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# **ACTion Programs for Animals (APA) Volunteer Meeting January 23, 2010 at the Encantada Park Clubhouse**

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## **Who we are**

APA is an animal-welfare nonprofit charity organization that formed in May 2009 to address some of the overwhelming needs for programs and services in our community to better the lives of companion animals. APA believes that transforming the community will happen when we engage with people one person/family at a time, and when we change the community, we will eventually change the outcome for our homeless pets. The vast majority of cats and dogs that enter our overburdened municipal shelter are put to death—in the last couple of decades, intake has been roughly 15,000+ and the kill rate has been 11,000+ each year, with current kill rates of approximately 80+% for cats and 60+% for dogs.

Our **mission** is to help people and their pets live better lives together. Our **vision** is that our programs and services will help transform our community to improve the quality of life for companion animals and greatly reduce the number of abandoned and homeless animals impounded and killed in our municipal shelter.

We know this community transformation will take time, and how much time it takes is dependent on how fast we can administer the multiple programs and efforts necessary to save lives. That's why we need your help!

## **How we're different from other animal-welfare groups**

APA operates from a progressive and positive animal-welfare philosophy. Our stance and positions on some animal-welfare topics may not be in line with some traditional groups (i.e., pro-TNR, anti-punitive legislative/legal methods that change little and/or lead to increased kill rates, etc.). We believe in being open-minded and working to find measurable approaches that are successful for our community versus doing things the way they have always been done, which has not yielded good results for many animals in our community.

## **Our goals and objectives**

- Positive humane outreach and education
- Assistance for pets and their guardians in times of need
- Programs that target the most urgent animal-welfare challenges in our community
- Services & support that make it easier for pet guardians to do the right thing

## **Current and future programs**

### Pilot Program: The Pet Food Bank

We launched this program in June 2009, and the demand for this service has grown faster than our fundraising efforts. To date, we have distributed more than 45,000 pounds of food to qualified families and individuals at monthly distributions and via other agencies, such as the Community of Hope. At this time, our monthly food distributions are on hold as we search for a new warehouse/distribution location as well as wait on a PetCo Foundation food grant. Without this granted food, the wholesale cost of the quantity we currently need is roughly \$2000 a month.

### Possible Future Programs/Services

The needs and possibilities are almost endless. However, from our interaction with the public to date and information we have gathered, top areas to address with our next projects have emerged. These include the following:

- Providing wellness/vaccination clinics and vet care assistance for pets of no- and low-income families
- Providing pet supplies/services, including dog houses and crates, grooming services, training and other pet retention services, etc.
- Providing alternatives to dog chaining and/or the materials needed to improve the lives of dogs chained 24/7, such as fence mending materials, etc.
- Providing resources, advocacy, and PR campaigns for incentivized, high-volume spay/neuter, including promotion of existing resources (i.e., SNAP)
- Providing resources, support, and advocacy for community cat caretakers and TNR efforts, including advocating for ordinance changes in the city and county
- Providing temporary care and/or transport to rescue for animals in need of new homes or temporary care for whatever reason (i.e., a battered woman who wants to leave an abuser but doesn't have a place for her pets to go temporarily or permanently)

APA does not think we can do it all alone, nor do we want to. These kinds of efforts require groups to work together and pool resources to meet similar goals as well as individuals and groups to network with each other and pitch in where and how they can. We welcome and want to form partnerships to achieve community goals, and we have working relationships with all the animal-welfare nonprofits in town; for example, we share information and resources with the HSSNM Pet Help Line and feature lost/found and pets needing re-homing on our Animals in Need page on our website.

## Our volunteer needs

Although we don't expect our volunteers to personally agree with us on all topics or at all times, we do expect that when working on APA's behalf, our volunteers will be respectful to the people we interact with and will carry out APA's mission as much as possible. Feel free to leave the challenging people and circumstances to the APA board to deal with; and most importantly, try to have a good time!

For 2010, our first priority is raising enough funds to stabilize our pet food bank program and to launch at least one new program by year's end. However, there are many areas in which volunteers can lend their assistance and talents (the listing shown next is not exhaustive). By the end of today's meeting, we'd like to break up into working groups of people with similar interests and pick some group leaders.

### ▪ Fundraising — working from small-to-large scale

- ✓ Crafts group (those who can help make items for APA to sell for donations at our tabling and outreach events)
- ✓ Groups built around specific fundraising efforts/events
- ✓ Mail-based fundraising group
- ✓ Sponsor solicitation group (those who can secure sponsorships and support from locally-owned businesses)
- ✓ Grant and foundation research group

*NOTE: Some local resources, such as the United Way, offer free courses to nonprofits on fundraising efforts; our board members and volunteers are welcome to attend these on APA's behalf.*

### ▪ Animal-welfare Public Outreach

- ✓ Tabling/events outreach group – setting up information tables at existing events and outside stores where we are allowed to do so (i.e., the Enchilada Festival, Sam's exit, etc.)
- ✓ Community connections group – those who can work on establishing relationships with centers and groups which provide social services so we can see where APA may be able to plug into existing human services as well as grow our community connections
- ✓ Public speakers group – bilingual teams which can give animal-welfare talks at community centers, schools, organization/group meetings, etc.



# **ACTion Programs for Animals (APA) Volunteer Waiver & Liability Release**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone #s (home:): \_\_\_\_\_ (cell): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_ Guardian (if under 18 yrs.): \_\_\_\_\_

Animal-welfare areas of interest: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you bilingual? \_\_\_\_\_ Previous volunteer experience: \_\_\_\_\_

## Volunteer Responsibilities

- I will always act in a professional, respectful manner; I agree to be courteous to all persons with whom I come into contact with during the course of my volunteer work with APA.
- I will attend to all my scheduled assignments; however, I will contact APA if I am unable to fulfill my volunteer role so the organization can get someone else to cover for me or replace me.
- I will be safety conscious at all times.

## Waiver & Liability Release

I release and forever discharge and hold harmless APA and its successors from any and all liability, claims, and demands of whatever kind of nature, either in law or in equity, which may arise from my volunteer work. I assume all associated risks in my duties and understand and acknowledge that this release discharges APA from any claim that I may have against the organization with respect to personal injury, illness, death or property damage that may result from my participation in volunteer activities. I also understand that APA is not liable for my medical expenses.

This release applies even though liability may arise out of negligence or carelessness on the part of those discharged, including APA officers, employees, agents, partners, and other volunteers.

## Visual/Audio Image Release

I grant APA all right, title and interest in any and all photographic images, video and audio recordings made by the organization during my volunteer work and in which I may appear.

## Use of Private Vehicle for APA Volunteer Duties

I certify that I have a minimum of state-required automobile liability insurance in place for my personal vehicle. I understand that in the event of an accident while carrying out my APA volunteer duties, my own insurance will be used to pay for damages, including those of my own vehicle.

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I am at least 18 years of age and competent to sign this release. I understand its contents and I freely accept the terms. If I am under 18, my adult guardian must also sign and approve of my volunteer role in APA.

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

Signature of adult guardian (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

Who to contact in case of emergency (name/telephone #s): \_\_\_\_\_