

**Sacramento SPCA Board of Directors
Volunteer Communication Committee**

Meeting Minutes
Saturday, April 6, 2019

Volunteer Committee Attendees: Bailey Hitch, Danielle Goldberg, Jolene Tippett, Kathy Tscheu, Kelly Godfrey, Linda Starr, Marnie Musser, Nancy Field, Nancy King, Trish Pease

Absent: Alex Russell, Nero Rebellato

SSPCA Staff Guests: Dan Marple, Jamie Larson, Nicole Cacy

Chair's Comments

- Nancy Field has rejoined the SSPCA Board of Directors and will assume chairperson duties of this committee.
- Nancy stated that the purpose of this committee is to further the Sacramento SPCA's mission statement.
- The goal is for volunteers to integrate better with staff, understand their needs and show appreciation for their work. Better communication between staff and volunteers will also enable staff to utilize the talents of volunteers to a greater degree. As a result, both groups can do their jobs more effectively.

Updates:

1. Construction

- Receiving Building: Installation of barriers on the kennels is about 50% complete. The barriers are not only cutting down on kennel noise but are also having a calming effect on the dogs.
- Kong Room: Relocation of this room to the grooming area will most likely happen by the end of April.

2. Behavior Evaluations

- The behavior assessment process has been tweaked.
- Dog behavior color coding will be changing; staff and volunteers will be trained on the new guidelines.
- Form updates are coming soon; adoption counselors will find them easier to use.

3. Volunteer/Staff Integration

- Plans are in the works to establish 'behind the scenes' (i.e., receiving, sick bay, behavior eval area) shelter tours for volunteers. First one will be in May.
- Quarterly mixers for staff and volunteers will begin the summer.
- Shelter operations staff are invited to attend new volunteer orientations. Established volunteers are also welcomed to attend these orientations to not only become familiar with the latest shelter opportunities, but to also recruit new volunteers for the areas in which they serve.

Questions:

What is the shelter's policy regarding mandatory dual adoptions? (Dan Marple)

- Priority is always to do what is best for the animal.
- The term 'bonded pair' is overused and misunderstood. An animal may enjoy the company of other animals in general and not just the one with whom it was surrendered.

- While the shelter takes into consideration what the owner says about the animals at surrender, importance is given to what is observed once the animals are in the shelter environment.
- Intake policy is to separate cats that have come in together and monitor for the first 3-4 days how they are doing apart. If a cat is not thriving (poor eating, acting depressed, etc), then it may be placed back with the animal it came in with, but most of the time the cats are fine in their own cages.
- From a medical standpoint, it's best to house cats separately. If two cats are together and it is suspected that one may have a problem, it's sometimes difficult to tell which one (particularly litter box issues).
- Cohousing animals that have come in together can create unintended consequences on the adoption floor. Potential adopters may think they have to take both when they only want one. Because they feel guilty about separating the animals, they don't adopt either one, therefore leading to both animals being at the shelter longer.
- It must be somehow communicated to volunteers that animals that come in together do not necessarily have to be adopted together.

Miscellaneous:

- New dog socializer training began last October. The focus has always been to get dogs out of their kennels; now the idea is to improve the 'in-kennel experience' as well. There are now different levels of dog socializing, with particular tasks associated with each level. The goal is for it not to take so long for volunteers to interact in some form with the dogs.
- Doggy Dash is on April 27 and the goal is to raise \$180,000. Everyone is encouraged to attend as a participant or to volunteer.

Old Business:

- Animal Care Staff Photos: Pictures are currently up in the office; posting them in the volunteer room is next.
- Foster Furlough: Dog socializers are welcome to take a shelter dog home for a few hours or overnight. Volunteers can email foster@ssPCA.org for a current list of eligible dogs.

Next Meeting: Saturday, July 13, 4:00 p.m. – 5:00 pm. Please email Bailey Hitch (bhitch@ssPCA.org) at least two weeks in advance with any suggested agenda items.