

Volunteer



Handbook

Thank you for your dedication to the animals.

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Welcome.



Welcome to the **Humane Society of Greater Niagara (HSGN)**. We are delighted to have you in our volunteer program. I truly believe there is no higher calling than helping the sick, the lost, and the homeless, whether they are animal or human. We are all grateful that you have followed your calling, and have chosen to give your time and talents to make a difference in the lives of Greater Niagara's animals.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Strooband'.

Kevin Strooband
Executive Director

HSGN

The HSGN is a non-profit, community-based organization and a registered charity. The HSGN has a volunteer board of directors, drawn from supporters and the community at large. Since 1881, the HSGN has been the leading organization providing a safe haven for sick, injured, and homeless animals in Niagara.

Mission

To be leaders in Animal Welfare.

Vision

A community where animals are valued and nurtured by an enlightened and compassionate society.



Hours of Operation

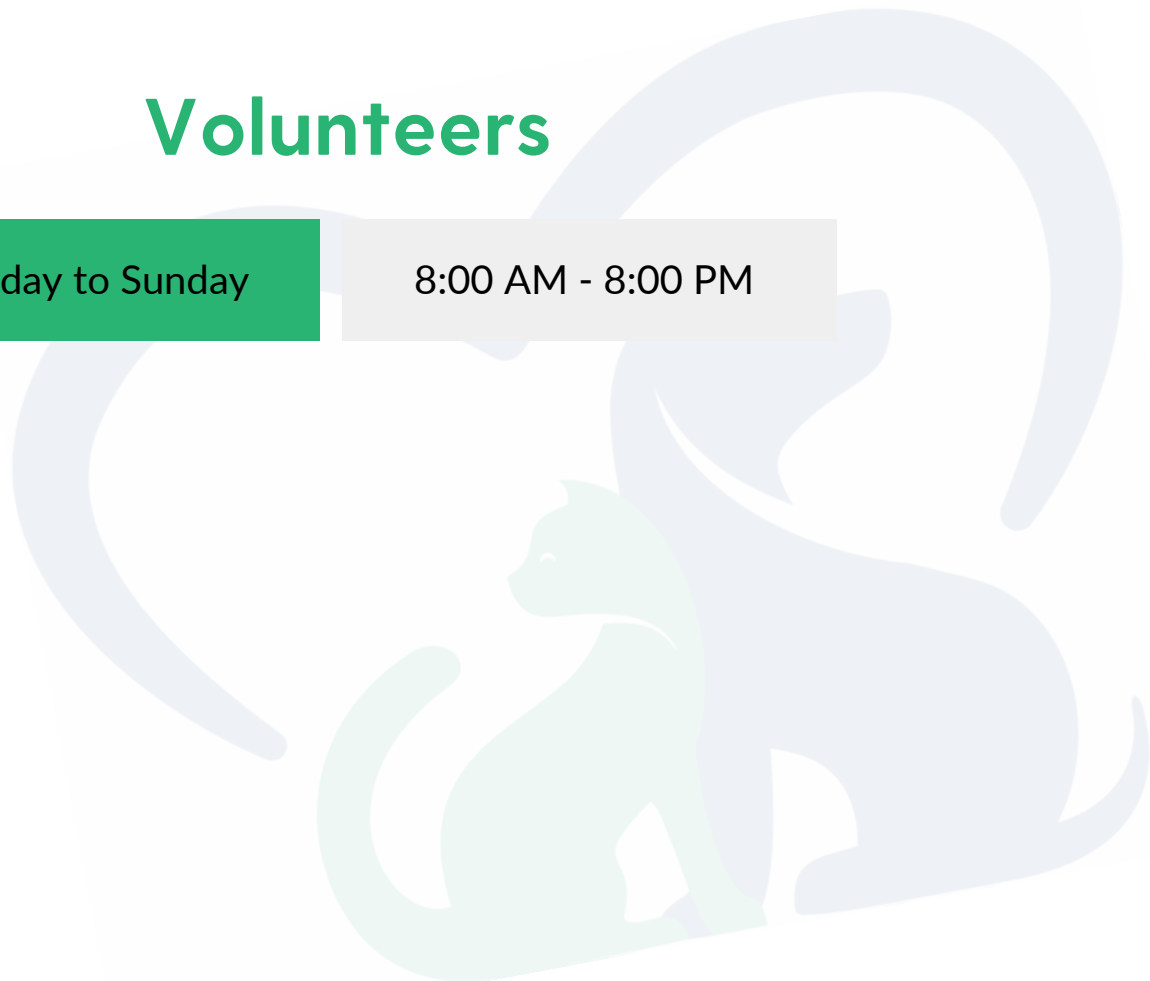
Public

Monday to Friday	9:00 AM - 5:00 PM
Saturday	10:00 AM - 4:00 PM
Sunday	11:00 AM - 3:00 PM

NOTE: The shelter is closed to the public on statutory holidays.

Volunteers

Monday to Sunday	8:00 AM - 8:00 PM
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Volunteering at the HSGN

Purpose of this Handbook

This handbook was created as a resource for all HSGN volunteers and is intended to set volunteers up for success in their new role. The general policies and guidelines contained in this manual apply to all HSGN volunteers, and they are responsible for reading, understanding, and adhering to all expectations as outlined.

If volunteers have questions about the information included in this handbook, they are asked to contact the Director of Operations, Mike France at mfrance@hsgn.ca or by telephone: 905-682-0767 ext. 249



General HSGN Volunteer Guidelines

A volunteer is anyone who gives time or service on behalf of and at the direction of the HSGN, without financial compensation. All volunteers must be familiar with and support the HSGN Mission.

- *Volunteers must be 18 years old or older (apart from any HSGN youth programs, including co-op).*
- *Most volunteer programs require a one-year commitment.*
- *Volunteers must have completed the online HSGN application form and signed their volunteer agreement before their first shift.*
- *Volunteers must be able to work safely around all species of animals.*
- *Volunteers must attend an orientation session and participate in program-specific training before volunteer duties begin.*
- *All on-site volunteers must sign in and out for their shift.*
- *Volunteer adoption applications must be signed off on by the Shelter Operations Coordinator, prior to completing the adoption.*
- *Staff members are welcome to volunteer in HSGN programs but the work performed in the programs shall not interfere with the staff members duties.*

NOTE: A volunteer must be officially accepted and enrolled by the **HSGN** prior to the performance of duties.

Organizational Culture

The HSGN has an organizational culture that embodies the following values: safety, service, respect, communication, excellence and diversity. As representatives of the HSGN, volunteers exemplify these values during their volunteerism. In HSGN culture, the safety of staff, volunteers and visitors is paramount. Following safety, service to the animals, community and colleagues is an HSGN priority. Respect for everyone – animal and human – follows. Communication that is clear, consistent, timely and comprehensive is the next priority. Following, volunteers must perform their work with excellence so that the HSGN can fulfill its mission to help animals in Niagara. Finally, a commitment to equity and inclusion by welcoming and celebrating diversity.

Making a good match between a volunteer's program of interest, their skills and talents, as well as meeting the needs of the HSGN is essential to fulfilling our mission. A volunteer's personal satisfaction in their volunteer role is important. If a program is not working for a volunteer, they are asked to consult with the specific program's coordinator at their earliest convenience to help the volunteer find a better fit.

Roles of Volunteers

Canine Enrichment: Adoption

Volunteers are responsible for walking adoption dogs (in HSGN dog runs), providing basic enrichment, encouraging basic obedience (sit, down, loose-leash walking) and following behaviour modification plan instructions, if provided.

Canine Enrichment: Stray

Experienced volunteers are responsible for walking stray dogs (in HSGN dog runs), providing basic enrichment, encouraging basic obedience (sit, down, loose-leash walking) and following behaviour modification plan instructions, if provided.

Feline Enrichment: Adoption

Volunteers are responsible for providing in, or out-of-cage enrichment to felines in the form of socialization, play, exercise, visual stimulation and mild grooming.

Feline Enrichment: UFR

Experienced volunteers are responsible for providing in or out-of-cage enrichment to under-socialized felines in the form of socialization, play, exercise, visual stimulation and mild grooming.

Roles of Volunteers

Small Animals

Volunteers are responsible for caring for and socializing small animals, including in or out-of-cage enrichment, play, visual stimulation and mild grooming for rabbits, guinea pigs, etc.

Office Support

Volunteers are responsible for a range of office tasks in support of various administrative needs.

Bingo

Volunteers are responsible for conducting off-site Bingos to benefit the HSGN.

Foster

Foster volunteers care for HSGN animals in the foster volunteer's home, under the supervision of the HSGN foster team. The length of foster care varies on a case-by-case basis and ranges from weeks to months. Animals may include cats, kittens, dogs, puppies and various small animals or birds.

Events

Volunteers are responsible for performing a wide range of tasks in support of HSGN special events and third-party events, from organizing to guest support to event set-up and tear-down.

Photography

Volunteers are responsible for photographing adoptable animals for the HSGN website and for photographing HSGN events and activities for various other needs.



The HSGN Commitment

The **HSGN** will:

- *Provide the volunteer with program-specific volunteer orientation;*
- *Provide program-specific training as applicable to the volunteer program, and as required by law;*
- *Designate a volunteer program lead for each volunteer as the **HSGN** point of contact on all matters, and the volunteer program lead will be available for discussions concerning any problems or suggestions;*
- *Provide workspace (as deemed necessary by the **HSGN**) to enable the volunteer to perform their volunteer duties;*
- *Provide all volunteers with a copy of the **HSGN** complaints procedure; and,*
- *Provide all volunteers with a copy of any policies and procedures that may be required by law or that the **HSGN** deems necessary for the volunteer to perform their volunteer duties.*



A Volunteer's Commitment

HSGN volunteers will:

- *Recognize that their services are provided strictly in a voluntary capacity and without any remuneration, compensation, benefits, insurance (WSIB) or discounts for any product or service;*
- *Acknowledge that they are not an employee of HSGN for any purpose whatsoever and are therefore not entitled to compensation under the Employment Standards Act, the Income Tax Act, the Labour Relations Act, the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, the Human Rights Code or any other legislation or regulation applicable to these parties;*
- *Agree not to represent the HSGN outside of their capacity as a volunteer and to wear their volunteer shirt to identify themselves as a volunteer when volunteering for the HSGN;*
- *Agree not to interfere with staff or management duties or decisions, or direct staff in any way;*
- *Only access designated volunteer areas;*
- *Agree to be present for scheduled shifts and to carry out volunteer duties promptly and reliably, consistent with their volunteer job description;*
- *Agree to familiarize themselves and comply with the HSGN's policies and procedures;*
- *Agree to provide their home address, telephone number, email address and mobile phone number for the HSGN to contact them when necessary and shall provide emergency contact information;*
- *Agree to hold absolutely confidential all information that may be obtained, directly or indirectly, concerning clients, animals and staff, and they agree not to seek to obtain confidential information from clients or others;*
- *Be open to constructive feedback and be a willing participant in any required investigation or inquiry;*
- *Avoid using their mobile devices during any volunteer shift to ensure they are focused on their assigned tasks to keep themselves and others safe;*
- *Not carry anything on their person which may cause harm to themselves, an animal or another human being; and,*
- *Fully understand and agree that failure to comply with any of the obligations outlined in this handbook or other volunteer-related documents, for any reason whatsoever, while performing their volunteer services, may result in removal from their volunteer placement.*

Volunteer Policies

Alcohol & Substance Abuse

The safety of staff, volunteers, visitors and animals is a top priority. The HSGN recognizes that, while alcohol and cannabis are freely-available and legal substances, their use and misuse can have serious consequences. Alcohol and cannabis-impaired judgment have no place in a business environment. In addition, driving under the influence is dangerous to the individual and the public.

As such, the HSGN has a zero-tolerance policy against volunteering under the influence. Furthermore, volunteers are prohibited from using, selling, transferring or possessing controlled substances, illegal substances, cannabis or alcohol while volunteering on behalf of the HSGN or on HSGN property or at any HSGN-attended event. Any volunteer found to be in breach of this policy will be subject to corrective action, up to and including removal from the program.

NOTE: *Smoking during a volunteer shift should be avoided, except during a mutually agreed upon break and only in designated smoking areas.*



Complaints

The following process must be followed:

Step 1

Speak directly with the staff or volunteer member involved. *If unsatisfied with the result or response, go to step 2.*

Step 2

Speak with the program coordinator. *If unsatisfied with the result or response, go to step 3.*

Step 3

Speak to the Director of Operations. The Director of Operations can be reached at mfrance@hsgn.ca or 905-682-0767 ext 249. *If unsatisfied with the result or response, go to step 4.*

Step 4

Speak with the Executive Director. The Executive Director can be reached at kstrooband@hsgn.ca or 905-682-0200. *If unsatisfied with the result or response, go to step 5.*

Step 5

Correspond with the President of the HSGN Board of Directors. Correspondence should be addressed to the President, HSGN Board of Directors, 160 Fourth Ave., St. Catharines, ON L2S 0B6 or at director@hsgn.ca.

Exceptions

- Concerns about HSGN policy should begin at **Step 3**.
- Concerns regarding possible harassment of any kind should begin at **Step 4**.
- Concerns regarding the Executive Director should begin at **Step 5**.



Conflict-Free Work Environment

The HSGN is committed to providing a work environment that is free from discrimination and harassment, and supportive of the productivity, dignity and self-esteem of every employee and volunteer. As such, the HSGN will not tolerate any form of harassment of or by any of its employees, volunteers or clients in the workplace or at any work-related and/or social functions, or under any other circumstance. Everyone in the workplace must be dedicated to preventing workplace harassment. Directors, coordinators, lead hands, senior staff, staff, volunteers and clients are expected to uphold this policy and will be held accountable by the HSGN.

In the event a volunteer experiences harassment during a volunteer shift, they are responsible for:

- Informing the harasser that the behaviour is not acceptable
- Reporting any incidents of workplace harassment
- Approaching the Director of Operations for information or clarification of this policy or for an informal discussion regarding a possible complaint. Such inquiries will be held in confidence; and,
- Supporting harassment investigations by making themselves available for interviews, as required.

Volunteers who feel they are being mistreated shall:

- Make their objection clearly known to the offender and ask them to stop
- Prepare and maintain a written record of the dates, times, nature of the behaviour and witnesses (if any); and,
- Immediately report the incident, in writing, to the Director of Operations, for further investigation.

Corrective Action

After an investigation has taken place, and if allegations are substantiated, appropriate corrective action will be undertaken in accordance with HSGN policies. No complaint will be regarded as substantiated until it has been investigated.

False Claims

If it is determined whether through an investigation or by some other means that a complaint was false, the party(ies) responsible may be subject to disciplinary action or removal from their position.



Euthanasia

Euthanasia is a difficult, but necessary part of animal care — especially for an open-admission shelter, like the HSGN. The HSGN wants volunteers to know there is no euthanasia of healthy, adoptable animals, but sometimes an animal's poor medical status or dangerous behaviour can make euthanasia the only humane choice. The outcome of euthanasia is a difficult staff decision and is never made lightly. Volunteers are expected to respect the choices that staff must make and are welcome to ask their program coordinator for information that will help them to understand and respect the reasons for the decision.

Social Media

The HSGN requires that volunteers refrain from posting information and photos of HSGN animals on social media, other than those previously authorized by HSGN management or those that are actively available for adoption. Volunteers are encouraged to help promote adoptable animals, follow the HSGN on all social media platforms and share posted content.

Volunteer Adoption of Animals

An important part of volunteering at the HSGN is a personal commitment to the animals. One of the forms this can take is fostering and adopting the animals in HSGN care. While it is important to support volunteers in this process, it is equally important that the HSGN is accountable for its decisions and for the placement of its animals. To this end, the following policy addresses adoption and fostering by all HSGN volunteers.

All **HSGN** volunteers:

- Must complete the regular HSGN adoption process for adopting an animal
- Only adopt animals from the HSGN with authorization from the Shelter Operations Coordinator
- Only adopt an animal for themselves, at the specified adoption fee
- May not use their scheduled volunteer time at HSGN to find animals for themselves or others; and,
- May only adopt animals that are currently available for adoption. They must be healthy and temperament-assessed and qualify for adoption. As such, the HSGN cannot place animals on hold nor discuss animals that are not available for adoption.

All volunteer adoption inquiries and applications must be triaged through the HSGN adoption team, consistent with rehoming policies. All applications that are supported by the adoption team will be forwarded to Shelter Operation Coordinator for review.



Volunteer Code of Conduct

Regulations for the acceptable conduct and behaviour of volunteers are necessary for the orderly operation of any organization. The purpose of this code of conduct is to provide guidelines to promote understanding of what is considered acceptable and unacceptable conduct and behaviour and to encourage consistency throughout the organization.

Volunteers who fail to maintain appropriate conduct and behaviour during their shift may be removed from their volunteer role and/or the volunteer program.

Volunteers are expected to conduct personal and other outside affairs in a manner that does not conflict with the mission, mandate and values of the HSGN. Volunteer conduct applies both on and off duty.

Appropriate conduct and behaviour includes but are not limited to:

- Adherence to volunteer policies, practices and procedures;
- Wearing proper attire and footwear during hours spent volunteering, appropriate to the job performed.
- Competent performance of all job duties as assigned;
- Courtesy to and respect for everyone they encounter during their volunteer shift;
- Not seeking out information beyond the scope of the volunteer's duties and,
- Prompt and regular attendance for their scheduled shift;

Inappropriate conduct and behaviour includes, but are not limited to:

- Racist, sexist or homophobic comments, writing, or images and or using obscene, abusive language
- Spreading malicious gossip or rumours;
- Excessive or inappropriate personal use of cell-phones or other devices; and,
- Horseplay or throwing objects.

Unacceptable conduct or behaviour includes, but are not limited to:

- Harassing, threatening, intimidating, coercing any person at any time;
- Possession of guns, weapons or explosives on HSGN property;
- Wilful violation of safety rules and procedures;
- Wilful neglect and/or mishandling equipment and machinery;
- Unsafe driving of HSGN vehicles;
- Accessing HSGN information for uses aside from their volunteer role;
- Fighting or aggressive behaviours;
- Breaching confidentiality, their signed volunteer agreement or this handbook.
- Intentionally provoking confrontation with a staff, volunteer or public member;
- Mishandling or inappropriate behaviour to an animal
- Poor or careless work;
- Volunteering while under the influence of alcohol, drugs or prohibited substances;
- Theft and/or falsification of HSGN records;
- Distracting staff from their duties;
- Attending unauthorized areas of the shelter outside of assigned duties,

Volunteer Conflict of Interest

The HSGN is a non-profit, community-based agency supported by the community and holds purchase-of-service agreements with various levels of government. It must maintain confidence and trust in its integrity, objectivity and impartiality. A loss of confidence and trust could result in funding shortfalls as well as call into question all its current beliefs and values.

A conflict of interest situation may arise when the private interests of representatives of the HSGN influence decision-making on matters related to the HSGN. The policy is meant to ensure that the HSGN maintains public trust. Volunteers shall refrain from all conflict of interest situations. If a volunteer becomes aware of or becomes involved in, a conflict of interest, he or she shall immediately disclose such conflict of interest to the Director of Operations. A volunteer must also disclose what could be “perceived” by an outsider as a conflict of interest. A volunteer cannot avoid the disclosure requirements because the volunteer feels that he or she was not, is not, or will not be influenced by the conflict of interest.

A volunteer who is unsure whether something constitutes a conflict of interest shall immediately discuss the specific concern with The Director of Operations in order to determine the HSGN's position on the issue.

The Director of Operations, in consultation with the Executive Director, will determine:

- Whether a conflict of interest exists;
- The seriousness of the potential or actual conflict of interest; and
- What steps are necessary to protect the HSGN against the conflict of interest.

Personal Gain

It is a conflict of interest for representatives of the HSGN to use their influence or position for personal or monetary gain. This includes soliciting or accepting for themselves or for their relatives any favours, gifts, entertainment, hospitality, or special consideration of more than token value from persons or businesses who have or seek, business interests with the HSGN. It also includes using the HSGN's name, likeness, facilities, assets, and resources or represent the authority of one's position with the HSGN for personal gain or private interest for a volunteer or relative of a volunteer. Representatives of the HSGN will not use their position to influence or gain favours from HSGN staff or accord preferential or differential treatment to family members, friends, or fellow members of any organization.

Volunteers are responsible for reporting to their program coordinator, within 24 hours, the receipt of any gift, favour, and or entertainment received as a result of their volunteering with the HSGN. The program coordinator will disclose this to the Director of Operations.



Volunteer Conflict of Interest

Prizes

In general, volunteers and immediate family members of volunteers should not participate in any activity that results in winning a prize unless the process used to determine the winner is demonstrably objective, and volunteers are invited to participate.

With respect to incentivize prizes for fundraising, because volunteers are often our biggest fundraising agents, it is permitted for volunteers and or their family members to win a prize for the larger amount raised as long as the process of selecting a winner is open and can be audited.

Volunteers who violate the HSGN conflict of interest policy will be subject to disciplinary action, which may include termination of volunteer duties.

Volunteer Dress Code

- *All volunteers must wear a volunteer t-shirt (or smock: cat volunteers) while volunteering for HSGN programs, except for foster volunteers.*
- *All volunteers at the HSGN must have a professional appearance while on duty. Volunteers working in an office environment should wear business casual attire.*
- *Items of clothing that are not appropriate include t-shirts with expletives or inappropriate slogans or words, any clothing that exposes midriff or cleavage, skirts, or tank tops, etc.*
- *All volunteers must wear closed-toe shoes.*
- *Volunteers who have direct contact with the animals may not wear long earrings and/or necklaces and non-breakaway lanyards. Hair must be tied back.*
- *Volunteers are required to wear personal protective equipment, such as attire according to program needs, as communicated by the program coordinator (i.e. smocks for CSI volunteers).*



Volunteer Reference

Volunteering for any organization is not only beneficial to the organization receiving the gift of time, but it can also be a great way for a volunteer to develop job-related skills and gain experience in a specific field. All requests for references must be submitted and issued through the Shelter Operations Coordinator (SOC).

The SOC will only issue letters of reference for volunteers when requested by the volunteer, and only after they have made a minimum one-year commitment to the HSGN. Letters of reference will be issued to the volunteer within 10 days of the request, and the letter will include:

- A brief description of volunteer programs the volunteer has supported;
- The volunteer start date (and end date, if applicable); and,
- A confirmation of total hours given, if known.

On occasion, a third-party organization will contact the HSGN looking for a reference for a current or past volunteer. The HSGN cannot release information to a third-party organization without consent from the volunteer to release information. The HSGN will only release information once the volunteer has granted permission and will provide the same information found in the letter of reference.

Volunteer Resignation or Removal of Duties

The HSGN acknowledges that volunteers choose to give their time and recognizes that volunteers serve on an at-will basis, and therefore can resign at any time. Should a volunteer feel the HSGN volunteer program is no longer working for them, and would like to resign, they are asked to advise the program coordinator as soon as possible to close the file and open recruitment to replace their shift.

Volunteers are a critical asset for the HSGN. However, instances can occur where volunteers are not found to be a good fit for the volunteer duties they have been assigned, or there may be instances where volunteers behave in a manner inconsistent with HSGN policies or procedures, or they may have a high rate of absenteeism, which affects departmental operations. At that point, it may become necessary to remove volunteer duties within a specific program, or entirely from the HSGN. Similarly, to when a volunteer makes the choice that the HSGN volunteer program is no longer working for them, the HSGN can remove volunteers from their role at any time.

NOTE: The HSGN reserves the right to modify, add, revoke, suspend, terminate or change any or all policies or procedures, in whole or in part, at any time, with or without notice. If a discrepancy exists between any policies contained within this document and applicable legislation, the legislation will prevail.

If a staff member resigns their paid position and is serving as a volunteer they will be required to reapply as a volunteer with the HSGN.



Health and Safety

Health and safety is an essential part of HSGN operations. Volunteers receive a basic introduction to health and safety during their general orientation. Volunteers will then receive program-specific training on their first shift, consistent with their program's risks, provided by their designated program coordinator. In addition, the HSGN will provide appropriate personal protective equipment as needed to keep volunteers safe while performing their duties.

Zoonotic Disease

A zoonosis (plural zoonoses) is a disease or infection that can be spread from an animal to a human.

All animals, like people, are capable of harbouring many different diseases. Sometimes animals get sick from these diseases, but sometimes they can be carrying disease agents without actually becoming physically ill. Some of these diseases, called zoonoses, can be passed to people and could potentially make a person sick. It is important for volunteers to be aware of risks to know how to protect themselves from being infected.

Animals in a shelter environment are more likely to be carrying these diseases than pets in homes. Since zoonotic diseases can be spread in many different ways, there are some important and simple precautions that need to be taken to protect health.

Zoonotic diseases can be spread through:

- *Direct contact with an infected animal or its body fluids (i.e. licks to your face);*
- *Touching an object that has previously been in contact with an infected animal;*
- *Inhaling aerosolized disease particles (e.g. a cough or sneeze);*
- *Ingesting the infectious agent (by touching the mouth/food with a dirty hand); and,*
- *Contact with an intermediate animal that spreads the disease, such as a flea.*

Some people are at a greater risk of becoming ill from a zoonosis than others. Although anyone can become infected if exposed to a zoonotic disease agent, those who have weakened or compromised immune systems are at greater risk and can develop a more severe clinical illness. This includes, for example, those undergoing chemotherapy, HIV infection, taking medication after receiving a blood transfusion or organ transplant, or autoimmune disease. The elderly and very young are also at increased risk. As evidence exists that the flu can be passed on to dogs, we ask that those volunteers who are ill, refrain from volunteering until better.

Examples of Zoonoses

Giardia

Is caused by a protozoan parasite and is less commonly seen. It causes severe and ongoing diarrhea in both animals and humans and will resolve with and without medication.

Toxoplasmosis

This is caused by a microscopic single-celled organism called Toxoplasma gondii that can be found in cat feces. It can cause flu-like symptoms if ingested and is especially harmful to pregnant women as it can cross the placenta and damage the fetus, even leading to miscarriage. It is safe to be in contact with cats and have them in the home during pregnancy, but it is recommended that somebody else cleans litter boxes.

Rabies

Although very rare in Canada, rabies is a fatal, untreatable disease. Pre and post-exposure vaccines are available, however, only to prevent disease. It is a virus that can infect any mammal and is spread through the saliva of infected animals through bite wounds.

Ringworm

This is a skin infection caused by a fungus, not a worm. It causes irregularly shaped areas of fur loss and rough, scaly skin on infected animals. In people, it causes a classic round, itchy, red lesion. It can be contracted by touching an infected animal or the hair they have shed in the environment. Some people are more susceptible to infection than others, but in general, those with a weaker immune system are at a greatest risk.

Prevention and Protection

The good news is that most zoonoses can be prevented by taking simple precautionary actions. To reduce the risk of transmission, the HSGN:

- Treats the animals for common parasites (intestinal worms, fleas);
- Performs a health exam of each animal upon arrival at the shelter (except some aggressive ones);
- Isolates clinically infectious animals and follows strict sanitation protocols;
- Provides training and education for volunteers;
- Reduces the risk of bite and scratch wounds by temperament-testing animals, identifying possible aggressive animals with warning cards on their cage/run and trimming nails;

To protect from zoonoses, volunteers must:

- Wash their hands after touching each animal and before leaving the shelter or touching their face;
- Use alcohol-based hand gels after interacting with an animal;
- Avoid eating and drinking when working with animals, and only eat/drink in non-animal areas;
- Talk to a doctor to identify personal risk factors.

Hand Hygiene Tips

1. Clean hands before and after handling animals or items in the animals' environment.
2. Use alcohol-based hand sanitizers because they:
 - a. Can be used when hands are not visibly soiled; and,
 - b. Provide a rapid kill of most transient microorganisms, but are not recommended when risks of ringworm or panleukopenia are significant.

Effective hand washing using alcohol-based sanitizers

1. Ensure hands are visibly clean (if soiled, use soap).
2. Apply one or two full pumps of cleaning product.
3. Spread product completely over all surfaces on hands, concentrating on fingertips, between fingers, back of hands and base of thumbs (commonly missed areas).
4. Rub hands until the product is dry, for a minimum of 15 to 20 seconds.

Effective hand washing using soap

1. Soap and water are recommended when significant soiling or risk is present.
2. Wet hands with warm (not hot) water.
3. Apply liquid or foam soap, one or two full pumps.
4. Vigorously lather all surfaces of hands for a minimum of 15 seconds, as removal of bacteria requires a minimum of 15 seconds of mechanical action (Pay particular attention to fingertips, between fingers, backs of hands and base of the thumbs – the most commonly missed areas).
5. Dry hands thoroughly.

Information borrowed from the ASPCA.



Designated Food and Drink Locations at the HSGN

The HSGN is committed to a safe and healthy working environment. To minimize the risk of zoonotic transmission, volunteers must refrain from eating and drinking at their workstations, during their shifts. Volunteers are permitted to eat and drink in the adoption processing area (unless in use). The only exception to this is for canine enrichment volunteers working in stray or adoption, where they are permitted to keep a closed water bottle, to access during their shift, after they've washed their hands.

Reporting of Injuries and Accidents

Working in an animal environment presents certain risks, as animal handling is required for many positions. It is very important for volunteers to pay close attention to the animals they are working with, assessing their body language, as well as monitoring their environment to remain safe in their roles.

Our two most common volunteer-related injuries are bites/scratches from dogs or cats and slips/falls. Should a volunteer get injured during their shift, or notice an unsafe working condition, they should report it immediately to their program coordinator, or nearest staff member in the event of a major injury. Volunteer safety is a top priority followed by implementing changes to rectify the unsafe situation and complete any required documentation to prevent this from happening again.

Volunteers are required to help keep themselves, other volunteers and staff, the animals, and their overall working environment as safe as possible. *All injuries and accidents are required to be reported to the Shelter Operations Coordinator at cwelychka@hsgn.ca.*

Compassion Fatigue

Compassion fatigue is an occupational hazard that can include fatigue, emotional distress or apathy resulting from the constant demands of caring for others physically and emotionally. It is a burned-out feeling, but it does not go away and can make a person feel sadness and despair to the extent that it impairs their own health and well-being. Sometimes volunteers can develop compassion fatigue as a result of their day-to-day life experiences, which can be exacerbated by volunteering in an animal care environment.

If compassion fatigue goes unnoticed and untreated, it can lead to self-medicating behaviours, including food, alcohol and drugs and it may display itself in unusual behaviours, such as extreme shopping, mood swings and making simple mistakes on the job. Sometimes those suffering may need professional help to get to the root of the problem. It is important to be aware of this occupational hazard to identify it, incorporate activities into life to minimize risk and take proper measures if at risk.

It is important for volunteers to see their doctor if they may be suffering from compassion fatigue.

Make an Even Bigger Impact

Employee Matched Giving

The HSGN would like to thank all volunteers for opting to give their time to the animals in HSGN care! There may be a way for volunteers to double the impact of their volunteer time! Many employers encourage volunteerism from their employees and give money to causes where their employees are giving their time. If a volunteer is currently employed, they can ask their human resources department to confirm if such a program exists within their workplace. If so, the HSGN would be happy to assist with any paperwork needed. If a volunteer is retired, their previous employer may also have a matching program that they can participate in — they can simply contact their previous employer to learn more.

If the employer does offer such a program, volunteers are asked to email our administrative assistant at admin@hsgn.ca to share the program's details and have an even greater impact.

PAW Monthly Giving

The HSGN relies on PAW heroes to help provide Greater Niagara's animals the second chance they deserve. PAW monthly giving is the most cost-efficient way to donate and the best way to help the animals. When someone becomes a PAW hero their monthly gifts go towards:

- *Feeding and sheltering thousands of animals;*
- *Providing life-saving veterinary care;*
- *Rescuing and protecting the animals in the community;*
- *Supporting public outreach and education programs; and,*
- *Reducing administration costs.*

In addition to their gift of time, volunteers are asked to consider becoming a PAW hero! Volunteers can make even more of a difference! They can visit the HSGN website, email admin@hsgn.ca or call 905-682-0767 ext. 400 to sign-up today.



HSGN Confidentiality Policy

Confidentiality Policy

The Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA) came into effect on January 1, 2004. It is imperative that the Humane Society of Greater Niagara (HSGN) addresses the issue of privacy and confidentiality. The HSGN takes the confidentiality of its business very seriously. The HSGN requires that each of its staff and volunteers review and agree to the following terms. This includes any confidential information accessed prior to this agreement.

1. All information obtained by you during the course of, or after your affiliation with the HSGN will be regarded as confidential.
2. You agree to keep as confidential the details of the HSGN, any associated entities, affiliates, agents, suppliers or customers, animals, etc.
3. At no time will you photograph, publish, communicate, divulge or disclose, in any manner whatsoever, to any unauthorized party or parties, any information, without the consent or approval of the Executive Director.
4. At no time will you disparage, either in writing or verbally, the HSGN or any HSGN staff or volunteer member, including posting anything publicly or on any private social media platform.
5. If appropriateness is in question, seek consent or approval of the Executive Director regarding any information or concerns you may have.
6. Upon completion of volunteer service, you agree to deliver to the HSGN any and all equipment, keys, data, manuals, notes, records or any other documents prepared for or during the Society's business activity.
7. Your obligations extend in perpetuity.

Please sign this form below to indicate that you have read, understood and agree to comply with the terms of confidentiality, as stated above. You further agree you have read the volunteer handbook and will comply with the contents. Failure to follow the handbook or confidentiality document may result in removal from the HSGN volunteer program.

NAME (PRINT):

SIGNATURE:

DATE:

WITNESS NAME:

SIGNATURE:

This form must be signed by all volunteers.