

**October 21, 2018**

**Dear Volunteer,**

Welcome to Secondhand Hounds! Thank you for your commitment to serve Secondhand Hounds (SHH) and the animals that we dedicate our time, energy and resources to rescuing.

By donating your time and energy to Secondhand Hounds, you are contributing to one of Minnesota's fastest-growing and most-successful rescue organizations. You are also joining hundreds of other volunteers who wish to help animals in need.

We hope your volunteer experience provides you an opportunity to develop skills, meet like-minded individuals and help the thousands of animals who are searching and hoping for their forever home.

This volunteer manual has been prepared as a resource for you. It is intended to be a convenient summary of information about Secondhand Hounds and an overview of volunteer policies and procedures.

We hope your association with Secondhand Hounds is a valuable experience. Your role is important and without people like you, we could not do what we do.

Thank you for supporting Secondhand Hounds!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rachel Mairose', written in a cursive style.

Rachel Mairose  
Executive Director & Founder



# VOLUNTEER MANUAL

## Table of Contents

<b>Purpose of this Manual</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Mission Statement</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Strategic Plan</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Benefits of Volunteering</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Volunteer Opportunities</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Age Requirements</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Volunteer Program Policy</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Volunteer Guidelines</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Role of SHH Staff</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>What is a Volunteer?</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Service at the Discretion of SHH</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Volunteer Rights</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Volunteer Responsibilities</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>Secondhand Hounds Rights</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>Secondhand Hounds Responsibilities</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>Volunteer Policies</b> .....	<b>7</b>
Conflict of Interest.....	7
Business Ethics and Conduct.....	7
Confidentiality .....	7
Sexual Harassment and Other Unlawful Discrimination.....	7
Americans with Disabilities Act.....	7
<b>Volunteer Procedures</b> .....	<b>7</b>
Record Keeping.....	7
Volunteer Personal Data Changes.....	8
Volunteer Position Descriptions .....	8
Available Opportunities .....	9
Volunteer Interview .....	9
Volunteer Placement .....	9
Re-assignment.....	9
Length of Opportunities .....	9
Volunteer Training .....	9
Potential Tax Benefits of Volunteering for a 501(c)(3).....	10
<b>Volunteer Supervision and Evaluation</b> .....	<b>10</b>
Volunteer Leader.....	10
Volunteer/Staff Roles .....	10
Completion of Volunteer Duties.....	10
Volunteer Evaluation .....	10
Concerns and Grievances.....	11
Volunteer Separation .....	11
Insurance/Liability.....	11
Contact List .....	12



# VOLUNTEER MANUAL

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## **Purpose of this Manual**

This manual is designed to acquaint volunteers with Secondhand Hounds and provide information about the volunteer process, benefits, expectations, policies and procedures.

It describes volunteer rights and responsibilities and outlines the volunteer opportunities available within Secondhand Hounds. One of our objectives is to provide a volunteer experience that is fulfilling, safe, and hopefully long-term! For your reference, Secondhand Hounds is also referred to as "SHH".

## **Mission Statement**

Secondhand Hounds is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that rescues animals and places them in loving homes.

Our mission statement is as follows: We rescue animals. We commit to our animals through adoption, rehabilitation and hospice care. We inspire change.

## **Strategic Plan**

Secondhand Hounds was founded in July 2009. It was originally supported by a small group of committed, passionate volunteers. We received our non-profit status in March of 2010 and grew quickly after that milestone was accomplished. To date, we have saved over 16,000 animals and placed them in wonderful adoptive homes.

Our volunteers and fosters are the heart of our organization. We rely on volunteers to keep Secondhand Hounds running in an efficient, compassionate, and friendly manner. Our goal is to create an environment where the volunteers can feel appreciated, fulfilled, and engaged.

Becoming a volunteer is a relatively easy process. If you are reading this, you have likely filled out an application on our website. There are several types of volunteer work we constantly need and you will work with different staff members to help in those areas.

## **Benefits of Volunteering**

Hopefully you will find various benefits of volunteering. We believe you will benefit in the following ways:

- Being involved in a community of people who have the same common goal of animal rescue
- Making important networking contacts
- Learning and developing new skills
- Gaining work experience



# VOLUNTEER MANUAL

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- Building self-esteem and self-confidence
- Feeling needed and valued
- Making a difference in the lives of rescue animals and helping them find their forever home
- Saving the lives of animals that otherwise would not have a second chance

## Volunteer Opportunities

As you will come to learn and understand, there are many ways in which you can assist SHH. These opportunities include but are not limited to:

- Intake Volunteer
- Office Hours Volunteer
- Let Out Volunteer
- Home Visit Volunteer
- Transport Volunteer
- Event Transport Volunteer
- Community/Fundraiser Event Volunteer
- Trap, Neuter, Return (TNR) Volunteer

## Age Requirements

- Intake/Let Out/Home Visit Volunteer – you must be 18 years of age or older
- Office Hours Volunteer – at age 16 you can assist with office hours and at ages 18+ can volunteer alone
- Event/Transport Volunteer – at age 12 you can volunteer with a parent/guardian and ages 18+ can volunteer alone

## Volunteer Program Policy

The mission and vision of Secondhand Hounds is best fulfilled by the active involvement of its membership. SHH accepts and encourages the participation of its membership at all levels of the organization. All staff and volunteer leaders take an active role in creating and maintaining volunteer positions and assist in recruitment and training of volunteers.

## Volunteer Guidelines

The purpose of these guidelines is to provide overall guidance and direction to volunteers and staff engaged in volunteer involvement. They do not constitute a binding contractual agreement.



# VOLUNTEER MANUAL

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## Role of SHH Staff

The Secondhand Hounds staff members develop and coordinate a comprehensive volunteer program that connects all essential elements of volunteer involvement, ensuring efficient and consistent coordination of volunteers. The staff's main objectives are to create a "culture of involvement" and educate members, staff and volunteer leaders on the benefits, trends, needs and available resources of volunteering.

## What is a Volunteer?

A Secondhand Hounds volunteer is an individual who contributes his/her expertise, talents and time to improve the lives of animals in need and advance the mission and purpose of Secondhand Hounds.

We welcome all who would like to give their time to Secondhand Hounds and want to ensure all volunteers have a positive experience. Our volunteer positions vary in expectations and demands. For the safety of our volunteers, staff and animals, we request that a supervisor is provided if a person with a physical or intellectual disability would like to volunteer. For questions regarding this policy, please reach out to us on our [contact form](#).

## Service at the Discretion of SHH

Secondhand Hounds accepts the service of all volunteers with the understanding that such service is at the sole discretion of Secondhand Hounds. A volunteer position is an at-will relationship. Because volunteering with Secondhand Hounds is at-will, the volunteer or Secondhand Hounds may end the volunteering relationship for any reason at any time.

## Volunteer Rights

Secondhand Hounds volunteers have the right to:

- a. A duty based on their interests, skills and availability, as well as the needs of Secondhand Hounds
- b. A written position description outlining the purpose, expected outcomes, commitment, qualifications, benefits and responsibilities of the volunteer position
- c. Adequate orientation and training to provide a valuable volunteer experience
- d. Treatment as a member of a team committed to excellence and carrying out the mission of Secondhand Hounds
- e. Staff support and resources necessary to be successful in their position
- f. A meaningful and rewarding volunteer experience
- g. Recognition for their contribution
- h. An opportunity to give feedback
- i. A chance to grow and develop as a volunteer through participation in special training events, meetings and more responsible positions



# VOLUNTEER MANUAL

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- j. The opportunity to end their volunteer experience

## **Volunteer Responsibilities**

Secondhand Hounds volunteers have the responsibility to:

- a. Accept a position that is realistic based on interests, skills and availability, as well as the needs of Secondhand Hounds
- b. Learn about the position and develop skills through orientation and training
- c. Become familiar with all materials in the Volunteer Manual
- d. Stay informed of Secondhand Hounds news through the website and other communication methods
- e. Ask questions and stay in touch with their volunteer leader or Secondhand Hounds staff
- f. Be a team member—be reliable and dependable in doing their job
- g. Follow all policies and guidelines
- h. State limitations and concerns
- i. Respect confidential information regarding programs, products and services of Secondhand Hounds
- j. Use resources for Secondhand Hounds use only
- k. Maintain confidentiality about the organization, staff and other volunteers
- l. Represent Secondhand Hounds using professional behavior and appearance
- m. Provide sufficient notification to volunteer leaders or staff liaisons when ending their volunteer service

## **Secondhand Hounds Rights**

Secondhand Hounds has the right to:

- a. Place volunteers based on their interests and skills and the needs of Secondhand Hounds
- b. Collect and maintain volunteer contact information
- c. Know the limitations and expectations of volunteers
- d. Expect communication from volunteers

## **Secondhand Hounds Responsibilities**

Secondhand Hounds has the responsibility to:

- a. Engage volunteers in a worthwhile experience to accomplish the goals of Secondhand Hounds
- b. Define purpose, expected outcomes, commitment, qualifications, benefits and responsibilities of the volunteer position
- c. Provide resources and support to the volunteer for a successful outcome
- d. Create a positive, challenging and rewarding volunteer experience
- e. Prepare staff to work with volunteers through training and resource development
- f. Keep the private information of each volunteer confidential and use it only as appropriate and relevant to Secondhand Hounds
- g. Recognize volunteers for their accomplishments and success



# VOLUNTEER MANUAL

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## Volunteer Policies

### Conflict of Interest

In the performance of their responsibilities, volunteers have the duty to act in the best interest of Secondhand Hounds and are to refrain from engaging in any activity that gives rise to actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest (including personal, professional or business) with those of Secondhand Hounds. All volunteers of the organization are required to observe the highest standard of business ethics.

### Business Ethics and Conduct

The successful business operation and reputation of Secondhand Hounds are built upon the principles of fair dealing and ethical conduct. Our reputation for integrity and excellence requires careful observance of the spirit and letter of all applicable laws and regulations, as well as a scrupulous regard for the highest standards of conduct and personal integrity.

### Confidentiality

Volunteers must respect confidential information regarding programs, products and services of Secondhand Hounds to which they are exposed while serving as a volunteer.

### Sexual Harassment and Other Unlawful Discrimination

Secondhand Hounds is committed to providing an environment that is free from all forms of discrimination and conduct that can be considered harassing, coercive or disruptive, including sexual harassment. Actions, words, jokes or comments based on an individual's sex, race, color, national origin, age, religion, disability, sexual orientation or any other legally protected characteristic will not be tolerated. Volunteers with questions or concerns about any type of discrimination are encouraged to bring these issues to the attention of their volunteer leader or staff liaison, or if indicated, the Executive Director or Operations Director.

### Americans with Disabilities Act

Secondhand Hounds complies with all federal and state laws concerning persons with disabilities as well as all other state and federal anti-discrimination statutes. Secondhand Hounds does not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities or any other members of a legally protected class.

Secondhand Hounds will reasonably accommodate qualified individuals with a temporary or long-term disability so that they can perform the essential volunteer functions.

## Volunteer Procedures

### Record Keeping

Information on each volunteer, including positions held, duties performed and personal data, will be maintained by Secondhand Hounds. Volunteer records shall reflect the same confidentiality as staff personnel records. Volunteers are encouraged to keep track of their volunteer hours.



# VOLUNTEER MANUAL

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## **Volunteer Personal Data Changes**

If you change your personal contact information (email, phone number, address), contact [info@secondhandhounds.org](mailto:info@secondhandhounds.org) as soon as possible so that the origination has up-to-date information about you and about how to contact you.

## **Volunteer Position Descriptions**

Every volunteer should receive a position description that provides a summary of the work and activities to be performed by the volunteer. The position description includes the position title, purpose, expected outcomes, commitment, membership requirement, application/selection process, qualifications, benefits and responsibilities. Position descriptions are available in this manual, as well as at our office.

**Intake Volunteer:** Animal intake takes place at our office. As an Intake Volunteer, you help with animals entering Secondhand Hounds. You help the animals through the entire intake process which includes them getting vetted by our staff, photographed, bathed and all ready to go to their foster homes. Intake occurs a couple times each week, typically on Saturday and Sunday. The usual time required is around 5-6 hours.

**Office Hours Volunteer:** Office hours take place at our office. As an Office Hours Volunteer, you will be present at the office as a resource to people who visit us. Visitors often arrive to drop off donations, pick up their foster animal, or ask for supplies for their foster animal. We prefer people commit to a block of time to be able to perform on the same day and time each week. During this time, your shift may include cleaning and organizing the office, doing laundry, helping with donation drop-offs, letting out the dogs and caring for the cats in condos. There are always plenty of activities to work on while at the office! Office Hour shifts are 2-4 hours.

**Let Out Volunteer:** Let Outs take place at our office. Let Out Volunteers are responsible for caring for the animals in the office at specific times throughout the day. Let Out responsibilities include taking dogs out for potty and a walk, giving dogs and cats food, water and any necessary medications, and cleaning up the kennel and condo areas when needed. Let out times vary, but 10-15 minute walks per dog is preferred.

**Event Transport Volunteer:** These opportunities are available in various locations across the Twin Cities. As an Event Transport Volunteer, you attend adoption events and handle a dog or cat during the event on behalf of their foster who is unable to attend. Adoption events last two hours, so a 2.5 – 3-hour time commitment is expected to include pick up and drop off.

**Home Visit Volunteer:** Home Visits take place in several locations, but you would be contacted specifically about the area of your choice as opportunities arise. As a Home Visit Volunteer, you are contacted to perform home visits for potential fosters and adopters. We provide a checklist for you to complete when visiting the residence. You choose which locations work best for you to perform a home visit. Home visits take about an hour (to answer questions of the new foster home), plus travel time.

**Transport Volunteer:** Transports are available in various locations in the Twin Cities. As a Transport Volunteer, you help us by transporting animals primarily for intake. This would be primarily on the weekend but can sometimes occur during the week as well. Transports can be anywhere in the Twin Cities, so times vary





# VOLUNTEER MANUAL

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depending on location. You can also help by providing transport of an animal from their foster home to vet appointments, or from various locations in the Twin Cities to our office.

**Community/Fundraiser Event Volunteer:** Events take place in various locations in the Twin Cities. As a Community/Fundraiser Event Volunteer, you attend community events on behalf of SHH and support in whatever way is needed. You may sell items, answer questions, or oversee a kissing booth with some pups! These events include 5K races, craft fairs or other local events to help raise money for the rescue.

**TNR (Trap, Neuter, Return) Volunteer:** TNR takes place in various locations across the Twin Cities. TNR is our newest initiative for 2017. We are looking for volunteers interested in assisting in trapping feral cats and growing this new program.

## Available Opportunities

Available volunteer opportunities are listed on the Secondhand Hounds website at <https://secondhandhounds.org/get-involved/volunteer/>. You may also be added to our Volunteer mailing list where you will receive a weekly email from our Volunteer Coordinator.

## Volunteer Interview

Before a volunteer is assigned or appointed to a position, an interview may be required to determine his/her suitability and interest. The qualifications of the volunteer and his/her commitment to fulfill the requirements of the position should be determined in the interview. The interview also will allow the volunteer to ask any questions he/she may have about the position. Interviews may be conducted in person, via survey and online signature or by other means.

## Volunteer Placement

The volunteer's interests and capabilities, as well as the requirements of the volunteer position, should be considered when matching a potential volunteer to a position. Volunteer placement should meet the requirements of both the volunteer and Secondhand Hounds.

## Re-assignment

Volunteers who are at any time re-assigned to a new position shall receive all appropriate orientation and training for that position. Appropriate screening procedures for the new position must be completed regardless of previous service.

## Length of Opportunities

Many of the opportunities we perform at SHH are ongoing, meaning there is no set end date to your service. Some volunteer assignments shall end at the conclusion of the set term, without the expectation or requirement that the volunteer be re-assigned to his/her position. Volunteers are welcome to continue their service in the position, seek a different volunteer assignment within the organization, or retire from volunteer service.

## Volunteer Training

Volunteers may receive position-specific training to provide them with the information and skills necessary to perform their volunteer assignment. The timing and methods for delivery will be appropriate to the complexity and demands of the position and the capabilities of the volunteer.



# VOLUNTEER MANUAL

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## **Potential Tax Benefits of Volunteering for a 501(c)(3)**

Some tax benefits are available for volunteers under the general charitable contribution deduction of the Internal Revenue Code. The following are types of non-reimbursed expenditures volunteers may be eligible to deduct:

- Non-reimbursed automobile mileage driven to and from volunteer work, or driven while providing service for Secondhand Hounds
- Bus and cab fares
- Parking fees and tolls
- Travel expenses above the per diem allowance
- Non-reimbursed costs of meals and lodging while traveling on Secondhand Hounds business

The following may *not* be deducted:

- Value of volunteer time donated
- Dependent care expenses incurred while volunteering
- Travel or other expenses for which you are reimbursed

For more information regarding federal tax deductions for volunteers, contact your local Internal Revenue Service agent or your tax advisor.

## **Volunteer Supervision and Evaluation**

### **Volunteer Leader**

Volunteer leaders are volunteers who supervise a given group of volunteers. They share their talents by directing the group in the accomplishment of the group's goals. Volunteer leaders shall be available to their volunteers for consultation and assistance and may refer volunteers to the appropriate staff member.

### **Volunteer/Staff Roles**

Volunteers and staff are considered to be partners in implementing the mission and programs of Secondhand Hounds, with each having a complementary role to play. For proper operation, it is essential that each understands and respects the needs and abilities of the other. Our staff is expected to attend monthly staff meetings and represent the organization at intakes and other community events.

### **Completion of Volunteer Duties**

Volunteers should complete their duties in a timely manner. If a situation arises where the volunteer is unable to perform the duties agreed upon, the volunteer will contact their volunteer leader and/or the Director as soon as possible to reassign duties.

### **Volunteer Evaluation**

Volunteers will periodically be asked for their feedback, as Secondhand Hounds is always seeking ways to improve programs and services. Volunteers are welcome to share their comments about events with [info@secondhandhounds.org](mailto:info@secondhandhounds.org) and that will go to Rachel and Claire. If volunteers have questions, they are also welcome to ask any of the staff members they meet at events.



# VOLUNTEER MANUAL

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## Concerns and Grievances

Secondhand Hounds encourages an open and frank atmosphere in which any problem, complaint, suggestion or question receives a timely response. If a volunteer has a problem with an assignment or the relationship with other volunteers or a staff person, SHH leadership should be informed.

Secondhand Hounds is committed to making every effort to resolve complaints confidentially, impartially and in a timely manner. A volunteer should first strive to resolve any conflict or complaint with the other person involved. If he/she is unable to reach an effective resolution and continues to have a concern, he/she must seek direction from a staff member. If there is need for further resolution, a volunteer may seek the counsel of the Executive Director.

## Volunteer Separation

Volunteer service may end voluntarily by resignation or involuntarily by termination. A volunteer may be re-assigned to a position that is a more appropriate match to his/her skills and experience. If a volunteer needs to resign his/her position, it is requested that the volunteer provide advance notice of his/her departure and a reason for the decision.

Possible grounds for dismissal may include but are not limited to:

- Gross misconduct
- Insubordination
- Being under the influence of drugs or alcohol
- Theft of property or misuse of Secondhand Hounds equipment, resources or materials
- Abuse or mistreatment of staff, volunteers and/or members
- Failure to abide by Secondhand Hounds policies
- Failure to adequately perform assigned duties

## Insurance/Liability

Volunteers agree to defend, indemnify, and hold harmless Secondhand Hounds, its directors, officers, agents, and employees from and against any and all claims, demands, losses, and expenses, including attorney fees, arising out of suits, claims and demands by reason of injury or death of any person(s) or damage to any property attributable to the willful misconduct, negligent acts or negligent omissions of the volunteer, its subcontractors, and their officers, agents or employees, except to the extent such claims or losses are due to the negligence of Secondhand Hounds, its employees or agents.

Volunteer acknowledges that the behavior of dogs, cats or other animals can be unpredictable and carries with it certain risks, including but not limited to bites, scratches or other injury to both the person and property. Volunteer recognizes and accepts this risk and waives the right to bring any legal claims against Secondhand Hounds, its directors, officers, agents and employees from any damages or injuries that may result from the inherently dangerous activity of working with animals.

## Contact List

You can find an updated list of contacts on our website: <https://secondhandhounds.org/about/our-team/>



# VOLUNTEER MANUAL

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This includes emergency issues as well as everyday contacts. We run mostly on email, so please email if you have a question. **If you have the phone number of a staff member, do not give this number out to other volunteers without the staff members' permission!** These are their personal cell phone numbers, so please be respectful of their time.