



# Welcome to the LA Animal Shelter Cat Room



## *Volunteer Contacts:*

**General Volunteering:**  
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**Cat Brigade Committee:**  
Nyree Cox – 662-2054  
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**Cat Socialization Committee:**  
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***"The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated."***

Gandhi

## Thank you for your interest!

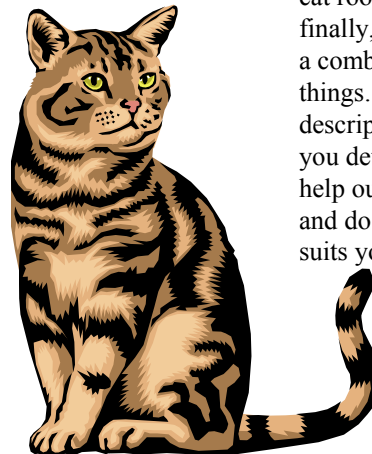
Thank you for your interest in the animals at the Los Alamos Animal Shelter. The volunteers take great pride in the work and dedication that we give the local shelter animals. We welcome new volunteers who share our same enthusiasm and desire to better the lives of the homeless animals in our community. Our mission is simple – to ensure the health, safety, and emotional well being of the animals while they are at the Shelter and to use our resources to find them new, permanent “forever homes”.



Below you will find out about the various volunteering activities that we have, along with descriptions of the 2 formal cat committees active in the Cat Room. Finally, you will find a set of our Cat Room Rules – a handy list anytime you visit with our resident felines.

## Volunteer Activities

There is a wealth of things to do as a volunteer for the LA Shelter Cat Room. The level of involvement is left completely up to you and we welcome any level you are willing to give. You may be interested in coming by the shelter when you have time and visiting with the cats and kittens or only wish to be on our email list to stay abreast of our cat room issues. You might also want to be more involved and join one of our



cat room committees, or finally, you might want to do a combination of these things. We hope the descriptions below will help you determine how you can help out the shelter felines and do it in a way that best suits you!

## General Volunteering

If you'd like to be a casual volunteer and come in when you feel like it, it's very easy to do. Just be sure that when you arrive at the Shelter you sign a volunteer waiver prior to working in the cat room. All shelter employees and most volunteers can get this form for you, so just ask!

You can also sign up to be on the Cat Room's email list by going to the following web site: <http://colab.org/mailman/listinfo/foscb>.



Finally, before heading into the Cat Room, make sure you've read and understand the Cat Room Rules before handling our resident felines.



## Cat Brigade Committee

The Cat Brigade came to life after several of the regular volunteers decided that due to the irregular shelter hours and staffing at the Animal Shelter, we needed to have a “cat person” who would come by each day of the week and check on the resident cats to make sure that they were taken care of.

We have been most fortunate to have a strong set of volunteers who have always been willing to commit to spending time with the cats.

Each member of the Cat Brigade has committed to a certain day of the week that they come to the shelter. On their scheduled day, the Cat Brigade member does the following:

- Checks that each cat has a clean kennel and bedding
- Checks that each cat has food and water
- Checks each cat's chart for any medicines that may need to be administered
- Checks out the overall state of the cat and contacts either Nyree Cox ([nyree@colab.org](mailto:nyree@colab.org), 662-2054) or a shelter worker if one of the cats looks in need of having medical attention

Additionally, but not required, most of the volunteers spend a good deal of time with each cat, giving them attention, grooming, and generally giving them basic socialization.

Time commitment for each weekly visit is entirely up to the volunteer. This can be anywhere from 10 minutes to 2 hours – whatever you have to give.

**The main goal of this team is to ensure that the daily needs of each cat have been met every day of the week.**



One other function of the Cat Brigade is to maximize adoptions. The main way we try and accomplish this is by having adoption days at Pete's Pets in Los Alamos on Saturdays. This entails the following

- A volunteer to pick up a cat from the Shelter and set the cat up at Pete's by 10:30 AM (time commitment ~ 1/2 hour)
- A volunteer who acts as the “call person”. This person needs to be able to be reached by phone while the cat is at Pete's and if called should go to the store, determine if the potential adopter is suitable, and if so, complete the adoption paperwork. (time commitment - 6 hours of being near a phone).
- A volunteer to pick up the cat from Pete's at 4:30 PM if they are not adopted. Or to pick up the empty kennel and supplies if the cat is adopted and then return the items to the shelter (time commitment - ~1/2 hour)

We generally have these adoption days once or twice a month, depending on the cat population at the shelter.

## Cat Socialization Committee

This team focuses on the socialization, handling, assessment, and evaluation of cats' behavior and personalities. Most if not all of the Cat Brigade (CB) volunteers are also Cat Socialization (CS) volunteers, and look at these aspects of the cats at the same time that they are making sure the kennel conditions are good. Other CS volunteers are not able to schedule their time as rigidly, and come as time permits. Both approaches are great!

At any given time, some of the cats need extra socialization and some of the cats may be intimidating to people not used to more aggressive cats. Unfortunately, a lot of times the cats at the shelter appear to be aggressive when they are actually scared and not used to the environment. We strongly encourage CS volunteers to do what they feel comfortable with, and not feel that they have to handle cats they are uncomfortable with.



## Cat Socialization Committee (continued)

Any time you can spend with any of the cats is a real bonus. It's also perfectly fine if you discover that you have some favorites among the cats and want to spend more time with them.

We strongly encourage anyone who works with a cat, either briefly or for longer times, to write some comments on the volunteer comment sheets on the clipboards on each cat's kennel. You may feel that you are just repeating what others have said, but in fact the pattern of comments from several different people is as valuable as any particular note by itself. This also helps other volunteers know that the cats have been handled regularly and not overlooked.

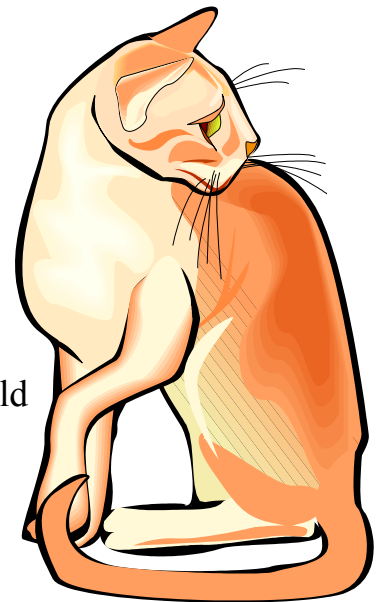
The white board with its list of cats is a very brief summary and mainly indicates if a cat has had a turn in the exercise pen, but doesn't give any information about personality or behavior.

Another task for the CS committee that we have started trying to do more regularly is to write up a poster-like description of each cat to display on the kennel door. Sally Wilkins will be able to use these for her shelter animal notebook at the front desk, as well. This type of description really makes it easier for the Animal Control officers to help potential adopters, since they actually have relatively little interaction with the cats. We welcome any input or assistance in writing up these descriptions and we often rely on our own experiences as well as the comments from other volunteers in writing these descriptions.

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### Cat Room Rules

- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap before and after handling each animal -- **this is very important!**
- New volunteers are strongly encouraged to coordinate their first visit with an experienced volunteer.
- Children under 18 must be accompanied by an adult at all times. This should generally be a parent; volunteers are not expected to supervise children.
- Read the information sheets on the cat before trying to handle it. Follow specific directions for handling.
- Remember that all these cats are stressed. Pay attention to what you are doing and to what body language the cat is signaling with, and do not assume that these cats will behave like your pet at home.
- If a cat wants to get down or away from you, let it. Do not try to restrain a struggling cat in your arms, as you are likely to get scratched or bitten that way
- Put only one cat at a time in an exercise area to minimize the possibilities of fights and transmitting disease. The only exceptions to this are cats that are already sharing a cage.



**Thanks again for your interest!**

