



Thank you for choosing to be part of Heartland's outreach team.

Outreach team members attend off-site events and interact with the public to create shelter awareness. Without shelter awareness, people would not visit the shelter to adopt animals, give donations or volunteer. Events are held year-round at both indoor and outdoor sites. Most events require we bring adoptable cats and/or dogs, however, we do occasionally make appearances without animals in attendance.

This *Outreach Team Member's Reference Guide* provides outreach policies and procedures. New outreach team members must read this guide and after completion, take the assessment that follows to demonstrate understanding of the content information. Upon successful completion, you will be contacted by our volunteer coordinator with the next steps. Feel free to print/save this guide for future reference.

### **Benefits of Outreach Events**

- Gives Heartland and its adoptable animals valuable exposure within the community
- Introduces the public to the concept of no-kill animal rescue and promotes adoptions
- Establishes relationships with local businesses and civic organizations
- Collect monetary and tangible donations for the shelter
- Serves as an effective recruiting tool for potential volunteers

### **Event Locations**

- Pet stores are the most common indoor sites. Many of the stores fundraise and promote the shelter, so even though there may not always be a lot of foot traffic in a store, this is our way of thanking and continuing our relationship with them.
- We have also attended many outdoor venues including corporate picnics, Earth Day events, Ravinia and 4<sup>th</sup> of July parades.

## Outreach Volunteer Structure and Responsibilities



- **Mentee** is a volunteer new to the outreach team. A Mentee will help with crate setup, event setup and the transportation of crated animals. During the event, they will mainly observe and help with non-animal handling activities. Mentees will advance to Animal Handler at the discretion of the Team Leader or Shelter Manager.



- **Animal Handler** is responsible for keeping the public and animals safe during the event. They must be able to read animal body language and feel comfortable instructing the public on the proper way to approach and pet an animal. Animal Handlers should actively engage individuals at events to meet the animals and learn about the shelter. They should not simply sit in a chair waiting to be approached. Animal Handlers must have completed necessary cat/dog training. An Animal Handler will advance to Team Leader at the discretion of the Shelter Manager or Executive Director.



- **Team Leader** has the ultimate responsibility of overseeing the animals and volunteers. They also confirm event details with the location, recruit volunteers, are responsible for the event set up/take down, the safe transportation of animals and consults with the Shelter Manager to determine which dogs/cats are appropriate to take to the event. Team Leaders must have volunteered at the shelter for six months or have 20 hours of related service, and have completed all necessary cat/dog training. Team Leader designation is assigned by the Shelter Manager or Executive Director.

## **OUTREACH EVENT GUIDELINES**

### **Safety First**

- Under no circumstances should anyone except an outreach Team Leader or Animal Handler be allowed to handle the dog leash or remove a cat from a crate.
- Keep dogs a safe distance apart and do not allow nose-to-nose contact. This may be difficult in tight spaces, but try to keep animals at least 5 feet apart. This is not only for the safety of dogs and the general public, but diseases can aerosolize over 4 feet.
- Refrain from using cell phones during an event, especially if you are handling an animal.
- Always be aware of animals and people around you. You do not want to be caught off-guard to a potentially dangerous situation.
- Immediately remove a dog or cat from the location if the animal shows signs of stress or aggression. (See '*How to read a dog's/cat's body language*' section.)

### **Visitor - Animal Interaction**

- Children under age 18 need parental permission to pet animals and their parent/guardian must be present during the interaction.
- Encourage petting dogs under the chin or on the shoulder – explain safe dog petting procedures. (See '*How to safely approach and pet a dog*' section.)  
Remind visitors to pet only - no kisses or hugs.
- Cat holding is allowed ONLY when someone is seriously interested in adopting. Animal Handler must always remove the cat from the crate and must explain the proper way to hold a cat. (See '*How to pick up and hold a friendly cat*' section.)
- If a cat is removed from its crate, it is a good idea to have a harness already on and leash added in case the cat gets spooked while someone is holding it.

- Only one child should interact with an animal at a time.
- Children should not be running, jumping or screaming around the animals.
- Never allow a visitor's pet to approach or interact with a shelter dog/cat.
- We rarely bring both cats and dogs to an event, but if we do, cats should be in their own area or at least 10 feet away from any dog at all times.



### **Emergency Procedures**

- Call 9-1-1 for a life-threatening emergency. If a volunteer or visitor is injured, the Shelter Manager or Office Manager should be immediately contacted.
- Immediately wash the bite or scratch with disinfectant soap and water.
- Any bite or scratch is required to be documented and photographed at the time of the incident. Use a cell phone to take a photo and complete an Incident Report.

## **IMPORTANT 'HOW TO' INFORMATION**



### **How to read a dog's body language**

Reading a dog's body language is crucial in preventing accidents/biting incidents. The safety and well-being of the general public, volunteers and the animals are our number one concern. It is imperative you are able to decode a dog's body language to prevent an incident. Dogs don't always follow the same sequence of behavior and they often do several of the warning behaviors simultaneously. It can be just milliseconds between a warning and a bite, but dogs rarely bite without giving some type of warning beforehand.

This Canine Ladder of Aggression is just one example of the sequence of warning signals/characteristics displayed prior to a bite.

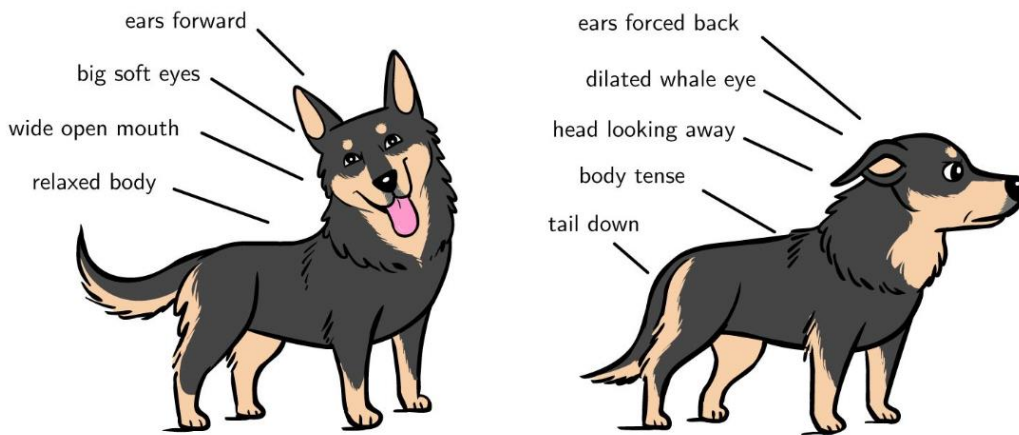
The Canine Ladder of Aggression



As stated above, a dog that is stressed or scared may display all or only a few warning signals. It is important to recognize warning behaviors of a stressed dog before it gets to the bite stage. If you see a dog display any of these warning signs or hear the dog growling,

immediately remove the dog from the current situation, and if the Team Leader instructs, remove the dog from the location.

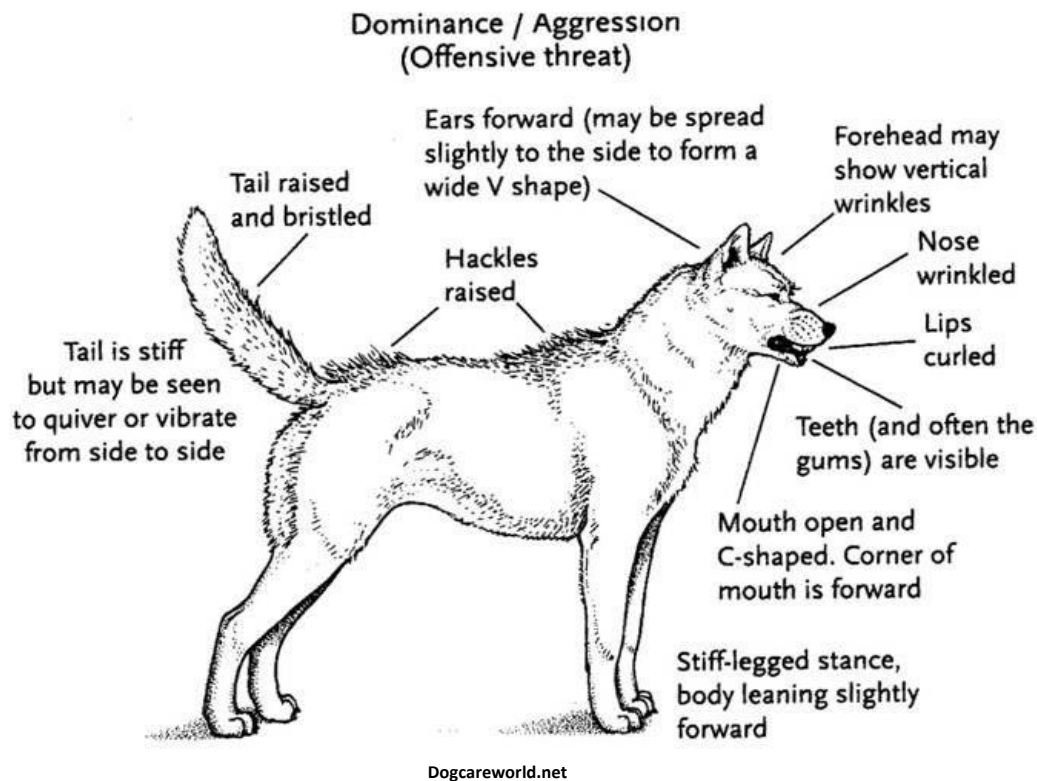
## Smiling vs Warning



doggonesafe.com

The outreach team has experienced dogs giving warning signals, including a warning snap, during an event. The volunteers recognized the situation and averted an incident.

Fortunately, most team members have not experienced a dog display full aggression at an event. However, please remember in many cases a dog's background or previous behavior is unknown, so you must always be prepared to react. If a dog's warning signals are missed or reactive behavior/characteristics erupt quickly, immediately remove the dog from the location.



### How to safely approach and pet a dog

- Hold your fist out towards the dog's nose. Do not offer an open hand as a dog may bite your fingers, thinking they are a treat.
  - If the dog walks up to your fist and its tail is wagging (or shows no signs of stress/aggression), let him sniff your fist. The dog sniffing a fist is evaluating it, not asking to be pet. If the dog does not show signs of stress, you may then assume it is safe to pet the dog.
  - If the dog does not approach and/or shows signs of stress/aggression, do not pet the dog. Slowly and quietly back away.
- Pet the dog GENTLY on the chest or shoulder. It is safest to reach in from the side, not over a dog's head. A dog may become scared or nervous if reaching over its head because it cannot see your hand. Make sure to keep your face away from the dog's face.



## How to read a cat's body language

Understanding a cat is simply a matter of paying attention, watching the cat's body language and responding accordingly. Cats use a variety of ways to communicate their feelings, needs and desires. Watching a cat's tail, ears and eyes will provide clues to the mood of a cat. Although cats will remain crated for the most part at events, it is still handy information to know when handling cats.

### THE TAIL

- *Tail up:* This is a happy, cheerful cat who is most likely approachable.
- *Tail down:* May indicate a cat who is scared or threatened.
- *Tail moving rapidly back and forth:* A cat's wagging tail isn't the same as a dog's happy tail wagging gesture. A fast-thumping tail is a good indicator that a cat is agitated and should be left alone.
- *Tail moving slowly back and forth:* If a cat is trying to decipher the situation, he may move his tail back and forth slowly as he makes up his mind about how he feels.
- *Halloween-cat tail:* A cat in this stance is not in a good mood and is trying to appear larger and scarier than he is.

### THE EARS

- *Ears forward:* A cat with ears slightly forward is likely feeling content or even playful.
- *Ears straight up:* When a cat is alert, his ears are likely standing at attention as well.
- *Ears turned back:* Watch out for this kitty! He might feel irritated or over stimulated, so it's probably a good idea to leave him alone.
- *Ears turned sideways or back:* This cat is feeling nervous or anxious about something. Use caution around a cat whose ears are in this position.
- *Ears back and flat against head:* This is a sure sign a cat is scared and feeling defensive. Ears flat against the head may also indicate an angry or aggressive cat. Either way, ears against the head means don't mess with him!

## THE EYES

- Dilated pupils: A cat's pupils may dilate when a cat is surprised, scared or stimulated.
- Constricted pupils: Might indicate the cat is tense or possibly feeling aggressive.
- Stare: A stare down is likely a challenge from your cat.
- Slow Blinking: The cat feels safe, comfortable and trusts you.
- Half Closed: Droopy lids indicate a relaxed and trusting kitty.

Often a cat will use several forms of body language to display his feelings.

Cat Talk: A Guide to Cat Body Language/Petfinder



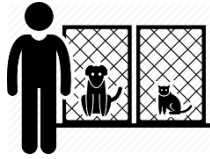
### **How to pick up and hold a (friendly) cat**

- Place one hand under the cat's body, behind its front legs.
- Place the other hand under the cat's back legs, giving plenty of support to its legs and bottom. Once both hands are in position, slowly lift the cat.
- Hold the cat against your chest. This will help the cat feel secure.

Of course, some cats like to be held differently. Some are perfectly fine being cradled like babies while others even like being placed over your shoulder. Although a vet may occasionally need to, you should never scruff a cat.

- To put the cat down, gently lower the cat until all four of its paws are on the ground before releasing it.





## How to prepare a dog or cat crate

- Crates are located on a shelf in the Training Hall. Assemble the crate by erecting the walls and clipping the front and back panels to secure.
- Place the plastic pan inside on the bottom of the crate.
- Add clean, comfortable linen to the bottom of the crate and a comfortable cat bed, or dog bed if desired.

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

During events the outreach team is frequently asked questions about the shelter and the animals. This section provides answers to the most frequently asked questions, and explains other shelter procedures.

### **How long has Heartland been around?**

Dr. Herbert Preiser, DVM and founder of Heartland Animal Shelter, wanted to make a difference by saving the lives of pets who might otherwise be euthanized due to not having a home. Driven to make a change, Dr. Preiser opened Heartland Animal Shelter in October of 2002.

### **Does Heartland euthanize animals?**

Heartland is a no-kill shelter which means that it places all healthy and treatable animals for adoption. Heartland has saved thousands of lives and will continue to be advocates for homeless pets until no more adoptable dogs and cats are euthanized.

Heartland's mission is to provide a no-kill shelter for the care, humane treatment, and adoption of lost, stray, and abandoned animals and to find permanent, loving homes for homeless animals and promote responsible pet ownership through education, community outreach, and collaboration while maintaining respect and compassion for all creatures.

## **Where do the animals in the shelter come from?**

Heartland rescues animals from various sources including owner surrenders, stray animals brought to the shelter, and local and out-of-state municipal shelters. The past year, Heartland has focused on rescuing more local animals from Chicago's two open intake shelters and other rescue organizations in the Chicagoland area who needed help.

## **How many animals are at the shelter?**

The number of animals in Heartland's care constantly fluctuates, but on average, Heartland's cat/kitten rooms house 70 cats and the kennel holds approximately 50 dogs/puppies. Also, Heartland is fortunate to have many great foster homes which allow Heartland to rescue even more animals because they are housed and cared for off-site in a person's home. The animals currently in foster care are indicated on Heartland's website and profiles are posted in the shelter.

## **Where does Heartland get money to pay for the animals?**

Heartland Animal Shelter is a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit shelter. Heartland does not receive government funding so it relies on grants and donations to feed, house and provide medical treatment to the animals.

## **Why does Heartland charge an adoption fee?**

Heartland charges an adoption fee to help cover some of the animal's expenses. Puppies and kittens' adoption fees are higher because they usually require more medical treatment than an adult animal. Heartland never makes a profit off of an adoption fee. The adoption fees cover:

- Age-appropriate vaccinations
- Deworming
- Heartworm test (dogs over six months) and preventative
- Flea/tick preventative
- FeLV test (cats)
- FIV test (cats and kittens over six months)
- Microchip
- Spay/neuter
- A free veterinary examination at Preiser Animal Hospital within two weeks after adoption



## Heartland's adoption process

Heartland's adoption procedures are designed to find the best possible matches between animals and people. This takes into account the needs of the animal and adopter, whether the adopter is allowed to have pets in their home, and if proper care can be provided, all which help determine whether a pet will be well cared for during the remainder of its life.

Potential adopters must complete an application. They may choose to complete it online or they may print it and complete. Applications may be submitted prior to them visiting the shelter and choosing a pet, or it may be submitted after they met and decided on a pet. Heartland requires every person in the household to meet the chosen animal prior to the application being approved. Assuming references are easily contacted, the approval process usually takes 48-72 hours.

Once an application is approved, an appointment is scheduled to finalize paperwork, collect the adoption fee and pick up their pet.



### Team Leader – Items to remember when preparing for an event

- Contact the location to obtain event details, including parking instructions, number of cats and/or dogs they wish for you to bring, whether table/chairs are provided or you need to bring, timeframe they want you there, etc. Please note that unless an exception is granted by the Executive Director, cats should be limited to indoor events.
- Recruit volunteers by posting in the Outreach Team Facebook group. Whenever possible there must be one more volunteer than animal at an event.
- To determine which animals are appropriate to take to the event, consult the Shelter Manager about dogs and the Programs Supervisor about cats.

- Pack the outreach bag with the following contents: New table cloth (with logo), 'Adopt Me' bandanas, donation DipJar, brochures, volunteer recruitment fliers, blank incident reports, water bowls, treats, toys, towels, poop bags, litter box and clean-up materials, cat harness and leash, animal profiles and rabies certificate copies. The animal profiles and rabies certificates are in each animal's file located in the front office cabinet or medical room. Under no circumstance should an animal be taken to an event without a rabies certificate.
- Place an "Animal Out at Adoption Event" place card on the cages of dogs or cats taken. They are kept in the outreach mailbox in the front office.
- Crates are recommended for transporting dogs and are mandatory for cats, but some dogs ride fine unrestrained in the car. Check with the Shelter Manager about each dog's preference.
- When you arrive at the event, introduce yourself and the team to the manager/event contact person.
- After the event, make sure to clean up the area and thank the manager/event contact person for including Heartland at their event. Crates returned to the shelter must be cleaned thoroughly with Rescue before putting back in storage (ask a staff member where to place dirty crates if you are unable to clean them).
- Monetary donations collected should be placed in an envelope with the amount, event name and event location written on the front. Give the envelope to the Office Manager or Shelter Manager.