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**Ambassador Training Packet
Updated 2024**

**Welcome**

Thank you for becoming an Ambassador for the Connecticut Humane Society. We know that your poise, communication skills, and enthusiasm for pets will make you an excellent representative! While it is impossible to give you every detail about the many aspects of the organization, this guide will assist you with the most common areas of inquiry.

**Objective**

Trained Ambassadors share information with the community about the organization’s programs and services, animal care and raise awareness for animal welfare issues.**General CHS Information**

* CHS is a private, 501c3 non-profit organization.
* CHS is not a state agency, nor is it affiliated with any other animal welfare groups.
* In 2023, CHS had 1,792 adoptions, with a placement/release rate of 96.5%.
* CHS does not euthanize for time limits, space, breed, or age and has one of the lowest euthanasia rates in the nation.

**CHS Today**

* Statewide pet care is provided through 3 locations: Newington, Waterford and Westport.
* Over the last several years, CHS has increased its focus on adoptions **plus keeping pets in homes**, providing resources for successful placement including access to low-fee veterinary care, a pet food pantry, humane education, and crisis foster support.
* CHS is currently building a new animal resource center in Wilton which will include adoption services, onsite veterinary care for shelter pets, a low-fee veterinary clinic for community pets and onsite pet food pantry and education programs. Learn more at CThumane.org/Wilton
* CHS receives pets from in-state and out-of-state rescues as space and staffing permit.

**Donor/Support** [CThumane.org/donate](http://www.cthumane.org/donate)

* 100% of every donation is spent on the pets.
* Funding comes from private donations from individuals, foundations and corporations, fees for services, and from the interest on endowment investments. CHS does not receive federal, state, or municipal tax dollars.
* CHS accepts donations of pet food and supplies; see CThumane.org/wishlist.
* Donors that are interested in conducting a fundraiser to benefit or supply drive can find information on the website: [CThumane.org/serviceprojects.](http://www.CThumane.org/serviceprojects)
* To leave a lasting legacy for the animals, consider leaving CHS in your will when planning your estate. More information can be found at [CThumane.org/donate.](http://www.cthumane.org/donate)

**Volunteer Program** CThumane.org/volunteer

* CHS has over 400 volunteers between the three locations.
* Volunteer needs vary by location and change frequently.
* On-site volunteers must be over 18.
* Fostering is a great opportunity for families with children that want to get involved.
* Students who need to earn service hours for a school program may conduct a service project (such as a fundraiser or collection drive): [CThumane.org/serviceprojects](http://www.cthumane.org/serviceprojects).

**Dog Training Services:**  CThumane.org/dog training

* Dog training classes are offered for the public at the Newington location.
* Classes are open to the public.
* Puppies adopted from CHS receive a discounted class fee.

**Pet Intake**

* CHS is a managed intake organization. This means we do not accept every pet that comes through our doors, instead we take in pets that we can treat medically, as we have space and staff available, and which are good candidates for our adoption program.
* CHS accepts pets of all ages, breeds and breed mixes, including dogs, cats, and small companion animals like guinea pigs, rabbits, hamsters, ferrets and birds.
* Intake decisions are based on a phone interview and in-person evaluation.
* An intake fee of $80 is requested for private surrenders to defray the costs of caring for the animal; this sometimes is waived if it is a financial burden.
* CHS accepts pets with health and/or behavioral issues that can be rehabilitated through wellness programs and safely placed in homes.

**Adoption:** CThumane.org/adopt

* Pets cleared for adoption will appear on the “Adopt” section of the website at [CThumane.org/adopt.](http://www.CThumane.org/adopt)
* Once a pet is adopted, they are removed from the “Available Pets” page.
* The best way to see the available pets is to visit the adoption section of the website regularly.
* Each available pet has been vaccinated, spayed/neutered, microchipped, and given flea/tick preventatives.
* Adoption fees vary based on the age and type of the animal, covering only a portion of the cost of caring for the pets during their stay.
* The adoption fee for all puppies under six months old includes six weeks of basic obedience classes post adoption.
* Adoptive families participate in a detailed interview with an adoption counselor to ensure a lifetime match.
* Free training advice and in-person consultations are available for adopters. Information about the Behavior Consultation Program is available on the website.

**Low-Fee Community Veterinary Service (Fox Memorial Clinic)** CThumane.org/Fox

* Located in Newington (adjacent to Newington shelter)
* Core services: vaccinations and general wellness.
* Due to high demand, there is often a 6 to 8 week wait for a wellness exam.
* Fees average 25-30% less than for-profit veterinary hospitals.
* Fox is not an emergency care center and cannot accommodate walk-ins.

**Pet Food Pantry** CThumane.org/Pet-Food-Pantry-Program

* Food is collected by individuals and groups then distributed from each of CHS’s locations.
* Online application for food is available.
* Pre-Approval is required.

**Humane Education** [CThumane.org](http://www.cthumane.org)/Education-and-Outreach

* Educational programs serve youth groups (classrooms, camps, libraries, etc.)
* Patch programs are offered to Boy Scout and Girl Scout troops.
* Behind-the-scenes tours are offered at each location. Request a tour at CThumane.org/tour

**Being the Face of CT Humane:**

* Every person you meet is a potential adopter, donor, or volunteer. Your interactions will build relationships that result in long-term support for the pets. Smile. Say hello. Make eye-contact. Standing is better than sitting. Use open-ended questions to create good conversation. When in doubt ask about their pets at home or their first pet.
* Ask the owner before giving the dog a treat.
* ***Know what you know and know what you don’t know.*** Refrain from giving out veterinary advice or behavioral training to the public. If you don’t know the answer, you can look up the answer on the website or give them Barb’s business card for follow up.

**Donations:** CThumane.org/donate

* A donation box will be in the supply duffle. There is a QR code on the header for easy online giving. Put it back in the duffle after the event. You do *not* need to give this to the front desk or manager.
* When accepting donations: Say “Thank you!” Receipts can be sent if the donor provides their name/address and the amount given. Small cash donations do not need to be recorded. Politely ask donors to bring donations of goods to one of the three shelters.
* While the focus of events/programs is primarily for raising community awareness, it is also important to let people know that CHS needs the community’s financial support.

**Problem Solving:**

While most community members have happy stories to share about their experiences with CHS, on a rare occasion you may be approached by a disgruntled customer. Perhaps they attempted to surrender a pet and it did not meet CHS’s intake criteria, or they had a negative experience while visiting a CHS location. They may be argumentative, defiant, or in disagreement with CHS philosophies, in this instance:

* Give the community member your full attention.
* Listen and ask questions to gather information and identify issues.
* Repeat the problem so people know you are listening and understand the issue.
* Empathize and apologize even when it’s not your fault.
* Ask for their contact information so a CHS staff member can follow up if appropriate.

**Logistics**

***Ambassadors*** will be notified when a CHS representative is needed to attend an event. Ambassadors may attend events alone or accompanied by other Ambassadors or CHS Staff. Events may last an hour or two, or up to a full day. Some events cover multiple days. When necessary, events will be divided into multiple shifts of volunteers. Ambassadors may be required to assist with set-up and breakdown. This may include carrying and setting-up of a bin of materials, table, chairs, and pop-up tent.

*Once you sign up for an appearance, make sure to mark the date and time on your calendar.*

**Event Details:**

You will receive a detailed e-mail with:

* Confirmation of the time and location of the event, parking info, and contact info.
* Staff will prepare a duffle bag of items needed for the event tabling, along with a folding table,
chairs and pop up tent. You will need to pick up/drop off the supplies back at the shelter.

**Prior to the Event:**

* Review the detailed event form.
* Make arrangements to pick up materials from CHS if needed.
* Review the Ambassador packet, Frequently Asked Questions and current stats sheet.
* Get up to date by reviewing CHS’s social media and reading recent newsletters.

**The Day of the Event:**

* Wear your volunteer uniform shirt and name badge.
* Arrive on time. Allow time for set up and parking. This goes for shift changes as well.
* Bring your own refreshments if needed. If you are the only person staffing an event/program you must be at your booth for the entire shift and must not leave materials unattended.
* **Friends, Families and Pets:** Do not bring personal pets, family and friends along.
* Maintain control of your personal items and any supplies. CHS is not responsible for lost or stolen items.
* Do not leave until the next shift has arrived.
* Use the Event Engagement Reporting Form to track interactions with the public.
* Obtain receipts for any out-of-pocket expenses such as entry fees or parking. Expenses associated with the event/program will be reimbursed if requested. Food expenses will not be reimbursed.
* Pack up supplies/ fold down tents, tables, chairs, etc.
* In case of an emergency, please contact your staff contact for the event/program.

**Following the Event:**

* Complete the Event Engagement Reporting Form and put in duffle.
* Return duffle bag (with donation box inside) to CHS:
Newington, return tent, table and chairs to 2nd floor lobby off the elevator, put duffle in Barb’s office. Westport, return all to the cottage. If cottage is locked, return to staff in the shelter.

Waterford, return to staff in shelter.

* Submit receipts for reimbursement if necessary.

**Reminder: Keep Current**

Community members will expect you to share news about pets and programs. Please visit the website regularly and read the volunteer newsletter, Petcetera (the e-newsletter), PetLife (the printed newsletter), and the annual report. Follow CHS on social media.

One great spot to check out is the playlist tab on the CHS Youtube site.

[https://www.youtube.com/@cthumanesociety/playlists](https://www.youtube.com/%40cthumanesociety/playlists)

(OR go to the CHS website, click on the YouTube icon, then click on playlists)

It is full of training, enrichment and CHS info videos! A great resource to share at tablings.

**Summary:**

Thank you for being a representative for the animals and for raising awareness about the Connecticut Humane Society and the services that are offered to the community. CThumane.org is a great resource for additional information about our programs and services and many questions can be answered with a quick website search.