



SAFE HAVEN FOR CATS

FOR CATS. FOR LIFE.

VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

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Location and Hours of Operation

Shelter Hours

SAFE Haven for Cats
8431 Garvey Drive, Suite 137
Raleigh, NC 27616
919-872-7233

SAFE Haven business office is open 7 days a week, 9 am until 5 pm

Volunteer shifts are: Monday through Sunday 9 am until 11 am

If you have any questions, please contact the Volunteer Coordinator at: 919-341-4103
or volunteer@safehavenforcats.org

Volunteers always report to the shelter location

Adoption Hours

| | |
|-------------------|------------------|
| Monday | Closed |
| Tuesday | 11 am until 5 pm |
| Wednesday | 11 am until 5 pm |
| Thursday | 3 pm until 8 pm |
| Friday | 11 am until 8 pm |
| Saturday & Sunday | 11 am until 5 pm |

Clinic Hours

SAFE Care Clinic
8411 Garvey Drive, Suite 109
Raleigh, NC 27616

Monday through Friday, by appointment only
Schedule an appointment at: 919-872-7730 or clinic@safehavenforcats.org



Introduction

Welcome to SAFE Haven for Cats. We are proud to have you join our team! This handbook is loaded with information to help you learn about us and will serve as your guideline as you begin your volunteer work with us. Always feel free to ask questions!

Our Mission

The mission of SAFE Haven for Cats is to use no-kill principles and education to save cats' lives through rescue, adoption, spay/neuter services and community programs.

Vision Statement

To be the industry leader in ending euthanasia to control animal population and eliminate homelessness.

History of SAFE Haven For Cats

SAFE Haven for Cats (a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization) was founded by Pam Miller and her family in 1994 in Raleigh, North Carolina. The shelter was first located in her two-car, 500-square-foot heated and air conditioned garage. The first 400 cats were adopted from that garage. Five years later, in October 1999, SAFE Haven moved and opened the first permanent no-kill shelter for cats in the Triangle region of North Carolina.

SAFE Haven was founded as a no-kill animal shelter, which guarantees life to every cat or kitten, except in cases of injury or illness from which the cat can't recover and is suffering.

In 2001, the SAFE Care Feline Spay/Neuter Clinic was founded. At that time it was the only free-standing low cost clinic for cats in North Carolina. The clinic provides low-cost sterilization services for the area's pet, stray and community cats.



SAFE Haven and SAFE Care have expanded four times since this initial move and now occupy two buildings near the corner of Capital Boulevard and Durant Road in Raleigh.

SAFE Haven for Cats is licensed by the North Carolina Agriculture Department, Veterinary Division and receives exemplary inspections. The SAFE Care Feline Spay/Neuter Clinic is licensed by the North Carolina Veterinary Medical Association.

Staff & Volunteers

SAFE Haven for Cats

Pam Miller – President and Co-Founder

Patti Godin – Senior Director

Sherri Orner – Shelter Director

Rebecca Schranz – Development & Administrative Assistant

Brittaney Keene – Cat Care Technician

Tonja Limburg – Part-time Cat Care Associate

Ginger Rice – Part-time Volunteer Coordinator

Nancy Ritter – Part-time Bookkeeper

SAFE Care Clinic

Dr. Jennifer Bledsoe-Nix – Medical Director

Gina Jennings – Clinic Manager

Carl Nix – Veterinary Technical Assistant

Danielle Batchelor – Veterinary Technical Assistant

Breannah Partney – Veterinary Technical Assistant

Volunteers!

We have 300 dedicated volunteers that are compassionate and hardworking. We would not be able to save lives and do what we do without them. We are excited to continue to grow our volunteer team and continue to make a difference in cats' lives and the community.

Policies and Procedures

Before beginning your wonderful journey with the fluffy and furry, please read over our policies and procedures. This will help you become more successful during your time at SAFE Haven for Cats.

Dress Code

- Wear clothing that can get dirty, damaged or furry.
- Dangling jewelry is likely to become snagged and can be a hazard (may also get damaged or broken).
- Comfortable, closed-toe and good fitting shoes are required. No flip flops, dress heels, crocs, sandals or any type of shoe that can easily come off.

Safety

- Use hand sanitizer after contact with each cat.
- Use gloves when cleaning cages, using cleaners and/or cleaning up any excrement.
- Any accident or incident, whether involving a cat or not, **MUST** be reported to a staff member immediately so we can document the incident and help you seek care if necessary.
- Never handle a cat whose disposition may be questionable. Your safety always comes first.
- If you observe a safety hazard at the shelter, please notify a staff member immediately.
-

Hours

Our volunteer shifts are two hours long. We request volunteers commit to a minimum of four hours (two shifts) each month to stay involved in the great things we do. We do offer volunteering to those who need hours for school or community service. We ask that you complete a minimum of 24 hours (12 shifts) of volunteer work with us. After the 24 hours are complete, you will receive a signed letter of completion. Because of this policy, we will not be able to sign off on any documents until the 24 hours are complete.



About the Cats

We take stray and abandoned cats. When cats first arrive at the shelter, they are often stressed. They are in an unfamiliar, frightening environment. You can help put them at ease by:

- Speaking softly and keeping your voice even.
- Petting them gently.
- Moving slowly around them.

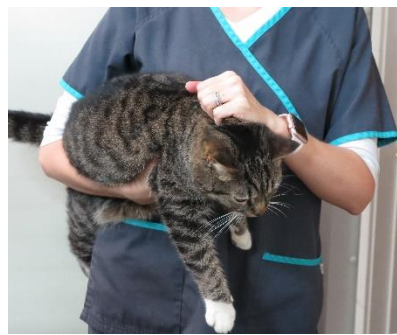
Do not underestimate how important you are to their socialization when you spend time grooming and petting the cats. You are increasing their adoptability!

Cat Handling Guidelines

Handle cats and kittens with respect and care. Let them know you are a friend who will be gentle. Please remember some of these cats are not used to being picked up and handled like your cats at home. Follow these guidelines to make them feel more comfortable.

- Carefully pick up the cat by placing your right arm under the cat, hand between the front legs.
- Bring the cat to your side using your elbow to anchor the cat's back legs to your side. Have your left hand resting on the back of the cat's neck ready to gently scruff the cat if need be.
- Make sure to support the cat until placed on the floor in a playroom or in their cage.

Do not hold the cat over your shoulder or near your face.



About Our Shelter

The Adoption Floor is where all of the cats currently ready for adoption are housed. All new volunteers will be assigned to the Adoption Floor.

Bullpen is for cats that need additional vet care, have an illness, are not fully socialized and/or are not ready for the adoption floor.

Isolation is where all incoming cats spend a minimum of 7 days to make certain that they are not carrying any transmissible diseases. These areas require very strict protocols.



Volunteers should not go into bullpen or isolation unless assigned to these areas.

Cat Gets Out

If a cat escapes from his/her enclosure, freeze, remain calm, and shout “Cat out!”

We understand that you want to help, but please don't try to grab or chase the cat. We do our best to keep the cat as stress free as possible and we are trained to handle frightened or defensive cats. We also do not want you to get scratched or bitten.

Signs

It is important to read all signage before you open a cage and interact with the cat. Signage can indicate whether or not a cat has any special instructions.

- Green – Okay for playroom – Cats can be moved to a playroom or swing cage on page 10.
- Yellow – Please leave me in the cage during cleaning - These cats should not be moved out of their enclosure at anytime.
- Sick Signs - These signs designate cats who are sick. These cats are cleaned in order of healthiest to sickest (low number to high number).
- Hot Pink Signs - Staff Only BEHAVIOR Do Not Touch - No volunteer should open these cages.

Cleaners

- Simple Green is a non-toxic detergent. Used to clean up any organic matter.
- Accel/Rescue is a non-toxic disinfectant used to clean empty cages.

Types of cages

- A queen cage is a larger cage with a middle door. These are for cats who do not like to be picked up. These cats should not be moved to a swing cage during cleaning.
- A condo cage is a smaller cage with no middle door. These cats can be moved out of their cage and into a swing cage during cleaning **if** they have a green behavior sign.
- A colony room is our largest cage. Colony rooms can house 3-4 cats. These are for cats that like others and/or need a little extra space. These cats should not be moved to a swing cage or playroom during cleaning.

Other weekly cleaning tasks

- Sunday - Change toys, mop all floors and clean water pitchers. Litter boxes are washed outside.
- Monday - Water and food bowls are changed on the adoption floor.
- Tuesday - Water and food bowls are changed in bullpen. Litter boxes are changed in the evening.
- Wednesday - Pull cages out and sweep on the adoption floor and in bullpen. Mop floors on adoption floor and bullpen.
- Thursday - Clean tops of cages.
- Friday - Clean bathrooms (empty trash, fill soap dispensers, clean toilets and sink).
- Saturday - Clean brooms and stepladders with Accel/ Rescue spray bottles, pull cages out and sweep on the adoption floor and in bullpen.



Shelter Cleaning Overview

Please do not open any cages or touch any of the cats prior to or during the meeting. This is for your safety and to prevent a cat from escaping.

At the start of each shift, all volunteers are required to attend the pre-shift volunteer meeting. At this time, you will get your name tag and learn what is going on in the shelter and about events coming up.

You will never be alone on any shift! Cleaning Captains are experienced volunteers who have received special training. They will train you on your first shift and help if you have any questions. They will assist you until you feel comfortable. There will always be a staff member nearby to answer any questions as well.

During Cleaning

If you see a medical issue or a cat that behaves differently than it has in the past, please let a staff member or cleaning captain know or record it on the board near the volunteer table.

Anything that falls on the floor is dirty and should immediately be put in the laundry or sink to be cleaned.

ALWAYS double and triple check to make sure each cat's water bowl is full and they have access to their food and litter box. Be sure to check cage latches as well!!

Please take initiative and tackle tasks such as laundry and washing dishes. Follow the instructions posted at each station for these tasks.

Play Time

After all cleaning is done, there should be time for play. We ask that you save play time until all work is done, so that everyone gets equal time to play.

Providing the cats with a clean environment is crucial to their health and happiness, but play time and snuggling is just as important, if appropriate to the individual cat.

When cleaning shifts are complete, if it is appropriate for an individual cat, you may take the cat to the playroom. Be sure to hand sanitize before handling another cat.

Pole toys, feather toys, etc., should only be used in the playrooms – not in the cages with the cats.

Cleaning Instructions

Cleaning Queen or Condo Cages

- There will be two large garbage cans with paper towels and Simple Green on them and a red bucket on the adoption floor.
- Always work from front (food bowls) to back (litter side), and TOP to BOTTOM.
- Always change gloves and hand sanitize before moving from one cage to the next.
- There are tool kits (small litter boxes) with a litter scoop, dustpan and broom on top of every cage with the cat's name on it. Verify that the cat's name on the tool kit matches the name on the cat's cage. If it does not, notify staff or the cleaning captain. Please remember - do not place the tool kits or any of the items inside it on the floor.
- Before opening the cage, please look at all signage on the outside of the cage. There will be a name card and a yellow or green behavior card letting you know if that cat can be moved out of the cage during cleaning and playtime. You should be cleaning around the cat, working slowly. A cat should not be moved out of its cage unless absolutely necessary.
- Spend some time with each cat before moving them from one side to the other. You can use the toys in their cage or their food but if you can't gently encourage them to move, please ask a staff member or cleaning captain. If there is a center door, please close and lock it to protect yourself and the cat. If there is not a center door, please use the swing cages (three stack of small dog crates). If appropriate please refer to the photo on [page 6](#) on how to pick up a cat safely.
- Remove water bowl, dump into the red bucket and wipe out with a paper towel. Water bowls are the large bowls and there should be one water bowl per cat. You will refill them once all the cages have been cleaned. Remove any paper food trays or old wet food bowls if empty. When in doubt, leave the bowls.

Swing Cage



- Gently shake out linens in cage and make sure the towels are clean and dry. If not, clean off any loose organic material into the garbage can and place the soiled items in the laundry. Replace them with clean items. Toys go into mesh bags on gray hamper. Place any items going back in the cage on the shelf in the cage or over the cage door, NOT on the floor or on top of another cat's cage.
- Use the broom and dustpan to sweep up any debris that is in the cage. Spot clean the surface of the cage with Simple Green if necessary. This non-toxic cleaner will get up any organic matter that is on the cage. After cleaning, place all items from that side of the cage back and leave nothing on the shelf. This includes beds and towels. Do not use fleece in cat's cages.
- Gently encourage the cat to move to the now clean bed side, remembering to close and lock the center door while you work on the litter box side.
- Gently shake out linens in cage and make sure the towels are clean and dry. If not, clean off any loose organic material into the garbage can and place the soiled items in the laundry. Replace them with clean items. Place any items going back in the cage over the cage door, toys can be placed in with the cat on the bed side. Do NOT place items on the floor or on top of another cat's cage.
- Use the broom and dustpan to sweep up any debris that is in the cage. Spot clean the surface of the cage with Simple Green if necessary. This non-toxic cleaner will get up any organic matter that is on the cage. Work around the litter box, do not remove it from the cage. After cleaning, place all items from that side of the cage back.
- Scoop litter into small litter box (tool kit). We use Equine Bedding (Pine Pellets) in most of the cats' cages. While cleaning you can place the dustpan and broom in the cage. Sift all of the sawdust (this is urine) into the small litter box (tool kit). Remove stool with litter scoop.

All of our cleaning protocols are to keep the cats in the shelter happy and healthy until they are adopted. If you have any questions about the cleaning protocol, please let us know.

After all the cages are cleaned

- Sweep around and under cages
- Water all cats with watering cans. Use cut up handy wipes soaked in Accel/Rescue to wipe the outside spout of the watering cans between every

cage. Please make sure to fill all water bowls to the top.

Cleaning Instructions for Colony Rooms

- Ideally, these rooms are cleaned by two volunteers – one volunteer inside the room and one volunteer outside the room.
- Work from one side of the room to the other. Do not stack everything on shelves and do not move everything at one time as it stresses the cats out.
- You can bring their tool kit into the room. Do not bring large brooms and dustpans into colony rooms.
- The volunteer inside hands the water bowls to the volunteer outside to empty into the red bucket and wipe out. Water bowls are the large bowls and there should be one water bowl per cat. Remove any paper food trays and old wet food bowls if empty. When in doubt, leave the bowls.
- Gently shake out linens in cage and make sure the rugs are clean and dry. If not, clean off any loose organic material into the garbage can and place the soiled items in the laundry. Replace them with clean items. Dirty toys go into mesh bags on gray hamper.
 - Rooms should have one bed per cat and a maximum of two rugs.
 - Do not overcrowd the rooms.
 - Do not place beds on shelves.
 - No towels should be used in the colony rooms.
- Sweep out the cage. Spot clean the surfaces of the cage with Simple Green if necessary. This non-toxic cleaner will get up any organic matter that is on the cage.
- Scoop litter into small litter box. Do not remove litter box from colony room. Sift all of the sawdust into the tool kit. Remove stool with litter scoop. Be sure to sift all of the litter to make certain all urine is removed. The volunteer outside the room takes the tool kit with the discarded litter and empties it into the garbage can. The litter boxes should be placed in back two corners of the room.

Cleaning Instructions for Swing Cages

- Spray swing cage with Accel/Rescue spray bottle. Wait five minutes then wipe down with paper towel. Do this before another cat is placed in the same swing cage and at the end of the cleaning shift.

Cleaning Instructions for Empty Cage (Full Clean)

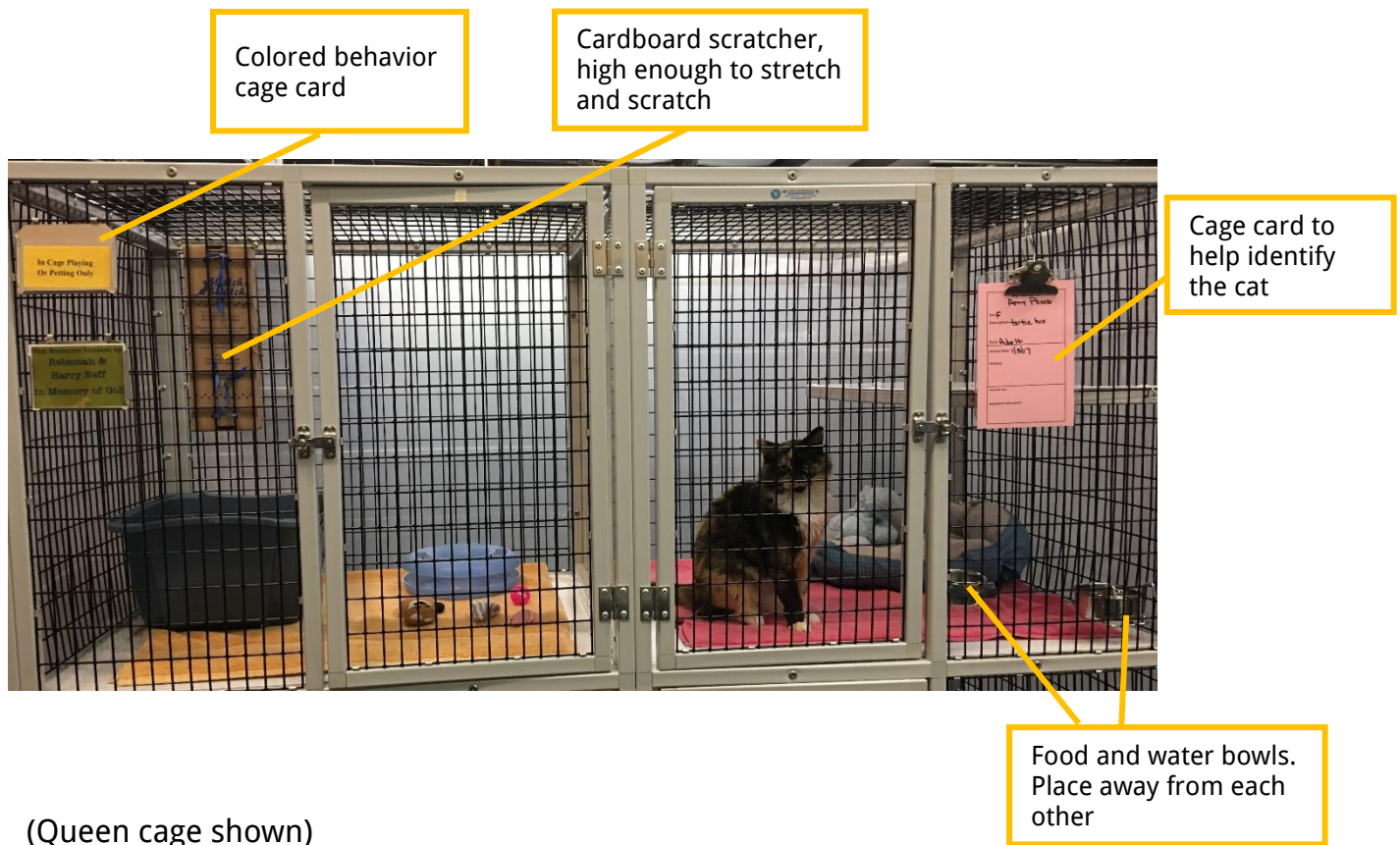
- Remove old food, litter, dishes, toys and bedding.
- Remove all solid and/or organic matter from cage (i.e., food, litter, fecal matter, urine, etc.).
- Wipe cage thoroughly with Accel/Rescue-soaked wash cloth. Please be sure to scrub all surfaces of the cage, including the door and ceiling. Use scrub brushes to clean corners of cage.
- Leave cage to soak for 5 minutes.
- Towel dry or air dry the cage.

Green scouring pads should not be used on any of the cages.



Cage Setup

Each cat in the shelter has at least 30 cubic feet to live in. That's enough space for a bedroom and a bathroom and each cage is equipped with everything a cat needs to be comfortable, healthy, and happy.



(Queen cage shown)

Each cage should have a maximum of three small toys (a catnip mouse, a ball, etc.), a ball tracker, one cardboard scratcher, a litter box, one bed, one food bowl, one water bowl, and a towel for each side.



(Queen cage shown)

Volunteering at SAFE Haven for Cats

The Life Saving Force Behind the Scenes

Volunteers are truly critically important to SAFE Haven for Cats. It takes around 70 volunteers in 7 different shifts each week just to keep the cats clean and happy! YOUR TIME IS VALUABLE!

In fact, we receive no funding from the city, state, or corporations. We rely primarily on donations from individuals and fees from adoptions and spay/neuter.

Donating your time allows us to put that money towards better medicines, better housing, and better care! Everything we do is made possible with your help and there are plenty of ways you can help and grow with SAFE Haven! Be assured that everything you do helps towards the mission of saving lives. Many of the needs of the shelter are listed below.

Ways you can volunteer

Shelter Cleaning Team

Central to the success of SAFE Haven for Cats is the cleanliness and upkeep of the shelter, and this cannot be done without the volunteers who come in daily to tidy up. The shelter cleaning team members scoop litter boxes, change linens and toys, fill water bowls, and sweep the floor. Some cleaning team members focus on laundry and dishes as well. If time permits, cleaning team members can also play and socialize with the cats at the end of their shift.

The shelter cleaning team members must be willing to take direction from the cleaning captain, follow policies and procedures to control sickness, and handle cats gently and responsibly. Cleaning shifts are quiet.

- Location – SAFE Haven for Cats
- Additional Training Required – No
- Pre-Requisite Training – None
- Dress Code – Very casual.
 - No flip-flops, tank tops, or shorts (due to use of cleaning supplies and handling cats).
- Physical Responsibilities – Must be able to move around the shelter and work in cages that are floor level and above the shoulders. There is a lot of kneeling. May have to use cleaning products such as bleach. Cleaning crew members will frequently be asked to move cats to “swing cages” or play areas during the cleaning shift.
- Youth Opportunity - No

Litter Box Team

It is a tough job, but someone has to do it! The Litter Box I Team, which meets on Tuesday evenings, is tasked with removing litter boxes from the cats' cages, replacing them with clean, new ones, and emptying them. This reduces the potential for sickness and misbehavior in the cats, so this crew has a very important job.

- Location – SAFE Haven for Cats
- Additional Training Required – No
- Pre-Requisite Training – None, but must be willing to open cages and work around cats. Must work quietly as shift is during adoption hours.
- Dress Code - Casual
- Physical Responsibilities – Must be able to move around the shelter, pick up cats, lift up to 40 pounds, and carry litter boxes. There is also a lot of kneeling and crouching.
- Youth Opportunity - No

Event Volunteer

Want to participate in outreach activities in the community? Maybe you would rather help set up for the annual Tuxedo Cat Ball or wrap gifts at a local Barnes & Noble during the holidays? SAFE Haven for Cats hosts multiple fundraisers and outreach activities throughout the year and always needs individuals who want to join the volunteer service team! Other events include:

- Auctions
- Craft fairs
- Fill-A-Truck events
- Fun runs
- Gift wrapping at the holidays
- Partner programs

Different events require different skills and aptitudes. For example, at fundraising events, volunteers may have to answer questions about SAFE Haven for Cats, direct participants to activities, and engage diverse audiences in conversations about the organization. Contact the Volunteer Coordinator for details!

- Location - Varies
- Additional Training Required – Varies according to the event; some events require event team leads, which require an aptitude for directing and supervising others and may require some pre-event orientation or training.
- Dress Code - Varies according to the event
- Physical Responsibilities – Varies according to the event
- Youth Opportunity – Varies according to the event

Adoption Counseling

Adoption Counseling is what sets SAFE Haven for Cats apart from many other animal rescue organizations. All potential adopters are paired with a counselor to discuss their needs, previous experience with cats, how best to choose a forever feline companion, and ways to integrate their new companion into their home.

Ideal adoption counselors must be patient, great communicators, willing to work with many types of people, and comfortable with handling and nurturing the cats at the shelter. Adoption counselors are expected to perform cash handling duties, fill out paperwork, and follow up with adopters.

- Location – SAFE Haven for Cats
- Additional Training Required – Yes
- Pre-Requisite Training – Many adoption counselors begin as cleaning crew members to acclimate to the SAFE Haven environment.
- Dress Code - Casual
- Physical Responsibilities – Must be able to move around the shelter, pick up cats, and place cats in carriers and cages. There is also a lot of kneeling and crouching.
- Youth Opportunity - No

Fostering

Do you have space in your home and heart to care for a mom and babies, orphaned kittens, bottle babies, or maybe an adult? We are always looking for foster homes! It's a very rewarding job whether it's raising kittens until they are big enough to be spayed/neutered or giving an adult cat a break from the shelter. Don't be discouraged if you work a full-time job, there are opportunities for everyone!

- Location – SAFE Care Clinic
- Additional Training Required – No
- Pre-Requisite Training – Foster application must be filled out
- Dress Code - Casual
- Physical Responsibilities – None
- Youth Opportunity - No

Tabby Cabby

Sometimes cats need to be transported to a specialty veterinary practice, and sometimes, local shelters request that SAFE Haven for Cats pick up cats for adoption. Also, sometimes food needs to be delivered to pet food pantry recipients. The Tabby Cabby outreach is the dedicated car service for cats!

Additionally, Tabby Cabby volunteers must be able to communicate clearly with outside agencies and businesses about the nature of the transport and may be asked to deliver documentation back to the SAFE Haven for Cats Shelter Director.

Volunteers must have a valid driver's license and a fully insured and registered automobile.

- Location – SAFE Haven for Cats

- Additional Training Required – No
- Pre-Requisite Training – None
- Dress Code – Casual
- Physical Responsibilities – Must be able to lift and carry pet carriers with animals.
- Youth Opportunity - No

Mouse Makers

What cat doesn't love a catnip mouse? Mouse Makers is a dedicated group of crafters who create catnip mice year round and transport to veterinary clinics in Wake, Franklin, and Johnston counties. Mouse Makers meet at the clinic once per month, so there is plenty of time for fellowship and crafting. Additionally, Mouse Maker team members may be called on to deliver jars of catnip mice to clinics and pick up money from sales; all "Mouse Transporters" must have a valid driver's license and registered vehicle.

- Location – SAFE Care Clinic (1st Saturday of every month)
- Additional Training Required – No
- Pre-Requisite Training – Sewing and crafting skills
- Dress Code - Casual
- Physical Responsibilities – None
- Youth Opportunity – Yes, with an adult who is a current volunteer

Clinic Volunteer

The SAFE Care Clinic offers spay/neuter services to the cats in the community, including those that are considered "community" (or feral) cats. Often, the clinic needs volunteers to do cleaning, laundry, and perhaps some administrative tasks. These responsibilities are not technical in nature, and clinic volunteers do not assist or observe surgery.

- Location – SAFE Care Clinic
- Additional Training Required – Yes
- Pre-Requisite Training – Yes, must have at least 15 hours of Shelter Cleaning shift completed
- Dress Code - Casual
- Physical Responsibilities – Must be able to lift up to 20 pounds and move easily around the clinic spaces. Kneeling required. May need to use household chemicals.
- Youth Opportunity - No

Pet Food Pantry

Helping needy families keep their pets was the impetus for creating the Pet Food Pantry. This initiative provides temporary assistance to low-income pet owners and distributes almost 10 tons of food annually.

Volunteers will be engaging with the general public and answering questions about SAFE Haven for Cats and its clinic, SAFE Care. Sometimes, there might be paperwork to fill out or inventory to process.

- Location – SAFE Care Clinic (1st Saturday of every month)
- Additional Training Required – No
- Pre-Requisite Training – No
- Dress Code - Casual
- Physical Responsibilities – Must be able to lift up to 40 pounds and move easily around the spaces. May need to assist in loading and unloading vehicles. Working outside, even in winter and summer, is required.
- Youth Opportunity - No

Happy Cats

The Happy Cats program provides shelter cats with behavioral issues an important opportunity for socialization. Individuals trained in the Happy Cats philosophy are quiet, compassionate, and patient individuals who are willing to work one-on-one with selected felines to increase their adoptability. They must be able to select appropriate toys and use behavioral management techniques that are individual to the animal. Since the stories of many SAFE Haven cats are not good ones, the Happy Cats program is key to increasing the emotional comfort level of these cats and therefore increasing their probability to find a new forever home.

- Location – SAFE Haven for Cats
- Additional Training Required – Yes
- Pre-Requisite Training – We request that you complete three shifts (6 hours) in the shelter to get to know our organization and the cats. Knowledge of cat handling and cat behavior a plus.
- Dress Code - Casual
- Physical Responsibilities – Must be able to move around the shelter, pick up cats, and sit in playrooms or colony cages for long periods. There is also a lot of kneeling and crouching
- Youth Opportunity - No

Shy Cats

The Shy Cats program provides timid shelter cats with an important opportunity for socialization. Individuals trained in the Shy Cats philosophy are quiet, compassionate, and patient individuals who are willing to work one-on-one with selected felines to increase their adoptability. You will be given guidelines for each cat you work with by our Cat Care Technician.

- Location – SAFE Haven for Cats
- Additional Training Required – Yes
- Pre-Requisite Training – We request that you complete three shifts (6 hours) in the shelter to get to know our organization and the cats. Knowledge of cat handling and cat behavior a plus.
- Dress Code - Casual

- Physical Responsibilities – Must be able to move around the shelter, pick up cats, and sit in playrooms or colony cages for long periods. There is also a lot of kneeling and crouching
- Youth Opportunity - No

Advocats

Be the voice and face of SAFE Haven! Help out at events, post flyers around the Wake Forest area and work with the Volunteer Coordinator to spread the word about our shelter and our mission, educate the public about spay and neutering by talking about SAFE Care Clinic, as well as accept donations and recruit new volunteers.

- Location – Raleigh area
- Additional Training Required – No
- Pre-Requisite Training – Experience working in the shelter. Knowledge of cat handling and cat behavior a plus.
- Dress Code - Casual
- Physical Responsibilities – No, but must be outgoing and willing to talk to new people with an upbeat attitude.
- Youth Opportunity - Yes, with an adult who is a current volunteer.

Training is provided for these positions. Some positions require more time, dedication, and skills than others do but all are equally important.

THANK YOU FOR MAKING A DIFFERENCE!!



Play Time Etiquette

Below are just a few guidelines to make sure that both our volunteers and cats are kept safe.

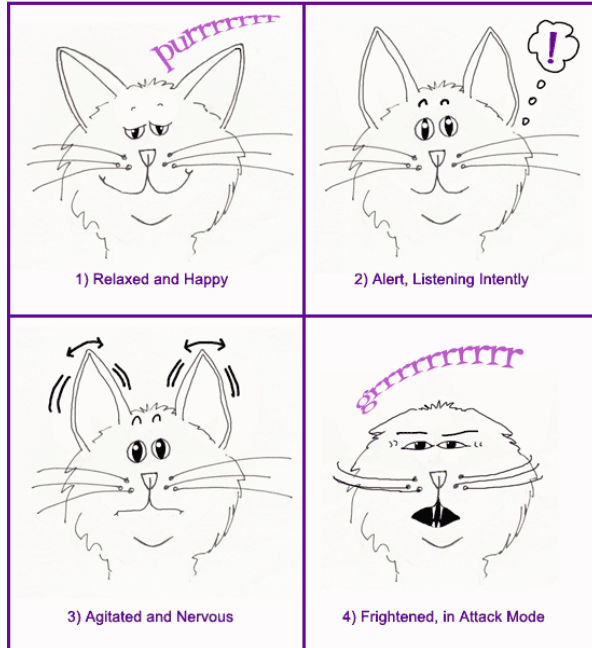
- Before moving a cat to the playroom, please look at the colored behavior cards. Some cats may be more comfortable in their cage for pet and play time.
- Some cats may need time to adjust to the playroom while others may not enjoy bigger spaces. Please give them adequate time to relax before interacting.
- When taking multiple kittens to the playroom, please carry them one at a time. This will help decrease the chance of escapees and make it less stressful on the kittens. Please ask another volunteer to help you when necessary.
- Please do not hold a cat outside their cage. Move quickly and calmly to the playroom.
- Please fill out a report card after spending time with a cat. This is a great way to let other volunteers know how wonderful a cat is. Please also place a magnet next to their name on the play time board so we can make sure all the cats in the shelter are loved equally. Report cards should be posted behind the cat's name card.
- Cats have a natural instinct to hunt. Toys are most fun to a cat if they get to chase it and catch it sometimes. Remember, prey doesn't attack the kitty.
- Never leave string toys in a cage or in a playroom with a cat. These are potential choking hazards or they could swallow the string and need surgery to remove it.
- Please wait until all cleaning is finished before engaging a cat in playtime.

Please have FUN and fall in LOVE! Maybe even adopt?



Body Language

When the Ears Speak, Listen!



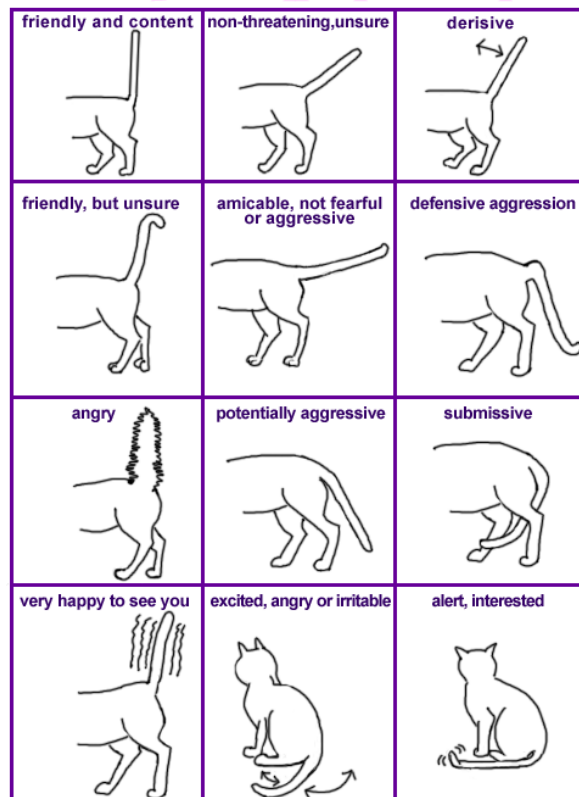
The Relaxed Cat - Normally, a relaxed cat's ears will point slightly to the side and slightly forward as shown in Figure 1 (below). This indicates contentment and sense of well-being. She's neither fearful nor aggressive.

The Alert and Interested Cat - When your cat is alert and something has captured her interest, her ears will assume a straight-up orientation, and a forward posture as in Figure 2 (see chart). She'll usually greet you with ears erect, offering a friendly greeting.

The Nervous Cat - If your cat's ears are twitching, she's agitated and nervous, as shown in Figure 3. This might be a cue to offer her reassurance and a safe embrace. Persistent twitching could be a sign of a medical problem.

Signs of Aggression - A cat's ears moving from a forward posture to a backward posture indicates increased aggression. A cat's ears moving from an upright position to a full horizontal position indicates increased fear, annoyance, or submissiveness -- a warning for you to leave her alone. If you notice that your cat's ears are maintaining a horizontal orientation on a regular basis, she could have an ear infection or ear mites, and a trip to the vet is warranted.

The Teltale Tail



Understanding Cat Body Language: The Tail - Your cat's tail is like a big old apostrophe at the end of her body that puts a fine point on affection, aggression, fear and happiness. One of the most primal tail movements is the violent back-and-forth swish, sometimes called a Sword Tail.

Whether it's a wild cat stalking a zebra, or a house cat stalking a gopher, she'll swish her tail to prompt the prey to move, which allows the cat to zero in for the attack. In the house, either leave her be until she relaxes, or toss her a toy to attack. It's usually not a good idea to pick her up when she's in "swish mode", because the object of her attack will likely be you.

A happy cat holds her tail high, and if she greets you at the door with her tail quivering, she's happy to see you.

Volunteer FAQs

Where do these cats come from?

They come to us from apartment complexes, shopping centers, from under decks, on roadsides, dumpster areas at fast-food restaurants, or businesses. There are cats everywhere there are people and a food source. They also come to us from our local county shelters.

Do you take personal pets that people find they can no longer keep?

No. We would like to be able to help every cat in need regardless of circumstance, but because we are a small shelter with limited space we have to focus solely on stray cats who have no one else to turn to. If someone has to give up a personal pet, we try to provide them with information to help them keep the cat in their home or provide them with information to allow them to rehome the cat themselves.

How long do cats stay at SAFE Haven?

A cat will stay in our shelter an average of 4 weeks (including time required to provide medical care). If a cat has been here for longer or seems to be stressed out by the shelter, we find a foster home to give the cat some time away from the shelter.

I have pets. Do I have to be worried about taking any diseases home?

No! Not if you take certain common-sense precautions:

- Wash or sanitize your hands carefully after handling any cat.
- Don't handle cats marked "Staff only" or enter the isolation area without being requested to do so.
- Don't leave the clothes you wear to clean the shelter where your pets can come into contact with them.

I hear that some of the cats are FIV positive. What does this mean?

It means they have tested positive for Feline Immunodeficiency Virus. In practical terms, it means very little to the cat if they are spayed or neutered, maintained as an indoor pet, and given appropriate health care. It also means very little to any cat with whom they might come into contact as it is generally only transmitted through serious bite wounds. It is not contagious through casual contact, nor is it in any way contagious to humans or any other type of pet.

Can I bring a friend or family member for a tour?

We are always happy to show off our wonderful adoption center. You are welcome to bring friends and family for a tour any time we are open to the public.

Are there other ways I can help in addition to volunteering?

Absolutely! Do you have a contact that might be able to provide us with supplies or services? Do you have friends who haven't heard about the services we provide? One of the best ways you can help is to just talk about us!

Adoption FAQs

As a volunteer, can I adopt a cat or kitten?

Absolutely! However, to be fair, we ask that you wait until they are available for adoption to the public.

How does the adoption process work?

The first step is to fill out an adoption application either on paper or online (available on the website). The application contains questions designed to help us help you make the perfect match and also ensure that our cats and kittens go to safe and loving permanent homes.

We will review your application, and if approved, we will work with you to schedule an appropriate time to complete the adoption process. There are educational materials we distribute and explain to all adopters (even if they are volunteers) and a legal contract specifying the terms and conditions of the adoption. Volunteers are expected to pay the standard adoption fees.

Why can't I pitch in and offer what I know when a potential adopter is here?

Our adoption counselors have received specific training in presenting the cats to their best advantage and will be aware of any special circumstances with the adopter which might make a particular cat more or less suitable.

We do however appreciate our volunteers providing feedback and the report cards are a great way to share your experience about a particular cat. Report cards should be posted behind the cat's name card.

I heard an adoption counselor tell a potential adopter that we don't have any kittens but I know I saw some in another part of the shelter. What's up with that?

The kittens you saw may not be ready for adoption yet, or we may be giving some harder-to-adopt cats a chance at a permanent home first. Don't worry, the kittens will find a home very quickly!

How do I become an adoption counselor?

Sherri Orner can answer any questions you might have either in person or via e-mail. If you have a particular interest in learning to be an adoption counselor, she will arrange for you to shadow experienced counselors while they do actual adoptions so that you can observe the entire process.