



AGAPE
animal rescue



Agape Animal Rescue Volunteer Handbook

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~ Agape Animal Rescue Volunteer Handbook ~

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Welcome from our Executive Director

To: Our volunteers

From: Tanya Willis, Agape Executive Director

Welcome, and thank you for becoming a volunteer for Agape Animal Rescue! You are joining a group of dedicated, enthusiastic foster parents and volunteers that are truly making a difference for dogs in need.

Since 2004 we have been working tirelessly to find forever homes for animals that have been abused, abandoned or neglected, and we have successfully placed hundreds of dogs to date. None of this would have been possible without the support and assistance from our volunteers.

We have many varied types of events throughout the year that I am positive you will find exciting and fulfilling to your volunteering desires, so please take part in these activities.

I look forward to meeting you at our events. If you have any questions, or would just like to send me comments or your thoughts on how we can improve our organization, please e-mail me at Tanya@agaperescue.org.

Thank you, again, for becoming part of our Agape team!

Best regards,



Tanya

About Agape



In 2001, Tanya Willis's passion for rescue was sparked one day when she found a litter of puppies in a ditch. Tanya ended up keeping the runt of the litter, while finding homes for all the other brothers and sisters. And that is basically what started the proverbial ball rolling. She began working with a few local animal rescues, but in 2004 decided to start her own rescue organization, and Agape was born.

Our Mission

"Making a Difference in Animals' Lives"

Agape Animal Rescue is dedicated to finding forever homes for abandoned and displaced dogs while educating the public to be more responsible pet owners. At Agape, we have seen it all when it comes to man's best friend. But despite the misfortunes these animals have endured, our commitment to them remains steadfastly clear: to provide loving, emotionally stable, nurturing foster care for them while they wait for their forever families.

Through no fault of their own, our dogs found themselves in homeless situations. We are dedicated to making a positive difference in these dogs' lives from the moment they enter our foster program. Our goal is to help them in every way we can...emotionally, socially, physically...so that the transition into their forever homes will be as smooth as possible. We strive to teach our dogs basic obedience skills, including proper leash manners and friendly house manners through our Foster Care Training Program. And we strive to match our dogs with the best family possible, working through as many applications as necessary to find a home that offers the dog the most fulfilling, enriched life.

On behalf of all the dogs waiting for a forever family, we thank you for your interest in improving the lives of these deserving animals.

Agape Volunteer Program



Agape volunteers and foster parents with our adoptable dogs at the annual Mars adoption event.

walking, watering, playing with the dogs, and introducing the dogs to potential forever families.

- Event committee volunteers.
- Adoption facilitators.
- Lead volunteer opportunities.
- Designers and illustrators.
- Content writers with SEO experience a bonus!
- Foster parents.

Volunteers are the heart of our programs, and we look for special people to fill our special openings. The requirements are simple: a love for animals, a desire to help find forever homes for our adoptable dogs, and the commitment to take part in our events and activities to accomplish our goals.

Volunteers should be 18 years of age, or 16 – 18 with a parental release.

Agape is always in need of additional volunteers. Even if you can only spare one hour a week, we can use your help. Take a look at our list of volunteer needs and let us know if you would like to take part in saving an animal's life.

We are currently in need of the following:

- Assistance in staffing our Agape booth at weekend events.
- Pet chauffeurs and chaperones for local adoption events, veterinary appointments, meet and greets, and home visits. This includes transporting,



Volunteer Aubrie with adoptable dog Bree at one of our events.

What We Do – Adoption Guidelines



The Sloan family and their newly adopted dog Emmy (in Chuck's arms).

At Agape we receive over 100 requests a week from individuals, shelters and other organizations who have dogs in need of our program. Adoption of our dogs is what we are striving for, and we would love nothing else than to find forever homes for all of our adoptable dogs.

We do things a little differently than the Nashville or Metropolitan Humane Associations, and understanding our process, and being able to explain it to potential adopting families, is very important.

We ensure, first of all, that each dog has received a thorough examination by a veterinarian, and that any medical conditions are remedied prior to placing them up for adoption. Additionally, we have each animal spayed or neutered, and tested for heartworms. All of our dogs are microchipped, to hasten their reunion with their families if they are lost. Finally, our foster parents begin the tasks of training the dogs in basic commands, beginning or reinforcing desired potty training habits, and introducing them to a loving and comfortable family social environment.

While humane associations allow adoption of their animals on site, or at the event they are part of, we do not. We feel that a several-step introduction of the dog into the potential adopting family is important, and we'll schedule both neutral site visits with the dogs and the families, along with home visitations, before we will place one of our dogs with their new family.

Humane associations also need to move dogs quickly through their process to make room for the seemingly never-ending stream of new dogs that need adoption. They provide some of the same medical evaluations that we do, and also spay and neuter. However, they do not have the capacity, nor the time, to assimilate the dog into a family social environment. Their fees are less than ours, which is \$200 per dog adoption, but our success rate of less than 1% returns for our adoptable dogs is far better than the humane associations' return rates.

Annual Event Schedule (Typical)

We have many events throughout the year where we need volunteer assistance. These include ongoing monthly Dog Adoption Days at the 100 Oaks PetSmart, as well as annual events throughout the Nashville metropolitan area. Additionally, we are partners with Happy Retales Pet Store, and they have volunteer needs seven days a week. Although the actual events we participate in will vary from year-to-year, typical activities include:

January	PetSmart Adoption Days
February	PetSmart Adoption Days Annual Campaign
March	PetSmart Adoption Days Tour For Life CrossFit Fundraiser
April	PetSmart Adoption Days Come, Sit, Stay Shopping Day
May	PetSmart Adoption Days Painting For The Pups Crossroads Adoption Day
June	PetSmart Adoption Days Yazoo Fundraising Event Woofstock Hippie Radio Adoption Days
July	PetSmart Adoption Days Nashville Pet Expo Glitter And Glam (our annual Extravaganza!) Car & Dog Wash
August	PetSmart Adoption Days Car & Dog Wash
September	PetSmart Adoption Days Nashville Humane Dog Day Festival Country Chic Canine
October	PetSmart Adoption Days Blessing Of The Animals Barktoberfest Mars Adoption Day Howl - o - Ween
November	PetSmart Adoption Days Meet Your Best Friend At The Zoo
December	PetSmart Adoption Days Pictures with Santa Agape Holiday Party

Becoming a Foster Parent

Agape Animal Rescue has a continuous need for quality foster homes for our rescue dogs. We are looking for all types of foster families, including those who are able to foster full-time as well as for just a few weeks at a time.



Foster parents with their adoptable dogs on a socialization walk.

Agape is looking for:

- Year-round foster homes
- Temporary foster homes (while other foster families are on vacation, for example)
- Large-scale animal abuse case foster homes (to help with sudden overflow)

We work with a network of foster homes where dedicated foster parents care for, nurture and provide basic training for the dogs. We are looking for people who can care for our dogs as if they are a personal pet.

With so many animals coming through our program, we can always match the right animal to the foster family/home.

Foster parents must be there to help with training and to provide unconditional love to each dog. Foster parents really are the key to helping us keep rescued pets until we can find the right human to adopt them.

The goal of foster parents is to teach the dogs good house manners and basic obedience skills, including how to walk nicely on a leash. Depending on how long the dogs are in foster care, they will have learned basic commands like SIT, STAY, DOWN, SIT TO PET, SAY HI, and more. Our experienced foster parents can help new fosters learn how to teach these commands to their dogs.

Fostering a dog is one of the most rewarding ways that someone can help. We have a dog for our fosters, regardless of the level of care they are able to provide. While some dogs come in fully trained and housebroken, others may have special needs that require more from a foster family. We will match the level of care the foster is able to provide, and we will work with them to find a good match.

If someone is interested in becoming a foster parent to one of our rescue dogs, ask them to fill out our Foster Application online. If they have questions, they can call us at 615-406-7799 or email us at foster@agaperescue.org.

Lead Volunteer Responsibilities

Becoming a Lead in our volunteer program means taking on a few additional responsibilities. After all, someone needs to get the ball rolling on events, and keep things on track! So what does it mean to be a Lead? Here are some standard Lead responsibilities:

- Our new volunteers need a little help in understanding their tasks when they attend their initial events. As a Lead, you should reach out to them to provide some expectations of what they will encounter. This would include sharing your cell phone and e-mail information so they can contact you if they have questions or conflicts with their assigned events, and sending them instruction sheets describing how to prepare for their event. Please see pages 15 & 16 for further details. Both of these attachments can be customized for sending to your volunteers prior to the scheduled event.
- Each event should have a binder containing the latest pictures and descriptions of our adoptable dogs. Please reach out to our Foster Program Coordinator to obtain the current list, and print out the pictures prior to the event, placing them in the binder when you get to the event location.
- If you have the opportunity to lead the PetSmart events, you may find that the donation jar has accumulated an excessive amount of money that should be forwarded to our Agape staff. Please leave approximately \$5.00 in the jar, then either turn the additional money in to an Agape administrator or staff member, or keep the cash and write and send a check for that amount to the central Agape address:
Agape Animal Rescue
P.O. Box 292766
Nashville, TN 37229-2766
- Occasionally you will have volunteers for your event that learned of Agape and volunteered through Hands On Nashville (HON). Please sign the attendance form for those volunteers if they provide that to you, and forward the name of the HON volunteer and the hours they worked to the Agape Volunteer Coordinator.
- At every event we have a sign-up sheet for those individuals that desire to receive e-mails about our upcoming events, or that want to become Agape volunteers. Please forward the names and e-mails addresses of those interested to the Agape Volunteer Coordinator following each event that you are part of.
- Occasionally you might find yourself in a situation where you feel that inclement weather or conditions that are not safe for our dogs or our volunteers require termination of our participation in the event. That is your call. Please notify both the Agape Volunteer Coordinator and our Executive Director if this occurs.
- Upon completion of the event, please put all marketing materials back in the large plastic container in an organized fashion. Let the Volunteer Coordinator know if supplies are low.

Lead Volunteer Event Quick Checklist

Here are a few steps you can quickly run through prior to and following your scheduled event. All of the items might not apply to the activity you are leading.

- Ensure you have the latest and most updated event information, including set up times, tear down time, parking locations, etc. (contact the Volunteer Coordinator to confirm).
- Verify with the Volunteer Coordinator that you have the contact information (names, e-mail addresses, cell phone numbers) of the volunteers working the event with you.
- If you are using volunteers that have come to us from Hands On Nashville (HON), ensure you have the sign in sheets for them to register when they arrive at the event.
- Provide your contact information to your helping volunteers in case they need to reach you about changes in their availability for the event.
- Provide your helping volunteers with the fact sheet for event volunteering (see Pages 15 and 16 of this guide) and the time you would like them to arrive.
- Contact the Foster Program Coordinator to get the latest pictures and descriptions of our adoptable dogs so you can print them out and place them in the adoptable binder.
- Coordinate picking up the event materials (table, tent, Agape banners, marketing materials container) with the Volunteer Coordinator.
- Check in with the Event Coordinator when you arrive at the event for any follow on instructions.
- Following the event, send your volunteers a “Thank you” e-mail to acknowledge their support of the event you were leading. It means a lot to them, especially the first-time volunteers.



Agape Certified Lead Program

"Excellence In Dog Adoption Volunteering"

What is a "Certified Lead"?

- A person that understands the Agape philosophy and adoption guidelines, and can clearly explain them to others
- The first person to arrive at an event, and the last to leave – just because you want to make that event successful
- Someone that wants to share their knowledge through the training of others
- Someone with a desire to help expand our program of finding forever homes for our dogs

What's in it for you? You will:

- Receive advanced notification of all upcoming events
- Select your choice of events to participate in
- Mold the Agape training program by assisting in training our new volunteers
- Assist in the update of the Agape Volunteer Handbook
- Interface with Agape administration in setting up volunteer policies
- Receive a new, official Agape tee shirt
- Be invited to attend an annual recognition event
- Join in the opportunity to put your "paw print" on Agape's future volunteer programs

How do you qualify? As a minimum you need to have:

- Participated in two PetSmart volunteering activities
- Assisted in two outdoor volunteering activities (Barktoberfest, Mars Adoption Day, Fontanel, Germantown, Nashville Dog Day Festival, etc), at least one of which required erecting the tent
- Received the recommendation of a Lead on the events above that you would be a good Lead candidate
- Signed up for a commitment to lead an event at least every other month (however, you may or may not actually lead an event depending on the number of events we have scheduled)

The Agape Certified Lead Program – It's not for everyone...is it for you?

Contact the Agape Volunteer Coordinator for more information and to get started in the program!

Frequently Asked Questions

Many people are interested in our organization, and you can expect quite a few questions when you volunteer at one of our events. The FAQs below are typical:

1. Where is your facility? Where are you located?
 - Agape does not have a central facility to house our adoptable dogs. Instead we use a networked association of foster families throughout the Nashville metropolitan area that bring the dogs into their homes to prepare them for adoption into their forever families.
2. Where do you get your dogs?
 - Our dogs come from many sources: puppy mill busts, hoarding situations, dog fighting rescues, humane association recommendations, stray rescues, etc. The common thread is dogs in need of love and caring to prepare them for the next step in their lives.
3. How much does it cost to adopt a dog?
 - Our adoption fee is \$200.
4. Can I take a dog home today?
 - No. We do not adopt on the event sites. Instead we go through a process of assimilation of the dog into the family social environment through meetings in neutral locations, then visitations to the adopting family's home.
5. What is the adoption process?
 - Once there is interest in someone adopting a dog – either through a picture and description on the web site, or through actual contact at an event, the family should complete an on-line adoption application. They will be contacted by one of our adoption coordinators who will discuss the next steps. We also consider out-of-state adoptions.
6. How quickly can I adopt a dog?
 - Our adoption process will take several days to weeks to complete. However, the wait will be worth it, as we will ensure that both the dog and the forever family will be happy with the match up!
7. Why do you charge so much more than the local humane associations?
 - We put both considerable time and money into a dog before allowing them to be adopted. We spend an average of \$400 - \$500 on each dog prior to putting them in the adoption process, and often more. This includes a complete physical by a veterinarian, a heart worm test, any necessary surgery to correct health issues, insertion of a microchip, and an extensive foster family socialization process to provide basic training and family familiarization preparing the dog for their forever family.

8. How do I get information on your organization?

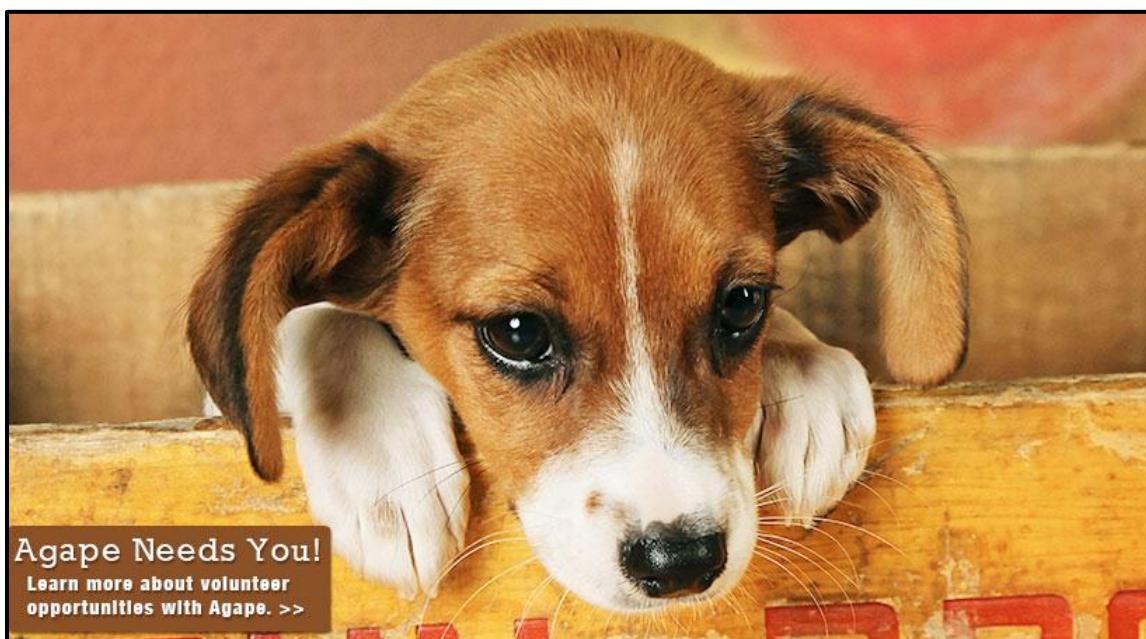
- Our website is www.agaperescue.org, and on this site we provide information on our history, our mission, adoption processes, upcoming events, and, of course, pictures and descriptions of our wonderful dogs currently available for adoption! We also post events and information on our Facebook page “Agape Animal Rescue Volunteer Group”.

9. How do I become a volunteer?

- Our website has an on-line volunteer application to complete. This will be forwarded to our Volunteer Coordinator who will reach out to the volunteer candidate to answer questions and to place their name and e-mail address into our Agape contact information.

10. How can I become a foster parent?

- Our website has an on-line application to become a foster parent. Once this is completed the applicant will be contacted by Agape administrative personnel to follow up, and answer any questions the applicant might have. (See Page 8 for more information on foster parenting.)



Agape Administrative Contacts

Chuck Sloan
Volunteer Coordinator
chuck@agaperescue.org
650-465-3307 (Cell)

General Volunteer E-mail
volunteer@agaperescue.org

Estella Pan
Foster Program Administrator
estella@agaperescue.org
615-707-9659 (Cell)

Katie Franke
Office Administrator
katie@agaperescue.org

Kelly Evans
Event and Fundraising Coordinator
kelly@agaperescue.org

Tanya Willis
Agape Executive Director
tanya@agaperescue.org

(General Volunteer Guidelines - SAMPLE)

Volunteers -

Thank you all for volunteering to help with our upcoming event this Saturday!

Here is the schedule I have for this activity:

10:00am – 4:00pm Saturday, September 20th, 2014

Centennial Park
Nashville, TN 37208
(More directions and instructions about parking to follow.)

All vendors must be set up and ready by 9:30am, so I will be there by 9:00am. If you can make it that early I would appreciate it, as I could use the help setting up.

I have all of the event set up materials – tent, table, dog bowls for water, etc., etc. I plan to be there about 9:00am to set up our tent. It doesn't take that long to get everything set and ready to go, but having a couple of extra hands would be nice. We can also help others around us set up if they need it. We will break down starting at 4:00pm, and no sooner, unless we are authorized to do so by the event organizers.

My contact information is below, and especially my cell phone, which I have with me all the time. **Please send me your cell phone numbers so I can call you if something comes up about the event.** Also, please do call me if you will be delayed or can't make the event.

If you have an Agape shirt please wear it so everyone can see who we represent!

It looks like it will be a beautiful day, but it might be a little cool, so I would recommend wearing "layers".

You might consider bringing a small folding chair to sit on. I will have two chairs, so worst case we can rotate sitting down. Standing for several hours gets a bit old, and besides, if you sit down you can hold one of our adoptable dogs on your lap!

I'm really looking forward to having many of our dogs there to help us. Please review our dogs that are available for adoption on our website (www.agaperescue.org) so you can describe them to possible adopting parents. I will have an updated book with pictures of all of the dogs.

Read through the dog applicant process (on line) so you can explain it to someone if they ask. I'll also print one out for us so we can show people the form, but they still have to fill it out on line if they are interested in adopting a dog.

Send me an e-mail if you have any questions prior to Saturday, and we can go over all of the adoption processes before the event really gets rolling. If you can't, don't worry, I'll be there for any questions you might need help with.

See you on Saturday morning!

Chuck Sloan
Agape Volunteer Coordinator
650-465-3307 (Cell)
chuck@agaperescue.org



(PetSmart Volunteer Guidelines)

PetSmart Volunteers –

Thank you all for volunteering to help with our bi-monthly PetSmart Adoption Day!

The event takes place at the PetSmart store in 100 Oaks Shopping Center along I65. The hours for the event are from 10:00am – 2:00pm:

Details:

The Lead for the event will be there just before 10:00am to set up the table and marketing materials, which are stored in the PetSmart back room. If you could arrive about the same time I am sure the Lead would appreciate your help! It doesn't take that long to get everything set and ready to go, but having a couple of extra hands would be nice. We will break down starting at 2:00pm.

I will provide you with the Lead's name and cell phone number. Please notify the Lead (or me at my cell: 650-465-3307) if for some reason you cannot make your scheduled time. **Please send your Lead your cell phone number so they can call you if something comes up about the event.**

If you have an Agape shirt please wear it so everyone can see who we represent! Jeans or shorts are fine, and you will be inside the store, so no problem with the cold or rain.

You might consider bringing a small folding chair to sit on, as standing for several hours gets a bit old, and besides, if you sit down you can hold one of our adoptable dogs on your lap! We also sit on the floor in the area, so that is up to you.

Several foster parents will bring their dogs there to help us, and the foster parent may or may not stay with the dog. If they leave the dog in your hands please ask if there is anything you should know about the dog – do they like to be petted, do they get special treats, how often should they be taken outside for a walk, etc. Also, please review all of our dogs that are available for adoption on our website (www.agaperescue.org) so you can describe them to possible adopting parents. We will have an updated book with pictures of all of the dogs for potential adopters to look at.

Read through the dog applicant process (on line) so you can explain it to someone if they ask. It is important for potential adopters to understand that we do not do on-site adoptions, and we have a proven, successful process to go through. There might be an application there for people to look at, but they still have to fill it out on line if they are interested in adopting a dog.

Send me an e-mail if you have any questions prior to Saturday. Also, the Lead will review the adoption process, and any other questions you may have, with you in the morning if you would like.

Thanks, again, for volunteering to help us at PetSmart; I am sure you will have a good time!



Chuck Sloan
650-465-3307 (Cell)

chuck@agaperescue.org



E-Mail and Volunteer Sign-up Sheet

Sign up for Agape's email list today!!

Name	Email	Volunteer	Newsletter

