

# Coffee Break



## Does your job follow you everywhere—even when you're on vacation or taking the day off?

That was the question we asked you for this issue's Coffee Break. Many of your answers included the words "vacation" or "day off" only in the context of not taking them! You told us about never missing a chance to educate, having a reputation as the local "pet expert," and being on call 24-7.

It is not so much that my job follows me, but more that I am my job—and wherever I go, there I am! When I was in Cabo San Lucas on vacation, I found a dog who had run into a local shop. The shop owners were trying to chase him out with a broom, and the dog was terrified. I picked him up, walked up and down the streets, and found somebody who knew who the dog belonged to. Ultimately, the dog was reunited with a very happy owner. This was all without being able to speak the language. I barely made it back to my cruise ship in time—but by golly, the dog was back home!

—Julie Green, Director, GRRR Village Canine Rescue, Weatherford, Texas

I find myself giving advice on spaying and neutering cats and dogs wherever I go, especially on my days off. I always look at friends' cats and kittens to see if they are male or female and look at their teeth until someone asks, "What are you doing?" I guess it is a habit of mine due to my career.

—Crystal Watkins-Knowles, Animal Health and Surgery Supervisor, Woods Humane Society, San Luis Obispo, California

This is a volunteer position; however, I check the phone lines seven days a week and return the calls. I keep the vet records for all dogs in the program and remind their fosterers when their vaccines are due. I am the foster coordinator; therefore I always have to be coming up with creative ideas to recruit dog fosterers. I check messages no matter where I am or what I am doing. I am constantly thinking of new ways to get fosters for the dogs. Never a break!

—Pamela Beane, Dog Team Co-Leader/Dog Foster Coordinator, Animal Adoption & Rescue Foundation, Winston-Salem, North Carolina

Because we don't have a computer at the shelter, home is where I answer e-mails, write reports, update our Petfinder pages, and do anything else that requires a computer and printer! My cell phone is subject to ring at all hours, since I am also our primary emergency contact. I do love my job, though, and the emotional rewards make up for the long hours and stress.

—Elizabeth Burrows, Managing Director, Humane Society of Grand Bahama, Freeport, Grand Bahama, Bahamas

Being in the “animal industry,” I have many folks ask me to watch over their pets while they are away. As I travel, I generally have some leftover biscuits in my pockets and may offer one to a friendly pooch so I can get my “dog fix.” Their people start to talk to me, and it usually comes out that I counsel folks in animal behavior. I certainly get quite a bit of conversation going at this point. I live in a very small town, so I often get stopped for many behavior questions and get to hear the happy adoption stories as well. I may not be the typical traveler enjoying my time away from work or spending my days off relaxing with human friends, but I wouldn’t have it any other way.

—Tiffani Zimmerman, Behavior Counselor, Stafford Animal Shelter, Livingston, Montana

Shortly after arriving in Dallas for Animal Care Expo, The HSUS’s annual conference, I was driving with a local friend to go eat one evening, and a loose dog was running in the middle of a busy road. We pulled over and caught the dog, called the number on the tag, returned him to his owner, and continued out to dinner.

—Jennifer Daniels, Special Projects Coordinator, Animal Rescue League of Western Pennsylvania, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

I always see dogs running loose in my neighborhood when I walk my dog. I usually have my lead from work with me, so I can catch them and return them to the owner or the shelter. My friends say I am “volunteer animal control.”

—Angela Grider, Kennel Tech, Pet Lodge, Nampa, Idaho

I work full time at a paying job, but on breaks I always check and reply to e-mails. At lunch I run home to take care of my foster animals and personal dogs, check voice mail, and return calls. When I get off work, I go to PetSmart to clean cat cages and again go back home to the animals at my house. I do vet visits, training, etc., be-

fore I go to work. On the weekends, I do adoption events, transport, paperwork, and accounting. I have only taken one vacation in years, and even then I took phone calls and gave advice to all my staff of volunteers. It is a lot of work, but it is all for a reason beyond myself.

—Joyce Berry, Director, The Pet Castle, Inc. Animal Rescue, Florence, Kentucky

I never turn down the chance to tell someone the benefits of spay/neuter, whether on the clock or not! I answer a 24-hour helpline for animal emergencies in our county, so my phone is by my bed. I’m always looking for donations or volunteers or new ideas to benefit the shelter and our pets awaiting adoption.

—Patricia Beam, Director and Cruelty Investigator, Mitchell County Animal Rescue, Spruce Pine, North Carolina

Everywhere you go, you see situations that “keep your motor running.” Most people think of picnics and fireworks on the Fourth of July, but the animal caregiver thinks of someone who loves his dog so much that he couldn’t stand to leave her at home and instead brings her out for the celebration. Or while others enjoy the fireworks display, you are thinking of every terrified animal in the area who can’t get away from the horrific noise. Everyone knows you as the animal shelter person, so the questions keep coming, no matter where you are. An animal shelter worker will never let the opportunity to educate pass them by.

—Barbara Scanlon, Director, Marshall County Animal Rescue League, Moundsville, West Virginia

**Animal Sheltering congratulates Tiffani Zimmerman of Livingston, Mont., whose submission was selected in a random drawing from those published in this issue. The Stafford Animal Shelter, where she is a behavior counselor, will receive a free coffee break: a \$50 gift certificate to a local coffee shop. “Bone” appetit!**

## Our next question: What is your favorite part of the workday?

Please submit your responses (150 words or less) at [animalsheltering.org/coffeebreak](http://animalsheltering.org/coffeebreak) or send them to Editor, Animal Sheltering/HSUS, 2100 L St. NW, Washington, DC 20037. **Your answer may be printed in a future issue of Animal Sheltering.** If your response is chosen for publication, you will be entered into a drawing to win a **free coffee break (valued at \$50)** for your organization. No donation or purchase is necessary to win; see [animalsheltering.org](http://animalsheltering.org) for contest rules, or send an e-mail or letter to the above addresses to request a printed copy.