

2018

HSP Behavior Department

Volunteer Program

Overview

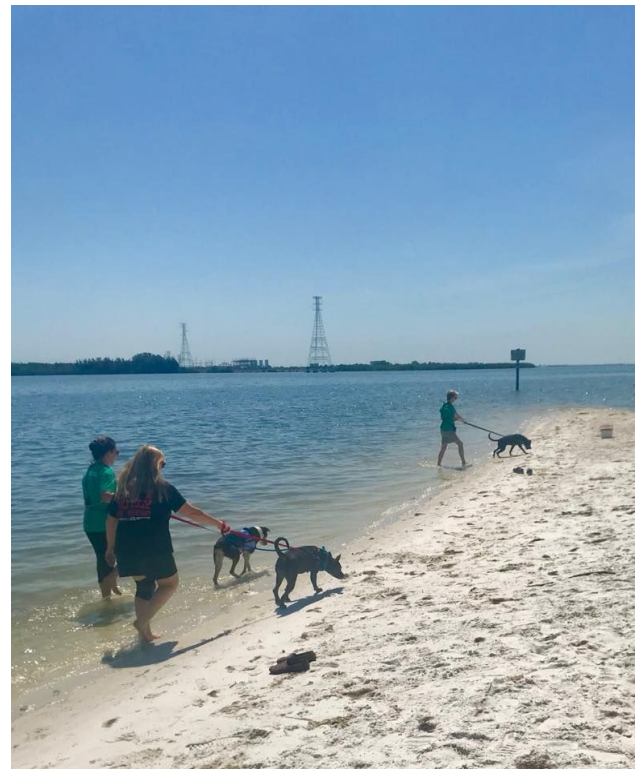
Volunteers are considered an essential part of the work our Behavior Team accomplishes! The HSP Behavior Department has structured its volunteer program to best suit HSP's mission, departmental needs, and the skill-level of each volunteer. HSP's philosophy is that the more people working towards a behavior modification and training goal for each pet, the more successful the pet will be and the less time that pet will remain in the inherently stressful shelter environment.

Orientation

All potential HSP volunteers, independent of their program, are required to attend the HSP Volunteer Orientation, which provides them with an overview of our programs and mission. After orientation, volunteers that are interested in working with and walking our dogs can sign up for our Safety and Handling class.

Blue Level Volunteers

Blue volunteers are our beginner level dog walkers. HSP recognizes that not all volunteers have the desire or the skill level to conduct obedience training or behavior modification, and therefore this level is designed for volunteers to simply walk "easy to handle" dogs. Blue dogs do not pull very hard on leash, are not leash reactive with other dogs, and generally do not display over-arousal behaviors (jumping, mouthing, leash biting). Blue Volunteers also complete three sessions with



a mentor volunteer (Green or Purple Volunteer trained to teach new volunteers) prior to volunteering independently. The mentors are given a checklist of skills that each new Blue Volunteer must be competent in prior to “passing” the Blue Level.

Required Training: *Safety and Handling*, an overview of how to read canine body language, safely remove dogs from the kennel, use walking equipment (slip leads, EZ Walk harnesses), and troubleshooting common problems while walking.

Shelter Dog Trainers

Some Blue Volunteers may want to teach HSP dogs basic obedience commands, such as sit, down, stay and more. To ensure consistency and that each volunteer is only utilizing positive reinforcement methods, Blue Volunteers must go through the *Shelter Dog Training* course and pass the corresponding evaluation. Shelter Dog Trainers can still only handle Blue level dogs.

Required Hours: 10 hours as a Blue Volunteer

Required Training: *Shelter Dog Training*, an overview of positive reinforcement, basic obedience commands and learning theory.

Green Level Volunteers

Many volunteers that pass *Shelter Dog Training* want to move up to the Green Level. These volunteers must participate in our *Green Level Training* and pass the handling evaluation with a member of our Behavior Department. During Green Training, volunteers learn about common behavior issues in the shelter, such as over-arousal behaviors and leash reactivity. They are taught skills on how to prevent these behaviors from happening, as well as how to teach impulse control in dogs and perform desensitization exercises.

Required Hours: 10 hours as a Shelter Dog Training Volunteer

Required Training: *Green Level Training*, an overview of leash reactivity, over-arousal in dogs, impulse



control exercises and desensitization/counter-conditioning.

Perks: Green Volunteers can conduct playgroups and walk dogs off property to nearby parks and neighborhoods, affectionately known as *pack walks*.

Pack Walks

Pack Walks are a volunteer favorite! Once at the Green level, these volunteers have received the necessary safety and handling training that enables them to take dogs off site and into the community. While Green Volunteers are allowed to take these dogs to pet stores, Home Depot, local restaurants, and other dog friendly spaces, these volunteers enjoy taking HSP dogs to local parks to practice obedience and enjoy the Tampa Bay water and weather.

Restrictions: Dogs are only allowed to be within a 10 minute drive from the shelter so they can quickly be returned to property in case of a prospective adopter. Volunteers must check the dogs' PetPoint profiles in case a dog is disqualified from the Pack Walk program for behavioral/medical reasons.

Purple Level Volunteers

Purple Volunteers are HSP's most experienced volunteers that have demonstrated an innate understanding of canine behavior and have the skills to learn advanced behavior modification techniques. Purple Volunteers assist the Behavior Department in behavior modification, playgroups, behavior evaluations, and all other departmental operations. Volunteers are advanced to Purple Level through *invitation only* and pass an evaluation conducted by our Behavior Department.

Requirements: Must be Green Level and receive invitation to complete evaluation by Behavior Department

Required Training: *Purple Level Training*, an overview of defensive handling techniques and advanced behavior modification.

Perks: Purple Volunteers are an elite group that can participate in advanced behavior seminars, conferences, etc. as an extension of the Behavior Department.

Volunteer Engagement

Volunteer Communication

Facebook. All dog walking volunteers, no matter what level, are invited to participate in HSP's private Facebook group in which they receive updates on dogs, report progress, and receive weekly training challenges. Volunteers who participate in the challenges post videos of themselves completing the challenge!

Google. All Green and Purple Volunteers also have access to our Behavior Modification Google document. Updated live, this document notes all dogs currently undergoing behavior modification protocols, and details each protocol for each pet.

**All volunteers must stay active in the program (complete a set numbers of hours each month), or else they are no longer considered active and lose their color status. If they resume being active after being inactive for three months, they must complete the evaluation again.*

