**SPCA of Westchester**

**Canine Companion**

**Volunteer Manual**

**

Welcome! On behalf of the SPCA we thank you for your interest in volunteering with us and hope you will enjoy the opportunity to learn more about our dogs and dog training. As a canine companion volunteer you can offer invaluable services to the SPCA and the gift to our dogs of human contact and exercise. We can’t stress enough how important it is for the dogs to have people like you.

Our goal for the dogs in our care is that they will thrive as they receive more physical activity and companionship to reduce the stress associated with living in a shelter, AND, that we can increase their adoptability by training and socializing them. Also, by teaching them the basic skills they will need to be part of a family we hope to ensure the longevity of those adoptions. Remember that every time you walk by a kennel or take a dog out of the run they are learning from the experience so make the most of it and teach them something that helps them on the road to a new home!

Canine Companion Volunteer Training:

**Steps to Becoming a Canine Companion Volunteer:**

1. Attend Canine Companion Training Class held at least once a month usually on Saturday afternoons. To find out when the next class is, please contact our Volunteer Coordinator Joanne- joanne@spca914.org.
2. View the Canine Communication Video (this has been uploaded to YouTube so that you can watch it at your earliest convenience.) Copy and paste it into your web browser, or type the link into your browser to see the video: [**http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ipmkq65jE\_4&feature=youtu.be**](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ipmkq65jE_4&feature=youtu.be)

DO NOT look up the video as it is unlisted and can only be accessed via the link provided!

1. Requirements to be completed before you can be mentored:

A. Attend 1 Body Language class

B. Attend the Kennel Entry and Exit Class

C. Attend the Equipment training class

D. Attend an elective class. This can be any other class offered on class days.

Classes are held on Tuesdays and Sundays at 10am.

1. After you have attended the 4 classes, contact Joanne -joanne@spca914.org and she will verify your hours and put you in contact with Carol Klein who will arrange a mentor session for you. You should reread this manual and review the attached Mentor Checklist in preparation for your session.

**Once you are a canine companion volunteer, you will be able to:**

1. Play an assisting role in all group activities listed above.
2. Walk, train and socialize your approved color level dogs individually.
3. Assist behavior team with training plans for green and blue level dogs.
4. Join our Trail Team on Sundays at 11am (you can walk too!).
5. Participate in Golden Outreach (GO) training once you have basic training skills on Tuesdays at 12 noon. You will need approval from GO trainer and be able to walk a variety of dogs to participate.
6. When you have your basic training skills, you can train a dog in C.L.A.S.S. program.
7. As you spend more time going through our training process and increasing your comfort level and handling skills, you can advance to Light Blue, then Dark Blue and eventually, if appropriate, to Purple . Your mentor will assign you to a level she/he feels is correct for your handling skills. As you gain experience, you may move up a level by discussing with the Behavioral Training Staff. Please note that approval for Dark Blue and Purple Dogs is on a dog by dog basis and approval is done by the Behavioral Training Staff. We keep track of all canine companion volunteers’ approved levels.

Sometimes two mentor sessions are required to complete your training. Your mentor will advise you if they feel that you need more mentor time. If you are still unable to walk dogs safely after your second mentor session, we ask that you come back to play group and/or training classes for practice. Please remind Jeanne and Diana that you need hands on practice. They will decide when you are ready for another mentor session. Please do not get discouraged. Walking shelter dogs is not as easy as people think it is; especially with old kennel doors and an open shelter setting.

**Purple Level Canine Companions** are the assistants to the training staff and are afforded the opportunity to do more advanced work with the more difficult dogs. It is not expected that all blue volunteers will become purple volunteers, but for those who are interested it can be very rewarding.

**Training to become a Purple Canine Companion:**

This will require working with our behavior team one on one with purple level dogs for a few sessions and demonstrating the sufficient skill level to handle purple level dogs alone.

 **Possible Responsibilities and Activities for Purple Canine Companions:**

* 1. Walk, Train and Socialize green, blue and purple level dogs
	2. Participate in specific training without direct supervision
	3. Assist with running play groups
	4. Assist behavior team with behavior evaluations
	5. Participate in behavior modification protocols
	6. Lead shelter dog class
	7. Mentor new dog walkers to become canine companion volunteers

Working with the dogs:

There are a thousand little things to remember when working in and around the shelter. Most protocols are in place to help keep you, the dogs and the public safe. We want you to enjoy your time at the SPCA and this means being safe. Please do not worry if you forget something - just ask. The staff is here to help. If you run into an issue with anything, do not hesitate to reach out for help from the people around you. **Review the attached Mentor Checklist regularly to make sure you are following protocols and if you have any questions.**

### Get Yourself Ready to Work with the Dogs:

**Dog walking hours are:** Every day 10:00 - 4:00 pm.

1. **Always Sign in/out** - Use the computer in the Volunteer Cottage. If it is not working use the sign-in sheet on the desk. This is very important. This is needed for active status and funding.
2. **Attire** - Please remember to wear your volunteer ID badge. You should also wear comfortable clothes, such as jeans, because you will get dirty and wet. There will be NO pocket books, leggings, umbrellas, sunglasses, clogs, flip flops or sandals. Hats are restricted to baseball caps only. Sun glasses are discouraged. If you wear transitional glasses, please speak to the Behavioral Training Staff. You should be ready to move freely and be covered well while working with the dogs.
3. **NO CELL PHONES! -** When walking the dog, the dog must be your sole focus. Please no talking or texting while working with the dogs.
4. **Treats** - Treats can be found in the refrigerator in the Volunteer Cottage. We usually use nitrate-free hot dogs cut into small pieces about the size of a pea. If there are no treats already cut up in the refrigerator, please cut extra when you are cutting them up for yourself. Treats are used to reward a dog for doing something asked of them. Most dogs go to training classes so they do know some commands. Besides walking the dogs, we want volunteers to reinforce the basic commands such as ‘sit’ and ‘let’s go’. Try not to give treats “just because” – they should work for food rewards by being calm, interactive with humans and learning skills. You can definitely use treats to get the collar and harness on an overly excited or shy dog also.
5. **Leashes** - You may find leashes in the cottage or in the tent. However, we do suggest you buy your own. A six-foot cotton webbed with the right type of snap (bolt vs. quick) is good. Absolutely no retractable or chain leashes are to be used.
6. **Poop bags -** You should be able to find them in the Volunteer Cottage and the Tent. There are also in birdhouses along the trail and at the end of the driveway, please take enough with you and pick up wherever you are including the dog’s kennel.
7. **Know your dog** - READ the kennel card and the Volunteer Communication Binder that is in the tent ***before*** taking the dog out. Each dog is carefully assessed by the behavior department and based on those assessments a level is assigned to the dog. Handling a dog which you are not prepared for can put you, the public, and the dog at risk. **The dog always loses. If there is no log sheet in the communication binder, please find a member of the Behavioral Training Staff ONLY and ask about the dog.**
8. **Kongs & Toys** - We are always looking for volunteers to clean toys and sanitize and stuff Kongs. You can do these tasks at any time the shelter is open. Kong cleaning and stuffing takes place in the Cottage Kitchen. The instructions are on the cabinet to the left of the sink. Toys can be cleaned in the Grooming Room and left to dry in the covered play yard next to Grooming. Of course, both of these activities can be done at your home so long as you can bring the Kongs and toys back within a few days. **Thursday is new toy distribution day beginning at 10:00 am.**

### Get The Dogs Ready for a Walk:

1. **Walking Equipment** –
2. **Collars**: Each dog should have a basket hanging on their kennel with their martingale collar in it. If theirs is missing please find a staff member to get you a new one. It is a good idea for you to learn how to fit the new one yourself. If you need help you can ask a staff member or a volunteer. They will be happy to assist you. These collars are designed so that if used properly, the dog cannot back out of it. There are two types: quick release and over the head. Please familiarize yourself with the Martingale type collar before walking dogs on your own.
3. **Harnesses**: We use the Easy Walk Harness. You will find them in the tent under each dog’s name, in alphabetical order. These are no pull harnesses that should make walking the dog easier. All harnesses are to be placed on the dog and taken off of the dog in the dog walkers’ tent, **with only Behavioral Training Staff approved exceptions only**. Please note that some dogs wear a Freedom Harness. Please ask Behavioral Training Staff how to use this harness before walking the dog.

***Fitting the Easy-Walk harness:***This takes time and practice to learn, so please be patient and ask for help if you need it when fitting these harnesses.

1. The Easy-Walk harness, which has two buckles, needs the different colored strap to go under the belly.
2. With the belly strap buckle unclipped, slip the shoulder strap over the dog’s head with the D-ring at the chest. The label should rest on the dog’s left shoulder and in your right hand.
3. Tighten the belly strap to a comfortably snug fit: for medium-sized dogs, allow room for one finger’s width under the strap. For larger dogs, a little more; for smaller dogs, a little less.
4. Adjust the shoulder strap so that the chest strap rests directly over the breastbone.
5. Attach the leash to the D-ring at the chest and the collar.
6. Final hint: The harness should look like a sideways “T”.

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1. **Be Prepared-** Be sure you are ready before you approach the dog; they get excited about going out. You should have in your possession treats, poop bags, leash and the collar. Make sure you clip the **leash to the collar before** you enter the kennel as it is much easier that way. If you know that the dog gets mouthy you might want to have a toy with you. Most important: be confident. It is essential.
2. **Always put your initials** on the blackboard next to the dog’s name and in the proper day. Normally we keep the dog out for 25 minutes, making sure that all dogs in your walking level have been out at least once before giving a dog a longer walk or a second one.
3. **Taking the Dog out of the kennel** - Most of the dogs are very eager to get out so you need to take caution when going into the kennel. First let the dog sniff your knuckles or back of your hand against the gate and get to know you. Open the kennel wide enough to slip through and block their exit with your legs. The door ALWAYS goes IN. If you don’t think you can enter safely, throw a treat to the back of the kennel before entering. With the use of a treat and confidence, place the collar on the dog. Some collars have clips and some go over the head. Exit the kennel, keeping the dog on a short leash on your side furthest away from the other dogs. Most of the other dogs will get excited, so exiting the area quickly is important. You are allowed to leave the kennel doors open; **EXCEPT in the small animal building. Please check that both doors are closed when you place the dog back in the kennel.**

### Out and about with the dogs:

1. **Treat small dogs:** with as much respect as large dogs. Allow them to come to you.
2. **Individual walks vs. Group Activities:** There are many differences between working individually and group activities. All playgroups, socialization walks and other group activities are directed by training staff to ensure safety. When working with the dogs on a one on one basis you will be able to feed, play and interact with the dogs in ways that are not safe in playgroups. Pay attention to the directions of staff and other volunteers to ensure that you are doing what is right for the activity you and your dog are currently involved in.
3. **Always be aware:** On busy days there are lots of dogs out. Keep at least 15- 20 feet between you and other dogs. Check carefully to make sure the tent is empty before entering. You may enter only if there is no other dog in there. Please keep your distance on the trail as well. If a dog reacts to your dog, please keep walking. Do not stop.
4. **Stay safe:** Do not allow other volunteers to handle your dog inappropriately. Keep away from other dogs and do not allow the public to greet your dog. If you find someone who would like to meet the dog, please find a staff member and hand the dog off to them for the greeting. You do not need to be rude to the public. Just politely state that you need an SPCA representative present before you can allow them to pet or handle the dog.
5. **“Adopt Me” Vests and Leashes:** If you are leaving the property make sure you find a vest or leash that says “Adopt Me” on it. Lisa has the vests and Behavioral Training Staff can give you a leash. Please remember to return them.
6. **Loose Dog Protocol:** If you are out with a dog and it gets away from you don’t panic, just find the staff and make sure they are aware of the situation. In the event you hear someone call loose dog you have 4 main responsibilities:
	1. Make sure the gate to the parking lot is closed!
	2. Get your dog out of the way, by getting indoors or behind a fence.
	3. Do not chase the loose dog!
	4. Make sure staff is aware so they can handle the dog.

**Our Training Philosophy:**

1. We use **positive reinforcement only**. We know that the dominance theory or pack leaders are scientifically and morally incorrect. Never are we to use any type of punishment, compulsion or adverseness while working with the shelter dogs. A great article on this subject can be found here: [The Truth About Dominance | Victoria Stilwell Positively](https://positively.com/dog-training/myths-truths/the-truth-about-dominance/) and [Ian Dunbar's Misconceptions-mythical-alpha-dog](http://www.dogstardaily.com/training/misconceptions-mythical-alpha-dog)
2. Only some of the dogs know the word “sit”. Using body language and treats are a more effective means of communication. Please do not chant “sit, sit, sit, sit” to your dog. Once is enough. When walking they should be on your left side and the leash should go across the chest not the back.
3. **Have fun!** It is our goal that you and the dogs will benefit from your time together, training should be no different.

### Golden Rules to Live By:

1. **THE GOLDEN RULES OF DOG WALKING**

**DO:**

1. Read the volunteer communication log in the tent before you take the dog for a walk: information changes frequently.
2. Make sure the dog is your level and you are comfortable with the dog.
3. Always walk a dog with the correct walking equipment. If the equipment is missing or not well fitted, inform a staff member.
4. Report any problematic or unusual behavior to the Behavioral Training Staff by email: trainer@spca914.org This will help keep all people and animals safe and help us find the best adopter for the dog.
5. Be prepared. Always use positive reinforcement.

**DON’T:**

1. Don’t walk a dog above your level unless a member of the Behavioral Training Staff says it’s OK.
2. Don’t handle a dog if you feel at all uncomfortable. There are plenty of dogs to spend your time with.
3. Don’t offer treats or toys to co-kenneled dogs.
4. Don’t drag a dog by the leash if it doesn’t want to walk. Use treats to lure them.
5. Don’t permit the public to interact with the dog you are walking.
6. Don’t allow your dog to interact with other dogs unless instructed by the Behavioral Training Staff.
7. Never put your face directly in the face of a dog.
8. Don’t rush yourself when working with the dogs, taking your time and having patience will always end with a better result.
9. **Never touch a dog that has not touched you first!**
10. Never touch a dog in any way the dog has not touched you first. For example do not put your face into a dog’s face. If a dog comes to you and kisses you that is okay, but it is not alright to bend down and kiss a dog.
11. When petting always have a hand on the collar.
12. Constantly check in with your dog to ensure their behavior has not changed.
13. Be aware of the dog’s body language (what are they communicating to you?)
14. Be conscious of your body language (what are you communicating to the dogs?)
15. Do not hover, loom over, put your face into the face of or hug a dog!
16. If a dog appears scared, keep your hand by your side for the dog to sniff; do not extend it towards the dog. Allow the dog to sniff you and wait for him to ask to be petted. A sniff is not necessarily an invitation to touch the dog.

## Important Contact information:

**Volunteer Coordinator:** Joanne Witmyer joanne@spca914.org

**Behavior and Enrichment Department:** trainer@spca914.org

**Train To Adopt Yahoo Group (TTA):** This is an email group that the dog walkers are invited to join, where we share information about the dogs and what is going on at the shelter. There is usually a weekly update about new dogs as well as any major changes with the residents. This group is specific to the dog walkers and is in addition to the LTW Yahoo group that Alice adds all volunteers to. You will be added to the group after you are mentored. You will receive an invitation from the TTA Yahoo group. Follow the instructions to join. You do need to set up a Yahoo account if you do not already have one.

Please feel free to contact either the Behavioral Training Staff or Joanne with any question and enjoy your time with the dogs!

**MENTOR’S CHECK LIST**

**Our Goal:**

We want all of our dogs to end up in a happy home! We want you to enjoy spending time with the animals and for it to be beneficial for you and the dog.

Please review this check list on a regular basis. We need everyone working together to keep our volunteers and animals safe! Thank you!

**UPON ARRIVAL**

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| Please keep your **cell phone** volume turned off and your phone out of site. There is no cell phone use while you are working with the animals. |
| Please wear clothes that are suitable for dog walking. No shorts, leggings, scarves, sunglasses, hats, necklaces, or dangling earrings. Closed-toed shoes with laces and good traction are required. No clogs. |
| Remember to fill all water bowls and to wash or exchange dirty ones for clean ones. |
| Cutting boards and knives are in the cottage kitchen. Treats should be cut into small pieces (pea size). All knives and boards should be washed as soon as you are finished with cutting the treats. |
| I.D. Badges are located in the cottage porch in the alphabetized drawers by the door. Your badge should be worn at all times when walking dogs or at an event. |
| Sign in on the volunteer computer to record the hour you arrive and the hour you leave. If the computer is down, please use the sign-up sheet on the desk. |
| The harness tent holds the white board with the dog list that designates if a dog is a level green, blue etc. and what kennel they are in. Please initial the box next to the dog’s name under the appropriate day **before** taking out a dog. |
| The medical board to report any concerns about a dog is located to the right of the dog list. Please include the date and your initials with the name and issue of the dog, in case the staff needs further info. Issues to report include: cuts, sores, blood in stools, very loose diarrhea, etc… |
| There are poop bags on the cottage porch and in the harness tent. Everyone should purchase a 6 ft leash, clicker and bait bag. There are extra clickers and bait bags in the drawer next to the badges. There are extra leashes in the tent. |
| The volunteer communication log book lists all dogs (except green level) and notes concerning their behavior. Please read the sheet on the dog you wish to walk **BEFORE** taking the dog out of the kennel. If there is no sheet, please ask the Behavioral Training Staff about the dog. If they are unavailable, DO NOT WALK the dog. |
| **Equipment** |
| ɘÐA proper fit for a Martingale Collar is when the D-Rings touch and you can still put one finger under the collar. We do not use Martingales as choke collars. You should hold the collar by the O ring as shown in this picture when making a field harness or holding a dog by the collar. |
| To fit the Easy Walk Harness, follow these steps:The Easy-Walk harness, which has two buckles, **needs the different colored strap to go under the belly.**With the belly strap buckle unclipped, slip the shoulder strap over the dog’s head with the D-ring at the chest. The label should rest on the dog’s left shoulder.Tighten the belly strap to a comfortably snug fit: for medium-sized dogs, allow room for one finger’s width under the strap. For larger dogs, a little more; for smaller dogs, a little less.Adjust the shoulder strap so that the chest strap rests directly over the breastbone.Attach the leash to the D-ring at the chest.harness02Final hint: The harness should look like a sideways “T”. |
| If you notice flaws in equipment, such as frays, knots and chew marks – it should not be used. |
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| **DOG WALKING** |
| Approach a dog’s run from the side first – not face on.Read the kennel card to make sure you have the correct dog. Attach your leash to the dog’s collar found in the basket on the run **before** entering the kennel. The leash attaches to the O ring. |
| Push the kennel gate in, go in quickly holding gate close to body and secure the gate behind you before leashing up the dog. |
|  Some dogs need to have a toy in the mouth to take out of their run; this info will be in the log book. NO TENNIS BALLS IN RUNS. Knows how to make a harness out of the leash by wrapping it around the dog and looping it through the collar. |
| Wait for the dog to have all 4 paws on the ground before putting the collar on. Some dogs know to Sit to be leashed. If a dog will not stop jumping, please leave the kennel, Click & Treat for Calm Behavior the dogs nearby & then your dog, before trying again. |
| Make a field harness out of the leash by wrapping it around the dog and looping it through the collar. |
| Walk the dog straight out of the kennel or to the nearest exit. Keep the dog next to you on a short leash away from the other dogs’ kennels.  |
| You can leave the kennel door open when you exit except in the small animal building. The kennel doors there must be closed. When returning a dog, check that both the inside and outside doors are closed. |
| Stop across from the harness tent before entering to be certain it is empty. |
| Put your leash over the pole while working with your dog in the tent at all times. |
| Write any notes about the dog in the volunteer communication log book that would like other walkers to know. Such as progress in training or unusual behavior. Always note the date and initial your comments if staff needs clarification.  |
| Growling, lunging, snapping and any behavior that is not usual for the dog should be sent in an email to trainer@spca914.org immediately. |
| Pay attention to your surroundings and your dog’s body language at all times. |
| Do not dawdle in the driveway while walking dogs. There is no interaction between our dogs and the public, unless directed by staff. And no there is no interaction between dogs except in play groups with staff members. |
| Other volunteers may interact with your dog if they ask first and wait for you to ask the dog to sit for a treat or pet. Do not hug, kiss or loom over a dog when petting. |
| Walk dogs on the shelter property. Field trips and North State Road are **by permission only**. Dogs going on field trips must be signed out at the front office. |

**SAFETY**

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| Please have all equipment ready before you enter the run. Ask the dog to sit before opening the latch or make sure they keep all 4 paws on the ground. Open the gate in towards the dog only enough to get your body in. Do this quickly while ready to block the escape of a dog with your legs and close the latch behind you so the door is secure while you collar and leash the dog. Do not rush; be efficient. And if at any time, something feels wrong – LEAVE! |
| Do **not** enter the tent when there is another dog there. Always ask first, the other walker may have just calmed down their dog. |
| Exit the tent straight out while announcing yourself. Do not cut around to the left! |
| Fasten the latch and use the safety latch on the gates of the runs so the dogs cannot escape.  |
| Please use and change the **green** sign over to **red** in the play yards. Even if the sign is green, check the yard before opening the gate. |
| Hold the leash with the loop over the palm of your hand then grab the rest of the leash with the fingers of the same hand like an accordion or shorten with your second hand. Do not wrap the leash around your wrist or hand. |
| Please keep a minimum of 15-20 feet from another dog. |
| Do not to look any dog in the eye and always approach from the side. Please let dogs approach you for attention. DO NOT APPROACH dogs in a forward manner, especially fearful dogs. |
| **Know your dog**. Read the card on the kennel and look up their behavior in the volunteer communication book.  |
| Hold the loop of the leash to pass off a dog while simultaneously sliding opposite hand down the leash towards the collar to have a firm hold on the dog. Then ask after passing the leash handle if the other person has “got it” before letting go of the leash. |
| If a dog becomes overexcited. Stand quietly to de-escalate the dog, step on the leash and ask for a touch or sit, or hold the leash at arm’s length while lifting slightly up to steady an aroused dog and return the dog to its kennel if necessary. |
| If a dog escapes, call out “loose dog” so that people close to the gate can run and close it. DO NOT CHASE the dog. Try to get it to follow you towards a secured area. If you are alone in the parking lot, you must close the gate. If a loose dog approaches you while you are walking a dog, keep your leash loose and lead the dog back towards a yard. If the dogs begin to fight – DROP THE LEASH!!!! |

**To advance to higher dog levels:**

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| The handler must demonstrate that they are actively learning and using techniques taught in classes and play group. Please read the weekly Canine Companion Updates through the Training to Adopt Yahoo group. There are also files and links containing information on training techniques and safety protocols.  |
| For example:You should learn how to Click to Calm at kennels.You should learn how to enter and exit a kennel calmly and safely.You should learn how to lure a dog into a sit or down.You should know the concept of loose leash walking and of “Tree” – stopping when the leash is taut and waiting for the dog to look back, leash to go slack before going forward again. Another option is to click & treat when the dog looks back at you.You should know the proper body language to use with fearful dogs and the warning signs of a dog becoming uncomfortable.You should know to create distance and distract when walking a dog that reacts to other dogs. |

Mentor Signature: Date:

Approved Dog Level:

Follow Up Needed:

**SPCA List Of Cues**





**Fear of People**

 Your new dog has shown fears of some people. Fear of people is very common in dogs that have not grown up with certain types of people. For instance, dogs that have not grown up around children may be afraid of children. Dogs that have only lived with women, may be afraid of men.

 Dogs that are afraid of people may look away, put their tails down, hide, cower and even tremble when they see some people. Some may even growl and bark. If the person they are afraid of reaches out to pet them they may snap or nip.

 Dogs who are afraid of people still tend to be very friendly to the people they know. By following these guidelines, you will be able to get your new dog to be less afraid of new people. As a result you will be on your way to a safe and long-lasting relationship.

* If your dog is calm with a new person in the room, you may try the following. Have new person sit whenever possible. Then have the person toss a DELICIOUS treat to your dog. Allow the dog to choose whether or not to move closer to the new person by continuing to toss the treat to the spot the dog is standing. DO NOT try to lure the dog closer by holding food out in your hand towards the dog. The dog should be kept on a loose leash.
* Ask all new people not to look directly into your dog’s eyes.
* Ask all new people NOT TO PET YOUR DOG unless he or she approaches them and asks to be petted…leans in or wiggles at their feet.
* If your dog likes to play, give a favorite toy to the new person. Have the person throw the toy to get you dog to play.
* DON’T PUSH YOUR DOG! Forcing a fearful dog to accept people before being ready can result in increasing the dog’s fear and worse, end up with the dog snapping at, or biting the person.
* Don’t take your dog to places where there are many people you can’t control (parties, parades, ballgames). Most likely your dog will be more afraid and neither you nor your dog will be able to have a good time.
	+ Many people may tell you that your dog just needs to be “socialized”. However, the best time for socialization is between the ages of 3 and 16 weeks. Unfortunately, this time has long passed. You can still “socialize” your dog but now since your dog has become fearful, the socialization must be done slowly and carefully.

**INTERACTING WITH FEARFUL DOGS**

GOAL: Fearful dogs are often in ‘flight or fight’ mode. Staff and volunteers must be taught to recognize the body language signals of fear, and how to interact with these dogs in a way that does not exacerbate their fear and potentially escalate to aggressive behavior.

GENERAL RULES:

1. Avoid direct eye contact.
2. Speak in a soft, gentle voice.
3. Move calmly and smoothly - avoid sudden jerky movement.
4. Do not invade the dog’s space. Stay as far away as possible so that the dog is comfortable and allow the dog to approach when the dog CHOOSES to approach. Go slow and don’t force the dog to interact with you.
5. Toss treats to create positive associations with people. Dogs that are fearful of people may not know that people have the potential to offer good things. Gently tossing treats toward the dog associates your presence with good things (food).
6. Do not ‘corner’ the dog. Always make certain that the dog has a potential escape route when it is afraid. An ‘escape route’ means the ability to quickly and easily move away to a quiet location away from scary people.
7. Some fearful dogs are fearful of leashes and training equipment and demonstrate severe fear (and in some situations aggressive behavior) when handlers attempt to attach a leash. These dogs must be handled by experienced people only and should be desensitized and counter-conditioned to a handler attaching their leash.
8. If the dog demonstrates aggressive behavior or makes you uncomfortable in any way, slowly and calmly move away from the dog and notify Shelter Staff.

**QUIET TIME FOR SHY DOGS**

GOAL: Spending time with people is one of the most important needs of dogs, aside from food, water and shelter. Quiet time for shy dogs gives shy dogs a chance to bond with someone and gives them time to relax. The idea is to mimic a home environment as much as possible; shy or fearful dogs that are in a kennel tend to be even more fearful due to all of the new people, sounds and smells.

GENERAL RULES:

* Quiet time should start in a quiet, non-distracting environment, somewhere indoors, such as a quiet office or training room or in their kennel if you have trouble getting them out.
* Quiet time should last 15 to 60 minutes. If you are busy, 5 minutes is better than nothing but ideally should be longer to give the dog time to settle. As it is it can be scary for the dog in a new environment.
* Good activities during quiet time include: reading a book/magazine silently or out loud, sitting quietly or working on the computer.
* It is important that your behavior is very quiet - slow movements and relaxed.

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Allow the dog to explore the room first and make sure the doors and windows are closed and you stay quiet, calm and relaxed.
2. Sit on the floor or in a chair and read a book or magazine to keep from moving too much.
3. Allow the dog to settle wherever they feel most comfortable (on or under a chair, under a desk or a table, etc.) and do not interact or look at the dog directly.
4. Allow the dog to have autonomy. If they look at or come closer to you or initiate interaction with you, do not look at them directly. Offer a treat and allow them to sniff you while you stay still and relaxed.
5. If you feel comfortable, talk to the dog in a low, slow and gentle soft voice.
6. If the dog eats the treat, gently toss the next treat behind the dog so that they must move away from you to eat it (this decreases the pressure of being close to you). Next, wait to see if the dog approaches. If the dog comes close to you slowly and gently offer a treat from your hand.
7. When the dog is approaching you regularly, eating treats from your hand and comfortable standing near you, start petting or touching them on their neck or chest area (NOT on the top of their heads). If they show any signs of fear or stress (move away, crouch, lip lick, etc.) when you attempt to touch them, do not do it anymore.

HELPFUL HINTS:

* Always work with a dog you are comfortable with - shy dogs can be challenging and respond best when the person is comfortable and relaxed.
* Only work with a dog when you yourself are calm and relaxed. Dogs tend to respond to our energy and if we are anxious, excited or in a hurry this could exacerbate their shyness and fearfulness.





