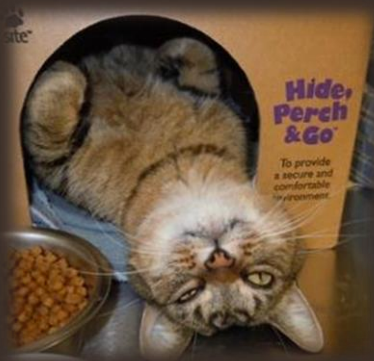


CAT COMFORTING CLASS



cat-CAN-do's!

Program and Purpose

To help reduce the stress of our shelter cats and make them more adoptable

Spending time with our cats helps get valuable information that could aid in getting them adopted quicker



Today's Schedule



8:30a-8:45a: Tour of Tabby Town

8:45-9:45a-Overview of Cat Comforting Program

9:45a Break

9:55a-11:00am Hands-on, comforting in Downtown



Overview & Guidelines

Shelter Cats



Shelter cats are not the same as your cats at home

- Unavoidable higher level of stress
- Quicker to display stress
 - fearful of being picked-up, patted on belly
 - sometimes nipping when they have had enough rather than just walking away like our cats at home.
- Don't always know the full history of the shelter cats
- Behavior may change during their time here
 - our interactions and observations help the vets and behavior staff keep tabs on what is happening on daily basis, both good and bad.

Cat Comforter Guidelines

2 hr/week commitment minimum

- Can be one day for 2+ hours, or more than one day for less
- Usually need at least 1-1.5 hours per shift to have time for preparation, comforting, and paperwork
- If you are doing more than one volunteer duty per day, be careful of the order of tasks

Times You Can Comfort:

Mon – Tue – Wed	11am - 6pm
Thu – Friday	11am - 7pm
Sat – Sun *	11am - 5pm

3rd Wednesday of each Month
Staff Training and/or major
cleaning day – do NOT sign up
until 3:00pm or later!

Cat Comforter Guidelines, cont.

- Clothing Rules (closed-toed shoes, short sleeves); long pants?
- Accessories / Long hair
- Scent-free
- If not signed up to work as cat comforter please do not open cat cages that day.

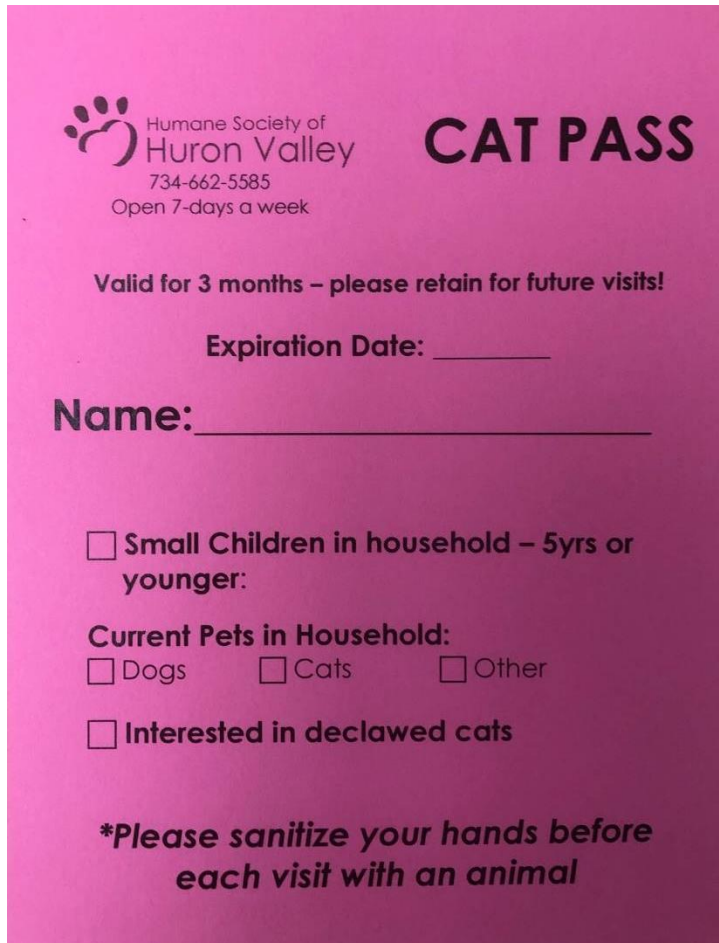



Please refrain from talking or texting while on shift; OK to have in case needed, but it's time to focus on the cats!



Please refrain from bringing family or friends to your cat comforting session.

The Public – Cat Pass



 Humane Society of
Huron Valley
734-662-5585
Open 7-days a week

CAT PASS

Valid for 3 months – please retain for future visits!

Expiration Date: _____

Name: _____

Small Children in household – 5yrs or younger:

Current Pets in Household:
 Dogs Cats Other

Interested in declawed cats

****Please sanitize your hands before each visit with an animal***

The public may walk through our shelter and look at the cats

- Cat Passes will have key items of importance noted, to help match guest with cat
- Only serious adopters are eligible to handle cats to help stop the spread of disease and keep the stress low
- Trained Cat Comforters may help guests open cages – or ask staff to assist if you are busy/not comfortable with situation.
 - Towels for customers?
 - Remain nearby to answer questions



Cat Behavior

Cat Behavior – Friendliness

Signs of friendliness:

- ears up
- eyes wide open with small pupils
- tail up, quivering, or...tail up with tip tilted
- may rub against you
- Eyes could alternatively be squinty and purring



I adore you...



Don't fall for the belly, it's a TRAP! 😊

Cat Behavior – Scared or Unsocial Cat



I'm worried...



Sometimes just talking to the cat through the cage doors is the best thing!

Signs of scared or unsocial:

- Cat may seem immobile in the cage, or backing away or up cage walls
- Flight risk
- Pupils dilated or eyes closed
- Clenched body posture with tail held close to body
- Tail low and fluffed out
- Quick flicking of tail
- Facing away from you and/or hiding in litter box



Cat Behavior- Frustrated Cat

Consider if over stimulated vs. under stimulated- often marked as a blue dot cat

- Very vocal
- In your face
- Tail whipping high in air
- Flight risk
- “Light-switch”, watch for sudden changes



Cat Behavior – Aggression



Watch
out!

Signs of aggression:

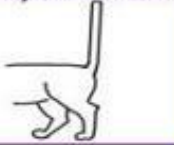



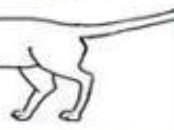
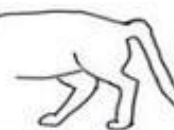






- Ears flat against head
- Crouched body posture as if ready to pounce
- Growling/hissing/spitting
- **Pupils dilated**
- **Possible swatting to keep you away**



















Do not open the cage door for the visit!
*Speak calmly to the cat through the cage
and be sure to make notes in the
Observation Binder & on Behavior Board.*

Observing Body Language

The Teltale Tail

friendly and content 	non-threatening, unsure 	derisive 
friendly, but unsure 	amicable, not fearful or aggressive 	defensive aggression 
angry 	potentially aggressive 	submissive 
very happy to see you 	excited, angry or irritable 	alert, interested 

catseowblog.com

	← MORE AGGRESSIVE →			
	 TAIL MAY BE HELD ALOFT			
	 FLATTER TO THE GROUND			
MORE SUBMISSIVE OR MORE FEARFUL	"FLINCH"  MAY EVEN FALL OVER IN SUBMISSIVE FEAR		 MUSTN'T CONFUSE THIS WITH STRETCHING	 POSTURE ALSO SEEN WHEN CATS SPRAY
	TOTALLY WITHDRAWN  TAIL TUCKED UNDER	 TAIL TUCKED UNDER		LAST DITCH  SCARED ANGRY

Cat's Actions & Body Language

- If the cat eats during your visit or retreats to their bed, continue stay a little longer and chat with the cat.
 - *At this time it is best to refrain from handling or petting.* Wait for the cat to re-approach you.
 - If the cat does not return, they may be done with the visit. Quietly close the door.
- If they start play biting, redirect them to a toy (plush for kicking?)
- If their ears are flat and their tail starts twitching, it's time to end the visit





Approaching a cat

Approaching a Shelter Cat



**How would this
make YOU feel?**

Approaching a Shelter Cat

- Don't rush or do quick, sudden movements. Get the cat's attention before touching them (they don't like surprises.)
- Introduce YOUR paw (hand) to see how the cat reacts; let them smell you and decide if they want attention.
- Let the cat come to you; NEVER reach in and pull a cat out of its cage or pick the cat up.



Approaching a Shelter Cat, cont.

- Do not reach over a cat's head or approach from the top
 - Start with cheek/chin skritches, work around to head/ears
 - Also be careful with petting sides/back of some cats
- **Avoid the belly**
- If you're uncomfortable handling the cat, DON'T! It is not wrong. Cat may be more "in your face" or do head bumps, not just "bad" behavior – if it's troubling you, don't pursue.
- Try to end each encounter on a happy note
 - If the cat is startled and hisses or lashes out, don't slam the cage door. Do not continue to interact, but gently tell them it's ok. Speak softly and slowly end the visit.



Visiting Cats

Cat Comforting Areas



- When signing up in VIC, you are selecting just a day/time, not a specific area – must communicate with other comforters.
- Look at binders to know where to go / which cats have not yet been seen that day.
- You can visit with adult cats and kittens on the same day as long as you follow the order of visitation.

Visiting Cats in Upper Cages

- Logic – which side to open first?
- Keep yourself in front of the opening
 - OK to have both sides open at once, but you must keep moving
- What if the cat puts paws on your shoulders?



Upper Cage

- You can make a “lap” with your arms on the floor of cage to give cats a chance to snuggle

Visiting Cats in Lower Cages



- Keep yourself facing the opening
- Sit on a stool vs. sitting on the floor
- How to return cat from lap that doesn't want to go back into the cage?



Lower Cage – on Floor

Lower Cage – on Stool

Never sit on the edge of the cat's cage to comfort them – that encroaches on their limited space and increases risk of disease transmission.

Visiting *Purrfect* Pairs in Cages

- Two cats living in the same cage – usually came in together, we want to adopt them out together
 - probably only open one cage door
 - try to interact with both cats if possible
- Can be challenging for one comforter, even those with lots of experience - especially if both cats are eager for attention or want to get out of cage

Visiting Cats in Condos and Communal Rooms

- After 11am, the doors are locked.
 - Sign out key from front desk (be sure to return it later!)
 - Once you are in the room, make sure the door remains locked from outside.
- For communal rooms: there are no binders for documentation since the cats here typically don't have concerns with frequent visits
- For condos / family visiting rooms: take binder up front near room, leave outside on table.



Visiting Cats in Condos and Communal Rooms, cont.



- Use caution when entering / exiting room to prevent cat escapes – can hold towel extending down to floor (like a shield) as you back out of the room.
- OK to sit on towels on the floor or benches.
- If many cats in one room - **no need to sanitize between each cat** since living in same area – however when moving from one condo / communal to the next, please get new towel; sanitize hands between condos

Keeping Cats Healthy

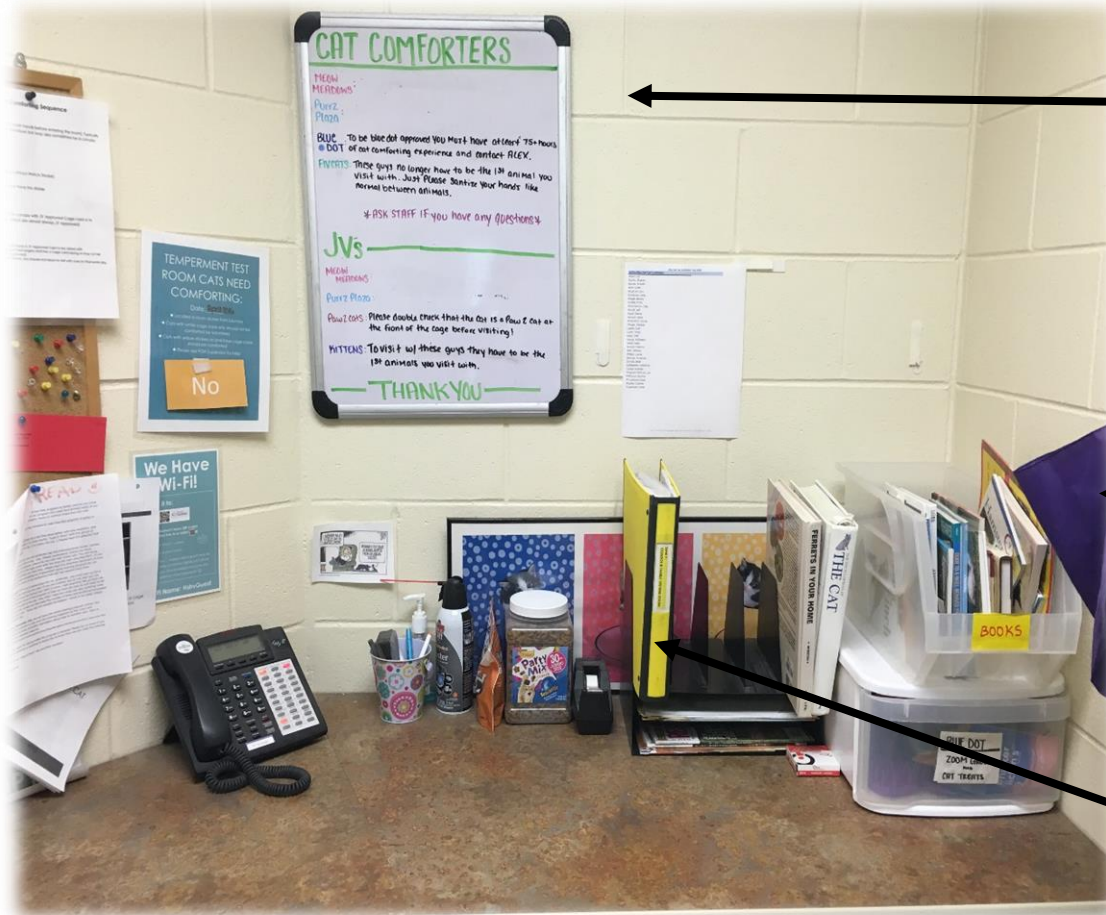
- **Fomite** = any inanimate object (as a towel or clothing or dishes or books or toys etc.) that can transmit infectious agents from one...in a shelter, the humans are the largest transmitter of disease.
- **Always use a clean towel with each cat you visit, roll up your sleeves**
- **Wash or sanitize “hands” between each cat visit:**
 - Includes anything that came in contact with the cat: hands, arms, face, etc.
- **Always potential to be exposed to diseases & germs.**
- **After volunteering be sure to...**
 - Wash clothes in hot water, color-safe bleach.
 - Dry in dryer on highest setting.
 - Wipe down and/or have “shelter only” shoes.





Communication & Binders

Cat Comforter Station



Important Messages
for Cat Comforters

Hang your
coats/keys on wall
(right hand side).
Do NOT leave
valuables here. If
you have an
apron, please take
it home with you

Binders for: the
Condos & Visitation
Room

Cat Kitchen – Medical / Behavior Boards

Examples of what you might write:

Medical: Sneezing, runny nose or eyes, snot on walls, cat seems lethargic, diarrhea (poop score?), nails need trimming

Behavior: obvious ones – hissing or growling / aggression; also subtle things - more irritable than before? not interested when used to be?

Not sure of category? (i.e. seems lethargic) – write on both boards!

Anything you write on these boards should also go into the binders for next comforter to know about.



Medical Concern Clipboard
(just inside kitchen door to right)



Behavior Alert Board
(on left-side kitchen wall)

Binders - Documentation

You must review all documentation before visiting each and every cat

Info from the cat behavior staff with special instructions; these are updated every few days – front pocket of the binders

We document our new observations/info about the cats at the end of our interaction (exception: Meow meadows/purrs plaza (the 2 communal room, & camp Kitten room)

These notes help the vets, behavior staff, other comforters



Binders – Best Practices

- Write legibly – including your first/last name
- Enter start/stop time of visit (i.e. 11:15 – 11:30)
 - Vets/staff get idea of how long cats were seen each day; especially important for cats with history of over-stimulation
- Enter comments immediately after EVERY visit
- Try to write a new observation
 - If cat behavior is unchanged, at least enter that comment
 - Include what the cat likes or dislikes (toys, areas of petting/scratching)
 - If cat was indifferent to you but seems to like everyone else, make that note too
 - During your interaction with the cat, think about what you want to write later; this makes it easier to document afterwards, without getting writer's block...

Binders – Locations



Uptown Cats – in room
(counter or drawer)

Downtown Cats – in
room (counter or drawer)

Camp Kitten – no binder

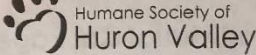
Purrs Plaza & Meow
Meadows (the two
communal rooms)

No binder

Condos + Visitation
Room – in cat comforter
station

Binders - Individual Cat Pages

- Each cat has its own page – kept in alphabetical order in binder where it is being housed
- This is page where you write your comments
- If no page for that cat or previous page is full, start a new one
- *Exception* → Communal Rooms do not use Individual Cat pages!

 Humane Society of Huron Valley

Individual Cat Page

Uptown Cage # _____ Downtown Cage # _____ **Cat Name** _____

Condo # _____ LRL _____ CVR _____

Purrs Plaza _____ Meow Meadows _____

Volunteer Name (first/last)	Comments / Observations about this cat		
	Date:		
	Start time:		
	End time:		
	Read to Calm/ Clicker		
	Date:		
	Start Time:		
	End Time:		
	Read to Calm/ Clicker		
	Date:		
	Start time:		
	End Time:		
	Read to Calm/ Clicker		
	Date:		
	Start time:		
	End Time:		
	Read to Calm/ Clicker		
	Date:		
	Start time:		
	End Time:		
	Read to Calm/ Clicker		
	Date:		
	Start time:		
	End Time:		
	Read to Calm/ Clicker		

VF-007-CatObservationCommentsheet

Binders - “At-a-Glance” pages

Each binder has a front page to help you quickly see:

- Which cats were not visited yesterday
- Which cats have already been comforted today
- Which cats are designated as “staff-only” and should not be seen by volunteers
- Which cats are on med/ being watched and therefore determines what order to visit the cats in that room
- Which cats require Blue Dot Training to comfort


This will help you decide where to start comforting each day and decreases risk of cat overstimulation.



Binders: Uptown, Downtown and Condo “Room-at-a-Glance” Pages

- Uptown / Downtown / Condo areas all have numbered cages, so their pages are similar.
 - Sample page on next slide
- Write down the cat name in each cage, mark the appropriate check-boxes for each cat (on meds? Blue Dot? No volunteer visit?)
- When ready to visit, you sign up for the cat, writing your name and indicating “start time”
- After the visit, fill in the “end time” – and then you’ll write details on the Individual Cat Page...

Sample: Uptown At-a-Glance

 Humane Society of Huron Valley **Room-at-a-Glance ~ Uptown**

Date _____
Su - Mo - Tu - We - Th - Fr - Sa
(circle the day of week)

Circle Cage # if cat/s were not seen yesterday.
Write an "e" next to cage # if the cage is empty.

Cage	Special?	Cat Name	Volunteer Name (first/last)	Time
16	<input type="checkbox"/> watch/meds <input type="checkbox"/> Blue Dot cat <input type="checkbox"/> No Vol Visit			Start: End:
17	<input type="checkbox"/> watch/meds <input type="checkbox"/> Blue Dot cat <input type="checkbox"/> No Vol Visit			Start: End:
e 18	<input type="checkbox"/> watch/meds <input type="checkbox"/> Blue Dot cat <input type="checkbox"/> No Vol Visit			Start: End:
19	<input type="checkbox"/> watch/meds <input type="checkbox"/> Blue Dot cat <input type="checkbox"/> No Vol Visit			Start: End:
20	<input type="checkbox"/> watch/meds <input type="checkbox"/> Blue Dot cat <input type="checkbox"/> No Vol Visit			Start: End:
21	<input type="checkbox"/> watch/meds <input type="checkbox"/> Blue Dot cat <input type="checkbox"/> No Vol Visit			Start: End:
22	<input type="checkbox"/> watch/meds <input type="checkbox"/> Blue Dot cat <input type="checkbox"/> No Vol Visit			Start: End:
23	<input type="checkbox"/> watch/meds <input type="checkbox"/> Blue Dot cat <input type="checkbox"/> No Vol Visit			Start: End:
24	<input type="checkbox"/> watch/meds <input type="checkbox"/> Blue Dot cat <input type="checkbox"/> No Vol Visit			Start: End:
25	<input type="checkbox"/> watch/meds <input type="checkbox"/> Blue Dot cat <input type="checkbox"/> No Vol Visit			Start: End:
26	<input type="checkbox"/> watch/meds <input type="checkbox"/> Blue Dot cat <input type="checkbox"/> No Vol Visit			Start: End:
27	<input type="checkbox"/> watch/meds <input type="checkbox"/> Blue Dot cat <input type="checkbox"/> No Vol Visit			Start: End:
28	<input type="checkbox"/> watch/meds <input type="checkbox"/> Blue Dot cat <input type="checkbox"/> No Vol Visit			Start: End:
29	<input type="checkbox"/> watch/meds <input type="checkbox"/> Blue Dot cat <input type="checkbox"/> No Vol Visit			Start: End:
30	<input type="checkbox"/> watch/meds <input type="checkbox"/> Blue Dot cat <input type="checkbox"/> No Vol Visit			Start: End:

Write your comments about each cat on the individual Cat pages - in alphabetical order.

Name of Volunteer Filling Out this Page: _____

Circle cage # if not seen yesterday or write an "e" for empty cage today

Check boxes for special info

Cat Name Here

Write date and circle day of week

Your name here

Start and End Time



Cage side Communication

Cage Cards – General


Humane Society of
Huron Valley

Condo 7

Animal ID: A29768875

Meet Fizban...

Name: Fizban
Age: 4 years
Gender: Male
Breed: Domestic Shorthair
Color: Buff
Intake: Surrendered On 8/4/2018



Prefers children over 5yrs
Prefers a dog-free home

About Fizban... Adoption Fee: \$70

What does Fizban want? Cuddles! When does he want them? Now! This lovebug enjoys quiet lap time with his human, away from the hustle-and-bustle. Some quality one-on-one time is his favorite way to spend an evening! If you are also looking for a laid-back companion, and take things slow in your home, you and our handsome Fizban could be the perfect match. He is looking to be the king of the castle, with a family who has no dogs, cats, or children under the age of 5. Come meet him today!

Microchip ID: 982000363813115

Color-coded cards with cat information:

Blue = male cat

Pink = female cat

White or White with yellow sticker = not adoptable yet

Other information on the cards:

- Name
- Age
- Breed/color
- Surrender date
- ID Number
- Location
- Information about how the cat came to the shelter or our overall observation of the cat
- "Preferences" (i.e whether the cat likes children, other animals, etc).

More info is also available at Front Desk.

White Cage Cards

Stray
Pending Sterilization

Intake Sub-Type: Stray without ID Arrival Date: 11/29/12 Emancipation Date: 11/29/12

Species: Cat Time to Adjust Scanned

Gender: Female Spay/Neuter? No Scanned

Primary Breed: Domestic Shorthair Primary Color: Black Age: 6 years Adult (Y/N): Yes Weight: 4.98 pound

Color: _____

Deceased? No

Animal # A1742651 Name: Betty Bird

I would like to visit with you! At this point, I have not had my vet check, so I can't get adopted just yet. If you would like to adopt me, please ask the staff at the front desk about the next step.

White Cage Card with Yellow sticker means both visitors and volunteers may visit with that cat.

Return
Pending Emancipation

Intake Sub-Type: Adoption Return to Shelter Arrival Date: 11/29/12 Emancipation Date: 11/29/12

Species: Dog Time to Adjust Scanned

Gender: Female Spay/Neuter? Yes Scanned

Primary Breed: Chihuahua, Long Coat Primary Color: Black Age: 8 years Adult (Y/N): _____ Weight: 10.80 pound

Color: _____

Deceased? No

Animal # A1742525 Name: Cookie



Just Chillin'

Sorry, I'm not available for adoption. For information see the Front Desk.

Staff Only -or- Volunteers OK

Placed by _____
(staff first name)

Review Date _____

White Cage Cards Only (no yellow sticker). These will all have **"Just Chillin"** drop cards in them. Look for the volunteers OK box to be marked. If it is, you may visit with that cat.

However, if a visitor is interested, have them go to the front desk to see staff no matter which box is checked.

Cage Card Additions- Overview

- Drop-In Cards
- Color-Coded Signs
- Icon Stickers



Cages are busy with information, some for staff, some for public, some for volunteers. **Here's what you really need to know...**

Cage Card – Drop-in Cards

- Dropped into the front of the cage card holder
- Indicate important information for staff/volunteers/public



- ***Just Chillin'***
 - look for is if the “Volunteers OK” box has been checked.
 - ***You can ONLY visit with the cat if this is checked!***



Just Chillin'

Sorry, I'm not available for adoption. For information see the Front Desk.

Staff Only -or- Volunteers OK

Placed by _____
(staff first name)

Review Date _____

Drop-in Cards cont.

- Cat not in the cage?

- First – double-check under blankets and behind tall litter box, may be hiding...
- Cat receiving medical care?
- Trial in communal room?



- “JV Approved”

- Junior volunteers can visit any KITTEN in condos or Camp Kitten without additional signage; may see card saying adult cat is OK for them to see as well.



Drop-in Cards, cont.

- Orange AIP = Adoption in Progress
 - Usually customer returning next day
 - Probably does not need comforting 😊
- Image of a “person at desk” = customers should ask at main desk for further details

Cage Card – Colored Signs

- Hanging next to the cage cards:
 - **Blue Dot** = you may NOT visit with these cats until you've taken the Level 2 training.
 - **Please See Comforter Log Notes** = has specific notes from behavior staff about this cat. Be sure to read before visiting!
 - **I'm new/shy, Please go slow** = until you feel comfortable comforting "regular" cats, hold off on visiting these cats - but no special training required
 - **Feliway** = cat pheromone spray to calm nervous cats in individual cages and condos
 - **Zoom Groom** = purple brush-like plastic thing, left in cage – use it if you want, but don't feel you must.
 - **No Brushing** or **Declawed** = self-evident

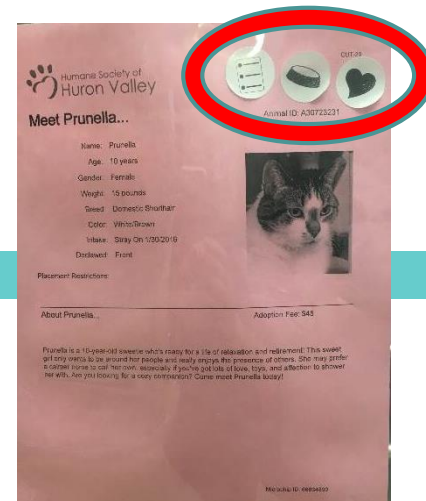
Please see
Comforter
Log Notes

No
Brushing

Feliway

I'm new.
Please go
slow.

Cage Card – Icon Stickers



- **In general, stickers tell staff there is more info on the back of the cage card.**



- Food bowl = special feeding directives
- Note sheet = monitoring food or elimination
- LB sticker = need special litter box



- Heart = cats on medication for non-URI issue
- Heart and Watch = on medication for URI



- FIV Positive cat +

Order of Cat Visitation

Visit cats in the following order:

CAT COMFORTING & DOG/PUPPY VISITATION Sequence



FIRST - not sick or being treated for non-contagious medical issue –
Kittens/Puppies then Cats/Dogs

Healthy/Non-Contagious = NO  sticker**



LAST - on medication for URI, kennel cough or other contagious issue
Kittens/Puppies then Cats/Dogs



watch sticker**

**Other cage card stickers that may be present on the cage card are not considered in the handling sequence.

Order of Cat Visitation-Ringworm Watch

- **Skin disease caused by a fungus.**
 - Is zoonotic**, as well as transmissible to other dogs and cats.
- **Very easy to transmit**
 - Can remain in the environment for long periods of time. It is important to treat both the animal and the environment.
- **Must wear full PPE which includes gloves and gown.**
 - Change gloves between ringworm watch cats, no need to change your gown unless it becomes dirty.
- **Animal should not have any contact with your skin,**
 - Any exposed clothing may retain spores- you should be aware of this and change/wash your clothes immediately upon returning home.



****Zoonotic**= a disease that can be transmitted from animals to people, a disease that normally exists in animals but that can infect humans.

Visiting with FIV+ Cats

- Policy Update:

- Volunteers must thoroughly wash hands and lower exposed arms before & after comforting.
- Use the standard towel draping as barrier to clothing, as is the normal standard if cat is in condo.
- If possible, visit with FIV+ cats first visiting with other cats. This is not required.

WHY? FIV+ cats are more vulnerable to catching URI or similar illness. We can protect THEM by visiting first and by washing our hands well. There is no risk to other cats visited after. There is no risk to the volunteers, either.

Staff Only Signs

- When you see these signs posted on the door, it means these cats are not ready to be visited with for a variety of reasons (i.e. getting acclimated to a new environment, etc.)



**Staff Only
Thank You!**

Cat Comforter – what's next?

Additional Cat-Comforting Volunteer Tasks Open to you right away:

- Morning Feliway
- Read to Calm
- Head Start-Clicker Training
- Special Cat Comforting duties – Camp PAWS, Pets & Pajamas, etc.
- Morning/Afternoon feeding still available

Level 2 – Blue Dot Cat Training

- Requires a **minimum of 40 hours** of cat comforting- email will be sent once you reach this milestone
- Completing the Blue Dot Cat Training:

https://secure2.convio.net/hshv/site/SPageNavigator/volunteers/volunteer_resources.html



Let's Comfort Some Cats

- Let's head down to Downtown or Uptown



Questions?





Nice to know

Please review the following slides prior to your first cat comforting shift. This will help fill in any details or pieces of information to help you be successful at cat comforting.

Additional Cat Enrichment Programs

- Enrichment Programs are designed to help reduce stress, anxiety, and fear in sheltered cat. In addition to visits, we offer...

Read to Calm

- Review Training Handout in Resource Library under “Cat Care”.

https://secure2.convio.net/hshv/site/SPageNavigator/volunteers/volunteer_resources.html

Head Start Clicker Training

- Trainings will open up on an “as needed” basis.
- Clicker/Treat method to re-inforce positive behaviors in fearful/shy cats.
- A way to keep our longer stay cats busy and engaged.



A Cat's Quality of Life

- Each cat receives the highest form of individualized care at HSHV, starting with their cage setup:
 - Kuranda bed and/or soft cat bed
 - Clean food and water, as far from the litter box as possible
 - Scratching post and play toys
 - Litter pan, large enough for the cat to use



Kuranda beds allow our cats another surface to sit on or sleep underneath.



More About Cage Set-up

Towel “Curtain” over front of Kuranda Bed

- Talk to cat with towel down, then OK to gently lift for interaction
- Return towel down when you are done



Water dish is closest to front for easy refill with water can

- OK to move food/water dish out of way while visiting, but return at the end of the interaction



Some Do's / Don'ts for Cages

- Please do add fresh water if bowls are dirty or low on water;
 - But also be a “cat detective” ... 😊
- Please do not add food to the cat bowls. Please do not add towels, beds, or blankets to a cat's cage if they already have some.
- Treats at comforter station are for comforters working with Blue Dot cats. Please do not use for regular visits.
- Please do not scoop litter boxes.

Cat Comforting – Best Practices

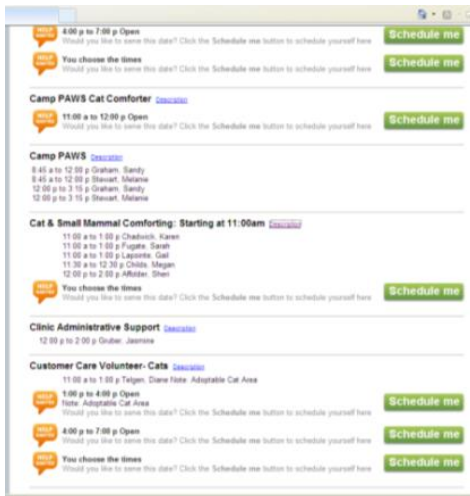
- Average visit should be 10 to 15 minutes... focus on **quality** not quantity!
- Don't get distracted during your interaction, pay attention to the cat at all times.
- Place dirty/used laundry into a bin or drop off at laundry room when you are done.



We thank you for keeping us happy & healthy! Meow!

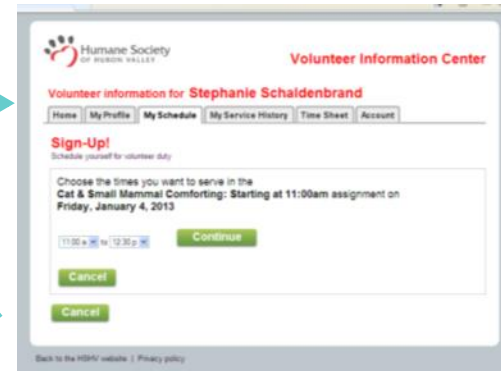
Scheduling in VIC – at Home

1. Choose your day



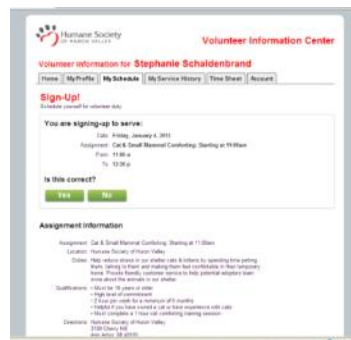
The screenshot shows the VIC home page with several volunteer opportunities listed. Each listing includes a title, a description, and a green 'Schedule me' button. The opportunities include: '4:00 p to 7:00 p Open', 'Camp PAWS Cat Comforter', 'Camp PAWS', 'Cat & Small Mammal Comforting', 'Clinic Administrative Support', and 'Customer Care Volunteer- Cats'.

2. Choose your start/ending times



The screenshot shows the 'Sign-Up!' page for Stephanie Schaldenbrand. It displays the assignment details: 'Cat & Small Mammal Comforting: Starting at 11:00am' on 'Friday, January 4, 2013'. A dropdown menu is open, showing the selected time range '11:00 a to 12:30 p'. There are 'Continue' and 'Cancel' buttons.

3. Just say
“Yes!”



The screenshot shows the 'Sign-Up!' page for Stephanie Schaldenbrand. It displays the assignment details: 'Cat & Small Mammal Comforting: Starting at 11:00am' on 'Friday, January 4, 2013'. The 'Is this correct?' section has 'Yes' selected. There are 'Yes' and 'No' buttons.

Note - VIC would allow you to sign up for ANY time – remember the allowed start / end times each day! 😊

The Public – Our Guests

- Cat cages are not locked. Guests must not open cages without assistance from a volunteer or staff member
 - **Double-check that latches are secure on all cages!**
- Guests are not allowed to take a cat out of its cage.
- “Camp Kitten” kittens may be held while person sits on bench but should never placed on the floor. Lobby cats/kittens may not be taken out of cages by guests or volunteers; staff may do this and stay nearby.
- Kitten condos and communal rooms are locked; find a Customer Care Volunteer (orange apron) or staff member
- *Only guests with Cat Passes can enter these rooms*



The Public – Our Guests

- Gently remind all guests to Sanitize or wash their hands after TOUCHING each cat; if you have difficulty, point them to the **RED** signs for further explanation
- Ask loud guests to please keep their voices down - cats are sensitive to loud sounds
- Remind guests to not allow their children to stick their fingers in the cages



If you feel uncomfortable asking a guest to comply with these rules, find a staff member immediately.

The Adoption Process

- Process takes 30 minutes – 1 hour
- Cat Comforter involvement:
 - Point/take potential adopters to adoption area (if requested by adopter)
 - Leave adoption area; we are not part of the adoption process
 - Respect the decision of the adoption team



Animal Handling HSHV Policy & Philosophy

As you comfort cats, you will occasionally see a staff member handle our adoptable cats. It could be they are getting the cat ready for it's new home or taking them to the clinic for a check-up. Here is our philosophy on animal handling...

- ❖ Handling must always be as humane as possible and appropriate for the individual animal and situation.
- ❖ The minimal amount of physical restraint needed to accomplish the task without injury to people or animals should be used.
- ❖ Humane handling requires an appraisal of each animal's behavior and properly trained staff. (per Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters)

The “Hidden” Cat Housing at HSHV (Back of House / BOH)

- **Observation**

- Behavior or bite hold cases
- Possible litter box issues

- **Isolation**

- Sick cats receiving treatment

- **Recovery**

- Temporary holding area for post surgery cats

- **Foster/Nursery**

- Cats/kittens waiting for foster pick-up



Comforting cats in these areas require additional training (100+ hours of comforting). Speak with Volunteer Manager if interested.

Cage Cards – Quick Review

- Blue, Pink or White cards with yellow stickers = OK to comfort; white card/NO sticker → NO



- *Just Chillin'* cards with “Volunteers OK”= OK to visit with that cat



- Watch icon stickers: be sure to see these cats in the correct order, after other cats.



- *I'm New. Please go slow and Please See Comforter Log* cards → wait until you feel comfortable with regular cats before attempting visit with these more special kitties.

Loose Cat...What to do, When & Where

If a cat gets away from you during comforting:

1. Do **NOT** try to catch or capture a bolting cat! *Let it go.*
 - This is a scratch risk and could further encourage the cat to escape to a more remote hiding spot.
2. Shut the doors, if not already closed
3. If customers are in room, politely ask the customer to not approach the cat. Assist the customer in leaving the room, so the cat does not exit.
4. Once you are the only one in the room, carefully exit the room and yell “Loose cat” and its location (e.g., Uptown)

Loose Cat...What to do, When & Where

5. Only a supervisor, behavior staff, intake staff or manager should attempt to catch the cat.

Exception: volunteers may catch a loose kitten, if and when one quick scoop will do it. Only one attempt may be made. Otherwise, follow above steps and notify staff.

6. Loose Cat Outside: Do **NOT** chase the cat, notify a staff member immediately to catch the cat.

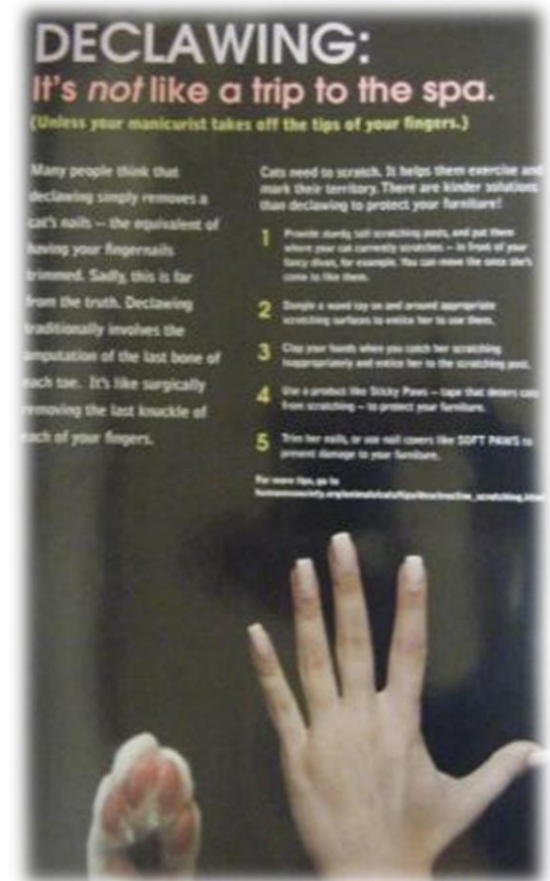
Bites and Scratches

- If you are ever bitten or scratched and IT BREAKS THE SKIN, you MUST report it to a staff member or supervisor immediately.
- We NEVER put a cat down automatically after a bite incident, so it is important to report all bites
 - If public gets bitten or scratches, also need to report.



Declawing Policy

- HSHV does not offer declawing services
- Try to guide interested visitors towards cats that are already declawed
- Education is key
 - Most people do not realize that up to the first knuckle is removed
 - **Point visitors to the framed posters in Uptown Cats that indicates which cats are already declawed**
 - Discuss the alternatives
 - Soft Paws (plastic claw covers)
 - Scratching posts
 - Trimmed claws



Open Admission Shelter

- Since HSHV is an “open admission” shelter, euthanasia is an inevitable part of the operation
 - Obvious circumstances when euthanasia is the humane course of action
 - unmanageable pain
 - severely injured
 - chronic medical condition
 - deemed unsafe
 - development of cage neuroses
 - You can choose to be included in the euthanasia update
 - If you feel the need to discuss a specific euthanasia, please consult the shelter manager or volunteer coordinator

Cat Comforter AdvoCATes



Angela Duquette



Mark Bertz



Sharon Apollo