



# Volunteer Handbook

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Cat Welfare  
741 Wetmore Road  
Columbus, Ohio 43214  
614.268.6096

**Cat Welfare Association, Inc.  
Volunteer Handbook**

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## Cat Welfare Association, Inc. Volunteer Handbook

Welcome!

Congratulations on joining the Cat Welfare team!

This Volunteer Handbook provides a brief introduction to Cat Welfare Association's volunteer opportunities, a compilation of information about the organization and relevant policies.

We ask that you carefully read this handbook to become familiar with the organization's culture. Please be sure to contact me with any questions you may have about the information presented as well as any other outstanding questions about Cat Welfare as a whole.

Know that we are happy to have you on board. I look forward to working with you and hope you find your volunteer activities and responsibilities rewarding.

Sincerely,

Melissa Meyer  
Volunteer Coordinator  
614.268.6096 ext. 106  
volunteers@catwelfareassoc.org

# Cat Welfare Association, Inc. Volunteer Handbook

## **VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES**

### **SOCIALIZATION**

Socializing with the cats is one of the very best things you can do as a volunteer. Well socialized cats are happy, emotionally healthy cats and will likely be adopted sooner than shy, reserved kitties. Volunteers are welcome to come to the shelter to interact with the cats and kittens as schedules permit. What to do? That's easy, just be you! The cats aren't particular about how you interact, just that you do!

Can you commit to a 90 minute weekly visit? If so, please consider leading a cat care team. Our volunteer coordinator will assign five cats to you along with kitty bios, instructions and grooming tools. Volunteers on our cat care teams report that the bond formed with the cats through this opportunity is amazing!

### **FOSTER CARE**

Are you a cat lover who can't permanently add another pet to your home, but you do have an extra room for short term fostering where a kitten could spend a few weeks until it is old enough to be adopted from our shelter? Or where a cat can finish recovering from surgery away from the shelter in a quieter environment?

Consider helping these kitties in need by volunteering as a foster parent. Food, litter, medical treatment and immunizations are provided by Cat Welfare.

### **MARKETING**

Do you love to share your ideas? Are you familiar with marketing techniques? Consider using these talents to help get the word out about Cat Welfare through marketing and/or fund raising efforts. Please let us know if you are interested in helping us plan, promote and/or organize special events. Photography and design skills are always needed. Feeling less creative? Consider assisting with data entry, distributing flyers or preparing mailings.

### **OFF- SITE OPPORTUNITIES**

Interested in community outreach? Even though Cat Welfare Association has been caring for homeless cats for 70 years, there are still folks in central Ohio who are not aware of our services. Many wonderful opportunities are available for Cat Welfare to reach out to the public – we just need volunteers to make it happen! If you enjoy attending social events and meeting a variety of new people, please consider becoming a CWA off-site representative. All new representatives are trained and paired with a seasoned volunteer or staff member for their first event.

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### **THE CATIQUE**

The Catique is Cat Welfare's resale shop located at 1005 Mediterranean Ave. Donations are inspected, sorted and reasonably priced for sale to the public. Openings are available for volunteers to assist with these efforts and to staff The Catique during sale hours. If you have retail experience or just love to shop, The Catique may be the perfect volunteer opportunity.

# Cat Welfare Association, Inc. Volunteer Handbook

## **ABOUT CAT WELFARE**

### **LOCATION**

Cat Welfare is located at 741 Wetmore Rd., Columbus, Ohio, 43214. The organization's official name is The Cat Welfare Association, Inc., although it is often referred to as "Cat Welfare" or "CWA". The office telephone number is 614-268-6096. The official website is [www.catwelfareassociation.org](http://www.catwelfareassociation.org) and you can find us on [www.facebook.com/catwelfareassoc](https://www.facebook.com/catwelfareassoc) and [www.instagram.com/catwelfareassoc](https://www.instagram.com/catwelfareassoc).

### **MISSION**

Cat Welfare Association is a non-profit organization dedicated to the care of and education about cats and kittens. Our pledge is to cherish, nurture and provide veterinary care for homeless, abused, injured and abandoned cats. We strive to find each cat an appropriate, safe and loving home, allowing those not placed to live their lives in the care and comfort of our shelter.

Cat Welfare is a limited intake facility. This means that cats are admitted into the shelter only when space is available. However, pregnant or injured cats, as well as cats adopted from Cat Welfare are always accepted.

### **VISION**

Cat Welfare Association envisions a community, and a world, in which cats are valued members of our animal population and are cared for, protected and cherished for their companionship, unique personalities and place in world history.

### **GOALS**

- To increase public awareness of the value of cats as unique members of our animal community and of the community-at-large
- To offer shelter to homeless cats where they can feel safe, be well cared for, and receive necessary medical treatment
- To encourage adoptions by providing a welcoming place where potential cat adopters and cats needing homes can become acquainted
- In order to minimize and, hopefully, eliminate the population of unwanted, uncared for cats, to increase public awareness of the importance of spaying/neutering, and to provide financial assistance to low-income households and those caring for feral cats to cover the cost of the surgeries
- To support cat owners by providing information and guidance to help them become responsible and loving owners

### **FINANCIAL SUPPORT**

The Cat Welfare Association, Inc. is supported by membership and adoption fees, donations, bequests, grants, fundraisers and special events. No government funding is received.

## **Cat Welfare Association, Inc. Volunteer Handbook**

### **HISTORY**

In 1945, seven concerned people met in the home of Mrs. Virginia Kunkler to form an organization to promote better care and understanding of cats and to provide for the physical welfare of homeless cats and kittens. A constitution was adopted and Cat Welfare was born!

In 1952, Cat Welfare was incorporated as a tax-exempt nonprofit organization and became The Cat Welfare Association, Inc. Since there was no shelter building at the time, members housed cats in, and placed cats from, their homes. The decision also was made to spay/neuter all adult cats before placement in an effort to reduce pet overpopulation.

The following year (1953), with the help of Dr. Bruce Wenger, Cat Welfare purchased the land and small building directly in back of the current Beechwold Veterinary Hospital. While foster homes were still heavily utilized, the small building became the first official location for the shelter. A decade later, the small building was torn down and replaced with a larger facility. For several years, there was even a caretaker who lived on-site. A bequest from the estate of Mary Kirk built an addition, used for the fund raising purpose of garage sales. Today, our resale shop, The Catique, continues to serve as one of the shelter's most lucrative fund-raisers.

During the 1970's, Cat Welfare established an Altering Fund to provide financial assistance to those who cannot afford the cost of neutering their pets. In addition, the decision was made to include spaying/neutering as part of the adoption fee charged for kittens. In 2008 it was decided that all kittens would be spayed or neutered before adoption.

Cat Welfare continued to grow during the 1980's and 1990's, making it necessary to again look to expansion. In May 1999, CWA moved into the larger and newly remodeled facility at our present location, 741 Wetmore Road.

The current facility has ~5,600 square feet with space dedicated specifically to admissions, medical examination and treatment, and isolation of ill cats and those recovering from injury or surgery. In 2001, a large all-season sunroom was added to our building to provide fresh air and sunlight for our permanent feline residents. The sunroom was built through a generous donation from Lillian Fobes, in memory of her husband Alfred and his cat, Gaylord.

Renovations continued as funds became available. In 2011 tile floors were replaced with epoxy flooring. The following year (2012) solid surface sinks were installed and the signage in and around the shelter was completely revamped. In 2014 a significant grant from The Joanie Bernard Foundation and monies from the estate of Marjorie Baker allowed Cat Welfare to renovate the space used by The Catique. This area is now dedicated to serving our resident felines and houses support operations. The Catique subsequently moved off-site and was transformed from a garage sale setting to a resale shop.

Cat Welfare has had a blessed past for 70 years and with the continued support of our members and friends, a bright future lies ahead.

# Cat Welfare Association, Inc. Volunteer Handbook

## ADMISSIONS, ADOPTIONS AND FOSTER CARE

### ADMISSIONS

As mentioned earlier, Cat Welfare is a limited intake facility. This means that homeless cats and kittens are admitted into the shelter by appointment only when space is available. However, pregnant or injured cats or those adopted from Cat Welfare are always welcome.

When a cat is admitted to the shelter, the person with the cat is asked to sign a release form, and is encouraged to make a surrender donation. Newly admitted cats are kept in isolation for a minimum of 48 hours (if possible). Kittens are held in isolation for as long as possible. Cat Welfare does not accept feral cats. (Feral cats are wild, unsocialized cats.)

### ADOPTIONS

Our cats are available for adoption by a loving and appropriate individual or family. Permanent adoption fees for cats and kittens are set by the Board of Directors; temporary special adoption fees may be established by shelter management with notification to the Board.

- **Vaccinations**

Each adult cat eligible for adoption has been tested for feline leukemia and FIV, and has received FVRCP-C, bordetella vaccine, rabies and feline leukemia vaccinations. Kittens are tested for feline leukemia and FIV, and are given their first vaccinations.

- **Spaying and Neutering**

All adult cats and kittens are spayed or neutered before adoption.

- **Health Guarantee**

Each adopted cat has a 30-day health guarantee. If the cat becomes ill during this period, the new owner may contact Cat Welfare to make arrangements for medical treatment. Cat Welfare is not responsible for the cost of veterinary services that have not been pre-authorized.

- **Returns**

A 30 day return guarantee allows for the return of a cat **with a refund of the adoption fee or an exchange for another cat**. A cat adopted from Cat Welfare may be returned after any length of time (without refund), regardless of circumstances. In short, cats adopted from Cat Welfare are unconditionally accepted back into the shelter.

- **Holds on Specific Cats**

Cat Welfare does not offer a broad-based procedure to "hold" specific cats for interested adopters. An employee, at his/her discretion, may take the interested individual's name and phone number and offer a courtesy call when the cat is ready to be adopted. CWA cannot guarantee that the cat will not be adopted by someone else in the meantime. However, placing a courtesy call to the individual allows for good customer relations and, hopefully, the adoption of a cat by a person who will provide a permanent loving home.

## **Cat Welfare Association, Inc. Volunteer Handbook**

### **FOSTER CARE PROGRAM**

Cat Welfare maintains a Foster Care Program administered by Cat Welfare's program manager. Volunteers provide foster care, in their homes, for stray kittens (with or without the mom). Kittens are kept in foster homes until they weigh at least 2.5 pounds (typically ~9 weeks old). Kittens and their moms are spayed or neutered and placed in the shelter for adoption as soon as possible. Foster care is also provided to cats with special needs until adoption is feasible.

Volunteers who provide foster care must be able to accept the risks associated with caring for young felines. An application process explains the commitment and responsibilities connected with this meaningful volunteer opportunity. If a foster cat or kitten requires medical care, the volunteer must first contact CWA's volunteer program coordinator. Cat Welfare maintains ownership of the cats and kittens in this program and retains records of all medical care needed by, and provided to, fostered felines.

Our application to foster:

<http://www.catwelfareassoc.org/assets/documents/application-to-foster-2014.pdf>

Our foster care agreement:

<http://www.catwelfareassoc.org/assets/documents/foster-agreement-2014-for-web.pdf>

Questions regarding our foster care program can be directed to Program Manager, Gail Harbert, 614.268.6096 ext. 103.

# Cat Welfare Association, Inc. Volunteer Handbook

## **RELEVANT POLICIES AND PROTOCOLS**

### **NON-SMOKING POLICY**

On November 7, 2006, Ohio voters enacted a law to ban smoking in public places by approving the Smoke Free Workplace Act. As a result, Cat Welfare has adopted the following non-smoking restrictions:

- Smoking is not permitted in any enclosed area of the facilities, including the main building and the storage shed.
- Smoking is not allowed in any area of ingress or egress to any Cat Welfare facility.

### **ANTI-HARASSMENT POLICY**

Cat Welfare prohibits the harassment of any individual on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, ancestry, disability, military status, genetic information, sexual orientation or any other characteristic protected by applicable law. Cat Welfare does not tolerate any action by any person – Board of Directors, president, executive director, operations manager, employee, volunteer, member, donor, etc. – which constitutes unlawful harassment.

Any individual, who believes s/he has been harassed, or has witnessed harassment of another person, should promptly report the facts of the incident or incidents and the names of the individuals involved to the volunteer coordinator, operations manager, executive director or the chair of Cat Welfare's Human Resource and Policy Committee. Reports will be promptly investigated and appropriate corrective action taken, without retaliation. Confidentiality will be maintained to the extent practicable.

### **WORKPLACE VIOLENCE PREVENTION POLICY**

Cat Welfare Association is committed to providing a workplace that is free from acts of violence or threats of violence. Compliance with this policy is everyone's responsibility.

Volunteers are to report any incident involving a verbal or physical threat of violence immediately to the volunteer coordination, shelter operations manager, executive director or to the chair of the Human Resources and Policy Committee. Please do not assume that any threat is not serious. Report all threats. An individual may report such incidents without fear of retaliation of any kind.

All reported threats or acts will be promptly and thoroughly investigated and appropriate action will be taken.

# Cat Welfare Association, Inc.

## Volunteer Handbook

### **CAT BITE PROTOCOL**

CWA understands that any incident involving a cat bite or scratch is very serious. Cats have sharp teeth that can cause deep puncture wounds, and sharp claws that can leave punctures or tears in the skin. Bites on the head, face, neck and hands are at high risk of infection, some requiring IV antibiotics and possible hospitalization.

In the event of a cat bite, please advise a staff member of the occurrence. A shelter supervisor will make sure the cat is quarantined (may or may not be caged) and will provide you with the cat's vaccination records. You are strongly encouraged to seek immediate medical treatment from Urgent Care or the nearest hospital's emergency room. The medical treatment at Urgent Care or the emergency room is paid for by Cat Welfare.

### **VOLUNTEER CONDUCT**

As a valued member of the Cat Welfare team, we ask you support the volunteer program by:

- Maintaining high standards of conduct
- Accepting the guidance and decision of the volunteer coordinator
- Being willing to learn and participate in orientation, training programs and meetings as appropriate
- Understanding the functions and maintaining a smooth working relationship with staff
- Staying within the boundaries of volunteer responsibilities

### **ABSENTEEISM AND PUNCTUALITY**

It is essential that volunteers be on time and arrive when expected. If you are unable to arrive at your regular time, please let us know as soon as possible. If you can't fill your volunteer position as scheduled, please contact our volunteer coordinator 24 hours in advance. If suddenly ill, please inform him/her as soon as you are aware of your condition and your expected return date,

### **RESIGNATION**

If you plan to discontinue your volunteer status, we would like the chance to talk with you before your departure. Please give a minimum of two weeks' notice to our volunteer coordinator. We want to be sure to schedule time to thank you for your support and express our appreciation. In addition, with your permission, an exit interview will be conducted. Included in the interview will be questions about your reasons for leaving Cat Welfare, suggestions you may have for improving our organization and possibilities for your future involvement.

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### **TERMINATION**

Volunteers who do not adhere to the rules and regulations, policies and procedures of Cat Welfare Association (CWA) are subject to dismissal. No volunteer will be dismissed without fair warning, or the opportunity to discuss the reasons for potential dismissal with supervisory staff. Possible grounds for dismissal may include, but are not limited to:

- Abuse or mistreatment of feline residents, guests or staff
- Gross misconduct or insubordination
- Being under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- Failure to abide by CWA policies and procedures

## Cat Welfare Association Inc.

### Volunteer Agreement (Waiver, Release, and Indemnification)

Volunteer Name: \_\_\_\_\_ has read, understands and agrees to the following:

- I will treat all animals, people and property I come in contact with at The Cat Welfare Association, Inc. (CWA) with courtesy and respect at all times.
- While engaging in any CWA volunteer activity, I agree to be supervised and directed by the Volunteer Coordinator or other designated staff member.
- I will refrain from using language that others would consider profane or disrespectful.
- If I believe that a misunderstanding or communication problem exists between me and others (staff, volunteers, general public, etc.) I will report the situation to the Volunteer Coordinator or other appropriate shelter management.
- I may gain access to information that is private or personal regarding staff, members, volunteers, customers and/or the general public. I agree to maintain confidentiality and to refuse disclosure of such information.
- I give permission to use photographs or video footage of my volunteer activities.
- I will be on time for my scheduled shift or event.
- I will wear a volunteer name badge.
- I will dress appropriately, as guided by the shelter, for identification, safety, and because each volunteer is a representative of CWA in the eyes of the public. I understand offensive tee shirt slogans are prohibited. I may be asked to wear long pants, closed toe shoes, gloves, etc., depending on my volunteer activities. I will also exercise caution and take safety precautions with jewelry or body piercings when interacting with cats and kittens and engaging in volunteer activities.

Volunteering at Cat Welfare is at will. A volunteer may be asked to leave the shelter or an event by shelter management. Active volunteer status may be terminated for any reason, with or without cause or notice, at any time by either parties-the volunteer or CWA.

## Cat Welfare Association Inc.

### Volunteer Agreement (Waiver, Release, and Indemnification)

Volunteers are advised that the activity of performing volunteer work with the shelter animals may be hazardous, as it involves contact with animals that are unpredictable. As such, The Cat Welfare Association Inc. (CWA) cannot be held liable for injuries or accidents that may occur as a result of volunteer work with the animals. Volunteers understand that the following are some, but not all, of the risks:

- Bites or scratches from cats and kittens
- Slips/trips/falls resulting from wet floors/kennels or equipment
- Water or cleaners sprayed in eyes
- Injuries resulting from cage doors, equipment, etc.
- Flea/tick bites or ring worm infestation
- Internal or external parasites
- Zoonotic illnesses (human illness contracted from animals)
- Animal illness exposure to animals at home
- Injuries related to lifting animals, food, litter, or equipment
- Exposure to cleaners, latex gloves, bleach, parasite control products
- Exposure to or incidents relating to the public and/or volunteers(outbursts, inappropriate contact)
- Loss of personal property
- Any type of damage to car while parked on CWA grounds
- Damage to clothing from animals, cages, chemicals, etc.

Volunteers agree that The Cat Welfare Association and its Indemnitees (which are members, employees, officers, directors, agents, and representatives) shall not be held responsible or liable for any personal injury or other injury, including death; damage, loss, or expense to the volunteer or his/her property, whether or not such injury, death, damage, loss, or expense is caused by negligence of CWA, any Indemnatee, or a third party.

Volunteers and their heirs, executors, and administrators agree to hold harmless each Indemnatee against any and all manner of legal actions, such as suits, debts, claims, or liability of any kind incurred while the Volunteer participates at the shelter and shelter event.

**Cat Welfare Association Inc.**

**Volunteer Agreement (Waiver, Release, and Indemnification)**

Volunteers fully, completely, and unconditionally waive and release each Indemnitee from all rights, liabilities, duties, claims, charges, demands, actions, damages, costs, attorney fees, or expenses of any kind that

Volunteers may have now or in the future against Cat Welfare or any Indemnitee relating to participation at the shelter.

Volunteers represent and warrant that s/he is physically and mentally fit to safely work with animals and public at the shelter. Should an accident or other medical emergency occur while participating at the shelter or while Volunteer is en route to or from The Cat Welfare Association sponsored events and CWA staff members are unable to timely reach Emergency Contacts for medical authorizations, then Volunteer hereby gives consent for CWA staff members to authorize medical treatment.

If any provision of this Agreement is found to be unenforceable in any way, it shall be enforced to the maximum extent possible and all other provisions of this Agreement shall remain in full force and effect.

Volunteer Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Address:

\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Numbers (daytime, evening, cell):

\_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Contact Name/Telephone

Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Signature if Volunteer is Under 18

years: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Volunteer's Areas of Interest:

\_\_\_\_\_

***For Office Use Only***

***Volunteer's Identification Validated:*** \_\_\_\_\_