



The Humane Society of the Treasure Coast



# Volunteer HANDBOOK



**HUMANE SOCIETY**  
*of the Treasure Coast, Inc.*

*NO KILL. NONPROFIT. FOR THE ANIMALS.*

**SHELTER & ADMINISTRATION:**

4100 SW Leighton Farm Ave  
Palm City, FL 34990  
(772) 223-8822

**CENTRAL THRIFT STORE:**

3302 SE Federal Hwy  
Stuart, FL 34994  
(772) 286-6909

**NORTH THRIFT STORE:**

1099 NW 21st St  
Stuart, FL 34994  
(772) 232-4887

**HSTCI.ORG**

# Welcome to HSTC!

## Thank You

for your interest in volunteering at The Humane Society of the Treasure Coast (HSTC) and for your desire to help the animals in our care. This handbook was designed for you as a reference and to help you be a successful HSTC volunteer. It provides some history as well as program philosophy, practices, and policies. While no volunteer handbook can answer all the questions you might have about our program, this handbook will give you a place to start and help you feel comfortable with our organization. Please don't hesitate to ask questions! HSTC depends on you - your success is the animals' success. It is hoped that you will enjoy your volunteer work and the animals here, and that you will find HSTC a rewarding place to volunteer. Thank you for your interest in our HSTC volunteer program!



**LAURA FABER**  
VOLUNTEER PROGRAM  
MANAGER

 *Laura Faber*

## Who We Are

Founded in 1955, the Humane Society of the Treasure Coast (HSTC) is the only open access, no kill, non-profit animal welfare organization operating in Martin County. With nearly 3,000 animals being rehomed annually through our adoption programs and other services, HSTC has joined leading shelters around the state and country as a model organization for lifesaving culture change in its community. HSTC accepts all Martin County animals regardless of health, age, temperament or breed. Over the years hundreds of thousands of animals have received care through HSTC's programs and services. Charity Navigator continues to recognize HSTC with their prestigious 4-star rating for fiscal management and transparency. These consecutive ratings place HSTC in the top 5% of the more than 10,000 charities reviewed.

## Our Mission

The mission of the Humane Society of the Treasure Coast is to provide compassionate care and nurture the bond between people and pets.

## Hours of Operation

**Shelter & Administration:** Monday – Saturday 10:30 a.m. – 5 p.m. and Sunday 10:30 a.m. – 4 p.m.

4100 SW Leighton Farm Ave.  
Palm City, FL 34990  
Phone: (772) 223-8822  
Fax: (772) 220-3610

**North & Central Thrift Stores:** Daily 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. (Donations 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.)

### North Thrift Store

1099 NW 21st St.  
Stuart, FL 34994  
Phone: (772) 232-4887

### Central Thrift Store

3302 SE Federal Hwy  
Stuart, FL 34994  
(772) 286-6909

*\*Shelter & Thrift Stores are closed on holidays\**

# HSTC Volunteer Opportunities

**Canine Enrichment:** Volunteers create a range of innovative and engaging enrichment activities and treats designed specifically for shelter dogs. Shifts are 1.5 hours long each week.

**Cat Care (Shelter & Thrift):** Feeding, cleaning, and socializing the adoptable cats in our care. Presenting the cats to prospective adopters and talking about their personalities. Shifts are about 2-3 hours long each week. Cat care shifts are located at our main shelter, as well as at both thrift stores.

**Community Events:** Participation in community events and fundraisers as part of a planning committee or day-of-event needs such as selling raffle tickets, assisting at the information booth, etc. Shifts are as needed.

**Critter Care:** Cleaning, feeding, grooming, and presenting our critters to prospective adopters. Critters consist of mostly guinea pigs and rabbits, but occasionally we have other critters who need to be cared for, such as hamsters, ferrets, etc. Shifts range from about 2-4 hours weekly.

**Dog Walking:** Volunteers walk the dogs around our Memorial Garden to provide basic exercise, mental stimulation and needed human contact. Volunteers must be able to handle large, energetic dogs over 50 pounds. Shifts are about 2 hours long each week.

**Front Desk/Administration:** Assisting the customer service staff members with answering phones, organizing paperwork, assisting customers, etc. Shifts range from 2-3 hours weekly.

**Mobile Adoptions:** Handling of pets outside of the shelter to increase awareness of our mission and exposure to prospective adopters. Bringing dogs to events wearing an "Adopt Me" vest and assisting in off-site adoptions. Must be able to handle large, energetic dogs over 50 pounds. Shifts are as needed.

**Pet Therapy & Humane Education:** Volunteers, along with their certified therapy pets, deliver educational programs to schools and youth groups, visit hundreds of seniors each month at senior centers, nursing homes and the hospital, and provide interactive programs for children with special needs. Shifts are as needed.

**Public Spay & Neuter:** Assisting surgery staff in prepping animals for surgery, monitoring animals during recovery and reviewing follow up instructions with owners. Shifts are about 3-4 hours weekly.

**Thrift Stores:** Cashiering, pricing incoming items, sorting donations and assisting customers. Shifts range from 2-4 hours weekly.

**Foster Care:** Volunteers keep our shelter pets in their own home for a period of time, ranging from days to weeks.

## Volunteer Program Structure

Here at the Humane Society of the Treasure Coast (HSTC), volunteers report directly to various department supervisors, however, all of the volunteer departments are overseen by the Volunteer Program Manager:

**Laura Faber**

**Volunteer Program Manager**

**Phone number: (772) 600-3214**

**E-mail: LFaber@hstc1.org**

For general concerns, or if you can't get in contact your department supervisor, you may contact the Volunteer Program Manager.

To contact your volunteer department directly please use the following e-mail addresses:

- **Canine Enrichment:** TSteffen@hstc1.org
- **Cat Care (Shelter):** ShelterCatSchedule@hstc1.org
- **Community Events:** Events@hstc1.org
- **Critter Care:** CritterSchedule@hstc1.org
- **Dog Walking:** DogWalkingSchedule@hstc1.org
- **Foster Care:** NHasler@hstc1.org
- **Front Desk:** FrontDeskSchedule@hstc1.org
- **Pet Therapy/Humane Education:** LFaber@hstc1.org
- **Spay and Neuter:** PSNschedule@hstc1.org
- **Thrift Store Cat Care (North):** NorthCatSchedule@hstc1.org
- **Thrift Store Cat Care (Central):** CentralCatSchedule@hstc1.org
- **Thrift Store Retail (North):** DDesruisseaux@hstc1.org
- **Thrift Store Retail (Central):** BZopff@hstc1.org and KEllis@hstc1.org

## Volunteer Program Goals

The primary goals of our volunteer program are to:

- Provide for the emotional and behavioral wellbeing of the shelter animals
- Support the staff in meeting the mission of HSTC
- Increase the number of lasting adoptions
- Educate the public on the responsibilities associated with companion animal guardianship, emphasizing the basic needs and behaviors of animals, which is key to keeping animals in the home

## Volunteer Perks

Volunteers at HSTC enjoy a number of perks including an invitation to the Annual Volunteer Appreciation Banquet, a 30% discount at our thrift stores (after 3 months of weekly service), eligibility for Volunteer of the Month, and more!

## Volunteer Rights & Responsibilities

As a volunteer, you have rights and responsibilities. The Humane Society of the Treasure Coast (HSTC) believes volunteers are vital to our operations and commits to the appropriate infrastructure to support volunteer engagement.

### **At HSTC, volunteers have the right to:**

- Work in a safe & healthy workplace, to know about unsafe work and refuse unsafe work
- A supportive environment in which to work and contribute
- Effective and meaningful volunteer involvement practices
- Have a say about their work and ideas regarding their role or program
- Provide feedback and receive feedback when requested and at regular intervals
- Ask for and receive support from their supervisor when required
- Be accommodated for any ability needs in order to complete non-essential tasks of the role

### **At HSTC, volunteers have a responsibility to:**

- Act with respect for the cause, community, organization and its work
- Act responsibly and with integrity
- Fulfill the duties of the role as defined in the position description, efficiently and effectively
- Respect all policies and procedures in place
- Notify their supervisor timely if they are unable to fulfill their duties or miss a shift

## Volunteer Code of Conduct & Ethics

As a volunteer representing HSTC, your conduct and interaction with staff, other volunteers, and the public are expected to always be professional and courteous. In volunteering, you are making a commitment to the staff and animals to carry out, to the best of your abilities, the responsibilities you have agreed to fulfill. We ask that as a volunteer, you pledge to:

### **RESPECT**

- Display courtesy, sensitivity, consideration and compassion for people and animals
- Use good judgment in recognizing the scope of authority of staff members
- Respect others even though you may not agree with them

### **SAFETY**

- Keep safety at the forefront of all volunteer activities
- Follow the rules presented to you in training
- Respect and use equipment and supplies as they are intended
- Report all injuries immediately to a staff person

## QUALITY

- Perform all tasks to the best of your ability
- Follow directions and ask for help when needed
- Recognize training is essential to maintain safe shelter practices

## SELF-DISCIPLINE

- Set boundaries for yourself – know your limitations with the animals and other activities
- Hold yourself accountable for the commitments you undertake
- Recognize your limitations and those of others

## COMMUNICATION

- Recognize you communicate both verbally and non-verbally
- Listen to the needs of others
- Advise shelter personnel of relevant information regarding the animals and your involvement at the shelter

## COMMITMENT

- Respect that people and animals count on you to honor your commitment
- Work together with staff and other volunteers to meet HSTC's goals

## WELFARE

- Value your role in the maintenance and growth of the organization
- Strive to promote a positive environment
- Respect and support all people and animals

## *The Rules of Basic Safety*

For the safety and well-being of volunteers, staff, and animals, it is imperative that volunteers follow these basic rules. **Additional rules, guidance and procedures for each volunteer department can be found in the Appendix.** Failure to follow these rules may result in dismissal. Consult with the Volunteer Program Manager for any needed clarification.

- Volunteers may only take animals to approved areas, as described during training
- Any information regarding clients and animals served by HSTC must be kept confidential
- Volunteers may only work in roles for which they have been trained
- Volunteers may not bring any non-volunteers or personal pets with them during the volunteer shift unless approved by the Volunteer Program Manager
- If a volunteer is bitten, scratched, or otherwise injured he or she is required to report the injury to their staff supervisor and/or the Volunteer Program Manager to fill out the proper incident report.
- No volunteer is permitted to handle animals that are not yet available for adoption unless given explicit direction from staff with their supervision
- Volunteers may not interact with animals coming into the shelter through lost & found, animal control intake, owner surrenders or owner requested euthanasia
- Volunteers should not enter non-adoption kennels unless accompanied or requested by a staff member

## Organizational Policies

**Uniforms:** Dress code is designed for volunteer safety and should be upheld at all times when volunteering at the shelter and thrift stores. Volunteers can be asked to leave if their clothing is in violation.

Volunteers must wear at all times: volunteer t-shirt/sweatshirt, name tag, comfortable clothes with freedom of movement (long sturdy pants/athletic pants or capris are recommended) to protect legs from injury, and non-slip shoes with closed toe. Replacement shirts and name-tags can be purchased at the shelter front desk, at thrift stores and from the Volunteer Program Manager located in the Towl Center.

Clothing that is prohibited: items that contain inappropriate language and context, low-riding pants, mini shorts, leggings, and low-cut tops, sandals or flip flops, and gym shoes with holes and large hoop or dangling jewelry due to the high possibility of entanglement or injury. Open toe shoes may only be worn on shift by thrift retail volunteers only.

**Cell Phones:** Volunteers are not permitted to use cell phones for calls, texting or e-mail when working with any animal. For the safety of both you and our shelter pets, your full attention must be focused on the animal in your care. Personal phone calls should be made before or after your shift. If you must make or take a call while on shift, please notify your department supervisor and step away from your duties until your call is complete. You may use your cell phone to take photos of our adoptable animals to post later on social media to promote our pets. Please, do not use shift time to create posts on social media.

**Smoking:** Smoking is prohibited around all buildings and structures. At no time should a volunteer smoke while on shift, or on site before or after a shift.

**“Employee Only” Areas:** Certain areas are designated as “Staff Only”. These areas house animals with medical care needs, behaviors and quarantines. Many areas have this designation permanently, but on occasion, new areas may be designated as needs arise. Volunteers are never to enter an area labeled “staff only”. Entering areas marked for “staff only” is prohibited.

**Reporting Injuries:** Any injury (bite/scratch/slip and fall) that occurs during your volunteer shift must be reported immediately to your staff supervisor. Failure to report an injury could result in dismissal from the volunteer program.

In the event of a bite or scratch: you must tell your staff supervisor if any animal breaks your skin with its teeth or nail. We will gather all information to complete a report and will ask you for details about the incident. The animal (dogs/cats/critters) may be removed from the adoption area and placed in the quarantine area temporarily. Please do not feel that the animal is “in trouble” by reporting an injury or assume that reporting the bite/scratch automatically labels an animal as “bad”, “aggressive” or will lead to euthanasia.



**Volunteer Insurance:** HSTC procures supplemental liability/injury insurance for volunteers in the event that a volunteer is injured in the course of their volunteer work at the shelter, either thrift store, at an HSTC sanctioned event off campus or as a result of fostering an HSTC animal. The Volunteer Program manager is advised of any and all incidents/accidents involving a volunteer on campus, either thrift store or in a foster home. Managers on duty when incidents occur are responsible for making sure that incidents/accidents are documented on the incident report form and then will be submitted to insurance by the Volunteer Program Manager. Reports must be completed regardless of whether a volunteer wants to complete one. Injuries not reported to insurance within a certain timeframe of the incident/accident are not eligible for claims/coverage.

**Visitors & Personal Guests:** Do not bring friends or family to assist you during your volunteer shift unless you are a Junior volunteer (ages 12 – 15) and you require a parent/guardian (18 + years) to accompany you on shift. If you give tours of the facility to friends or relatives, you must remain in areas that are open to the public. Personal visitors are prohibited from entering “staff only” and “staff and volunteers only” designated areas.

**Euthanasia:** HSTC is an open access, no-kill\* shelter. We accept all dogs, cats and critters regardless of health, age, breed or temperament from Martin County. The primary goal of HSTC is to find suitable homes for all animals and to operate as humanely as possible. There will be situations when the most humane course for an animal is compassionate euthanasia. These occasions come about when an animal is sick/injured beyond being helped and as a result is suffering and when an animal is a threat to society and/or other animals and cannot be rehabilitated. An animal will not be euthanized because of its length of stay at the shelter or to free up space.

*\*A no-kill community is one that acts on the belief that every healthy, adoptable dog, cat and critter should be saved, and that its focus should be on saving as many lives as possible through pet adoption, spay/neuter, TNVR and other community support programs rather than achieving a specific numerical outcome. With that said, we understand the importance of having a quantitative benchmark that communities can use as a goal. Saving 90 percent or more of the animals who enter shelters is the current benchmark for no-kill. This means that for a community to be considered “no-kill,” all of its shelters and animal welfare facilities responsible for animal control intake must be saving 90 percent or more, collectively, of the animals who enter their system.*

**Compassion Fatigue:** *"Compassion Fatigue is a state experienced by those helping people or animals in distress; it is an extreme state of tension and preoccupation with the suffering of those being helped to the degree that it can create a secondary traumatic stress for the helper."* – Dr. Charles Figley

HSTC relies heavily on our volunteers. To prevent compassion fatigue, we offer opportunities to volunteer without direct interaction with the animals. We also encourage volunteers to be aware of common signs of compassion fatigue, such as: feeling hopeless around the animals, feeling like no one else cares about the animals; or being unable to stop thinking about the animals when away from the shelter. If you begin to notice these symptoms, talk to the Volunteer Program Manager about finding some relief.

**Attendance Policy:** Volunteers are expected to commit to a weekly shift for a minimum of 3 months unless a volunteer has chosen a "shifts as needed" department. Volunteers will be removed and/or suspended from the schedule and from the volunteer roster for inconsistent attendance or repeated "no-shows" over the course of 30 consecutive days. Volunteers are also expected to contact their volunteer department via e-mail (see page 3) as soon as possible if they will be absent for their shift. Volunteers "calling out" due to illness, unexpected events, pre-planned trips or unexpected travel for emergencies will not be penalized for missed attendance. If a volunteer's schedule changes and they are no longer able to fulfill their chosen weekly shift or need to change their shift they are expected to contact their department via e-mail or the Volunteer Program Manager to make appropriate arrangements.

**Resignation:** We hope you have an enjoyable experience volunteering at HSTC. If for any reason you wish to terminate your volunteer commitment, please let the Volunteer Program Manager know. HSTC appreciates a 2-week notice if at all possible. We do understand that there will be circumstances and events in one's life that will prevent you from continuing service with us. Please know that your help here at the shelter is appreciated and we look forward to having you back at another time.

## *Volunteer Dismissal Policy*

The Humane Society of the Treasure Coast (HSTC) reserves the right to dismiss volunteers who engage in any conduct that it determines, in its sole discretion, puts staff/volunteer/animal safety or well-being in jeopardy, and/or negatively impacts HSTC'S organizational needs. Grounds for dismissal include, but are not limited to, one or more of the following categories:

- A.** Violation of HSTC policies and/or procedures
- B.** Misuse or misappropriation of the HSTC brand
- C.** Negative conduct directed at other volunteers, staff or animals (including on social media)
- D.** Failure to complete the duties assigned to the role held

The following include but are not limited to, inappropriate conduct which leads to the right of dismissal:

- Theft or inappropriate removal or possession of HSTC property (including animals)
- Altering HSTC reports or records without consent
- Volunteering under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs and/or illegal or unauthorized possession, distribution, sale, transfer, or use of alcohol or illegal drugs in the volunteer environment
- Creating a disturbance on HSTC premises, at sponsored activities/events or in areas which could jeopardize HSTC
- Improper use of HSTC property
- Lack of cooperation with staff direction, or other disrespectful conduct
- Inappropriate use of telephones (including cell phones), computer equipment or systems, mail system, e-mail system, or other HSTC equipment
- Unauthorized disclosure of HSTC proprietary or client confidential information
- Unsatisfactory performance or conduct
- Repeated "no-shows" or inconsistent attendance

# Zero Tolerance Policy

HSTC's Zero Tolerance Policy is part of our commitment to providing a safe and dignified work environment for all volunteers, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, religion, or any other aspect of their identity. All volunteers are responsible for conducting themselves in a professional and inclusive manner, and disciplinary action will be taken in situations where a volunteer's behavior violates this expectation.

## **Zero Tolerance Prohibited Conduct**

The Policy applies to any individual who engages in the following behavior(s):

- **Harassment** – is any one-time or repeated unwanted physical, verbal, or non-verbal conduct that violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, uncomfortable, or toxic environment. Examples of harassment include, but are not limited to: making threatening remarks, sexual assault, gender-based insults or jokes causing embarrassment or humiliation, repeated unwanted social or sexual invitations, inappropriate or unwelcome comments on a person's physical attributes or appearance.
- **Bullying** – is any physical, verbal, and non-verbal conduct that is malicious or insulting. Bullying can make a person feel vulnerable, excluded, humiliated, undermined, fearful, or threatened. Bullying can take the form of physical, verbal, and non-verbal conduct. Examples of bullying include, but are not limited to: physical threats, psychological threats, overbearing or intimidating levels of supervision, shouting at fellow volunteers or staff, spreading malicious rumors.
- **Discriminatory Behavior** – refers to behavior that treats people differently or adversely because of one or more of the facets of their identity, including race, color, ethnic origin, gender expression, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, family status, physical or mental disability, or genetic characteristics. Examples of discrimination include, but are not limited to: making insensitive jokes, purposefully excluding someone on the basis of their gender or race, using a racial slur.

Volunteers who are found to be in violation of the Zero Tolerance Policy may face a variety of disciplinary actions, up to and including immediate termination.

## Reporting Grievances

A grievance is defined as any event, condition, rule, or practice which a person believes violates their civil rights, treats them unfairly, or causes them any degree of unpleasantness or unhappiness on the job. A grievance may also deal with an attitude, a statement, or an opinion held by the Volunteer Program Manager, a fellow volunteer, or a staff member. Volunteer grievances are of concern to HSTC regardless of whether the problems are large or small.

HSTC is committed to treating its volunteers fairly. HSTC has established a grievance process to ensure it makes informed decisions. The grievance process assures HSTC gathers full and accurate information about a disputed volunteer issue. Through this process problems should be resolved quickly, fairly, and as confidentially as possible. Volunteers are urged to bring any problem, dispute or concern about any term or condition of their volunteer status to the attention of the Volunteer Program Manager in order to provide HSTC with an opportunity to resolve the matter.

The grievance procedure is as follows:

**Step 1:** Address your **Department Manager** first. If you feel that any volunteering condition, policy, practice, or action by HSTC is unjust, you should tell your Department Manager about it and discuss the matter confidentially. If the Department Manager fails to offer you the opportunity to discuss the matter, or if the discussion does not lead to a satisfactory conclusion, then proceed to the next step.

**Step 2:** Contact the **Volunteer Program Manager** who will schedule time to discuss the grievance, review facts and will follow up to gather additional information before making any conclusions, decisions or changes. Should you feel that the Volunteer Program Manager's handling of your grievance is not sufficient, then you would move to the final step.

**Step 3:** Contact the **Director of Community Outreach**, your Volunteer Program Manager's immediate supervisor. The Community Outreach Director will review the grievance and schedule a time to meet with you. At this meeting you should feel free to openly discuss your complaint and substantiate your reasons for feeling the way you do. The matter should be resolved at this stage.