

# 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

3<sup>rd</sup> 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 – Assisting Adopters

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

- Only serious adopters are eligible to handle cats to help stop the spread of disease and keep the stress low
- Please find a staff member or have an adopter check at the adoptions desk if they are interested in visiting.
- Cat Comforters may ask if an adopter has filled out an application (if no, you can show them adoption surveys up front). Staff will lead interactions and may ask trained comforters to assist.
  - Towels for customers?
  - Remain nearby to assist staff if needed
  - Share information about the cat's personality, what you know from visiting with them.

Thank YOU for choosing to adopt!  Humane Society of Huron Valley

**ADOPTER SURVEY** Date \_\_\_\_\_

First Name \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Primary Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Alternate Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email \_\_\_\_\_  Do not add me to the HSHV email list  
 Emergency Contact Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_  
 Driver's License Number \_\_\_\_\_

**Tell Us About Your Household**  
 We have \_\_\_\_\_ adults in our home and \_\_\_\_\_ are children  
 Ages of children in the home \_\_\_\_\_  
 We  Own  Rent our home  
 Our home is  Active  Quiet/Low-key  Somewhere in Between  
 We have dogs frequently visit our home

**Our pet history over the past few years:**

Pet's Name	Species/Breed	Age	Currently: in home, deceased, or living elsewhere

**We are adopting for**  
 Our family  Our child(ren)  Another family member  Companion for another pet  
 Guard dog  Barn cat  Outdoor pet

When we are not home, our pet will spend time:  In a crate in the house  Loose in the house  
 Confined in one room  In the yard  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Our pet needs to be alone \_\_\_\_\_ (#) of hours per day

**Tell Us About a Pet You'd Like to Adopt**  
 Easygoing or Laid Back  A Must  Doesn't Matter  Loves other animals  A Must  Doesn't Matter  Declawed  A Must  Doesn't Matter  
 Active or Energetic  A Must  Doesn't Matter  OK Being Alone  A Must  Doesn't Matter  
 Quiet  A Must  Doesn't Matter  Mouthing/Rough Play  Definite No  Can Train

**We will review the pet's medical history and behavior notes with you.**  
**Check any other topics you'd like to discuss:**

<input type="checkbox"/> Acclimating this pet to our home	<input type="checkbox"/> Introducing pets to a baby
<input type="checkbox"/> Introducing this pet to our resident pets	<input type="checkbox"/> Toys & fun
<input type="checkbox"/> House and crate training	<input type="checkbox"/> Preventatives (i.e. for heartworm, flea & tick)
<input type="checkbox"/> Basic Training	<input type="checkbox"/> Finding a pet trainer
<input type="checkbox"/> Nail Trimming or scratching managing tips	
<input type="checkbox"/> Moving with pets	



# 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:




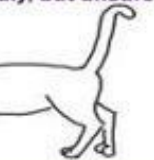
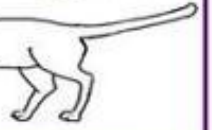







- Ears flat against head
- Crouched body posture as if ready to pounce
- Growling/hissing/spitting
- **Pupils dilated**
- **Possible swatting to keep you away**



















***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 

catsemeowblog.com

	← MORE AGGRESSIVE →			
	 TAIL MAY BE HELD ALOFT			
				
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 		LAST DITCH 
	TAIL TUCKED UNDER	TAIL TUCKED UNDER		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



**Lower Cage – on Stool**

- 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**

*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

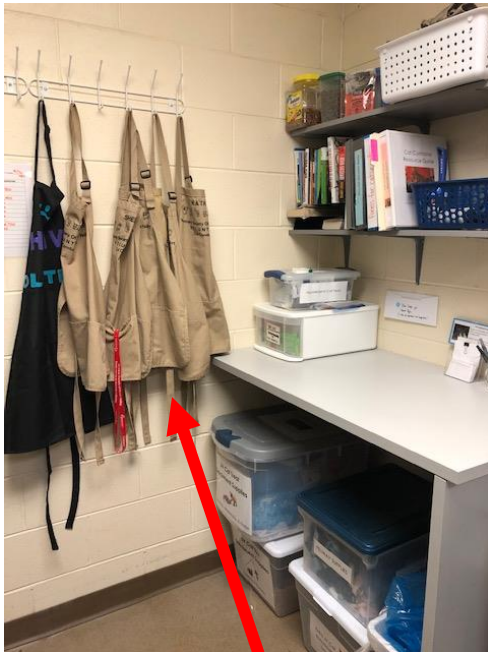
- **Fomite** = any inanimate object (as a towel or clothing or dishes or books or toys etc.) that can transmit infectious agents from one...in a shelter, the humans are the largest transmitter of disease.
- **Always use a clean towel with each cat you visit, roll up your sleeves**
- **Wash or sanitize “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



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



Important Messages  
for Cat Comforters

**Binders** for the  
Condos & Cat  
Behavior Resources

# 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

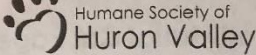
Purrs Plaza & Meow  
Meadows (the two  
communal rooms)

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
- If the cat has no name/is a stray, file under “A” and use the animal ID number as the name. Animal ID numbers start with the letter “A”.
- *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			

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. No name? Use the animal ID number which starts with "A"

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

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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
- 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  
Animal Date: 11/29/12  
Emancipation Date: 11/29/12

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

Deceased? No

Animal # A1742651 Name: Betty Bird

**Yellow Sticker:**  
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  
Animal Date: 11/29/12  
Emancipation Date: 11/29/12

Species: Dog  
Gender: Female  
Spay/Neuter? Yes  
Primary Breed: Chihuahua, Long Coat  
Primary Color: Black  
Age: 8 years  
Adult (Y/N): Yes  
Weight: 10.80 pound

Deceased? No

Animal # A17425925 Name: Cookie



## Just Chillin'

for information see a staff member

Staff Only -or-  Volunteers OK

Placed by \_\_\_\_\_  
(staff first name)

Review Date or Time \_\_\_\_\_

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/Stickers

- 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'**

for information see a staff member

Staff Only -or-  Volunteers OK

Placed by \_\_\_\_\_  
(staff first name)

Review Date or Time \_\_\_\_\_

# Drop-in Cards/Stickers 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/Stickers, 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

 Indicates special visitation requirements, handling, or housing. Check binders for more information or front desk (might be a memo in petpoint)

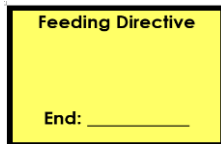
# Cage Card – Colored Signs


- Hanging next to the cage cards:
  - **Blue Dot** = you may NOT visit with these cats until you've taken the Level 2 training.
  - **I'm new/shy, Please go slow and Go Slow/ I'm Shy** = until you feel comfortable comforting "regular" cats, hold off on visiting these cats - but no special training required
  - **In Cage Visits Only** = most often on kitten cages, do not remove those kittens from their cages for visits
  - **Keep Calm** = May or may not be accompanied by a Blue Dot sign. Without Blue Dot sign, these cats don't require special training, but may be for more seasoned comforters



# Cage Card – Icon Stickers

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



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



- Rx = cats on medication for non-URI issue
- Rx and I have a cold = on medication for URI



- FIV Positive cat **+**


- FeLV Positive Cat 

# Order of Cat Visitation

## 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  URI sign\*\*

Can visit with FIV+ cats first, although this is not required



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

Has  URI sign\*\*

OR

 FeLV felines\*\*

\*\*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.

# Visiting with FeLV+

- Feline Leukemia is a retrovirus
- Transmitted only to other cats (not people or other animals)
  - Saliva (licking), nasal secretions
  - Infected blood
  - Mother to kittens
- Unstable virus, easily killed by disinfectants
- Visit last (**do not visit if you have visited with “watch” sticker cats**), and with any visit, clean towels and hand washing/sanitizing are a must!

# 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
- Special Cat Comforting duties – Camp PAWS, Pets & Pajamas, etc.
- Morning/Afternoon feeding still available
- Read to Calm

## 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](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](https://secure2.convio.net/hshv/site/SPageNavigator/volunteers/volunteer_resources.html)

## Head Start Clicker Training

- This program is currently under construction, we'll check back with new info soon!



# 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 can be used with all cats during visits. Please make sure to watch out for food bowl stickers, which indicate a special diet. These cats can not have treats or must have prescription treats, if available. Treats are available at the cat comforter station.
- 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!

# The Public – Our Guests

- Cat cages are not locked. Guests must not open cages without assistance from a 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 staff member
- If a guest is interested in visiting, volunteers can ask if they have filled out an adoption survey. Please get a staff member. If staff need your assistance, they will ask.



# 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.**

# 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 its 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



- I have cold card: 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.

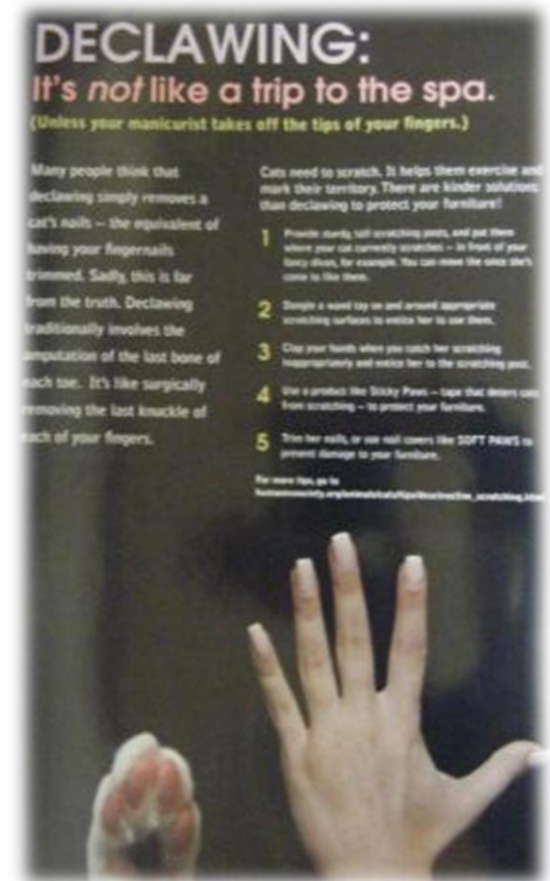
# Bites and Scratches

- 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