

# **VOLUNTEERS' CHARTER, SPA CREUSE**

## **Opening hours**

Volunteers may visit the refuge during opening hours, ie 14.00 to 17.00, except Sundays and Public Holidays. Volunteers, including members of the C.A., cannot make voluntary work visits to the refuge at any other time except with the prior authorisation of the SPA office.

## **Management structure**

On site you will find 4 staff members; one person at reception and three who take turns with the cooking etc. They can give you information and advice if any problems arise.

When you register, you will meet one of the managers: either Mme Mounoussamy, or the Vice President, Mme Lambert. It is they who deal with the recruitment of volunteers, and the enforcement of regulations. If they are not present, you can reach them by email to the SPA or via the letter box in the reception area.

You will also meet other members of the C.A. and other senior volunteers.

## **Registration as a volunteer.**

To register as a volunteer requires the following:

-- Joining the SPA Creuse for the sum of at least 16 Euros (annual subscription fee, valid for a calendar year – might change every year).

--A valid ID. A copy will be kept by the SPA (for minors this will be their parents' ID)

--A certificate of civil responsibility (The home insurance of the volunteer must cover him/her in case of accident. The SPA accepts no responsibility in the case of an accident).

--Sign the Charter, which binds the volunteer and specifies the rules, which must be respected. A copy of the Charter will be provided.

--Provide contact details and availability.

--Maintain contact with the secretary or Vice President

--If the volunteer is a minor aged 16 or over, the parent or legal guardian must fill out a parental authorisation. If the volunteer is under 16, a parent or legal guardian must accompany them during their voluntary activity.

## **Attitude**

The volunteer must possess a strong motivation and love of animals.

As a priority the volunteer must act to suit the animals' needs and follow the rules laid down by the SPA staff. This must take priority over the wishes/opinions of the volunteer.

Do not hesitate to seek advice or to signal problems (orally to the staff, or in writing in the register). The staff obviously know the dogs well and will be able to determine the best way to approach them.

Do not take on more than you can handle.

Undertake that you will never exercise any violence against the animals. Our dogs have been mistreated, abandoned, have lost their owners. They need gentleness and to regain trust in humans.

Use language and behaviour suited to the group environment.

## **Two reminders are essential at the start, to avoid any other problems:**

The volunteers must not give orders to the staff of the refuge, nor must they express to the staff or to a third person any criticism of the instructions of management and staff. Any problem must be pointed out to a member of the management team.

Any animal is potentially dangerous, especially as those taken into the refuge have often had a difficult past. Therefore, we ask you to be very aware of this point before joining our association, and be alert to signals that the animals may make (growls, stares, etc.)

## **Guide for the volunteer.**

The volunteer must always record his/her arrival, indicating on the register the time of arrival and the activity. On every visit, consult the notice board on the infirmary door for new information.

When leaving, the volunteer must always record in the register his/her departure time and any pertinent remarks concerning dogs he/she has dealt with.

The gate of the central corridor must be closed at all times in order to prevent escapes. Before taking out or returning a dog, make sure no other dog is loose in the corridor, or is about to leave.

When entering the dog's cage, talk reassuringly to him/her.

1. Dog walkers: create relaxing moments.

As a priority, take out the dogs who have not yet been walked (depending on your physical abilities), even if you have a special bond with other dogs. The register of dog walks will help you to decide who to prioritise.

Always ask the staff or a senior volunteer before taking a dog out. Some dogs may not be walked except by authorised persons, for various reasons.

Do not take dogs from cages which bear the notice DO NOT TAKE OUT or NE PAS SORTIR, except if authorised by the secretary or Vice President.

In the event of a problem leaving the box, call a staff member.

In exceptional circumstances, a staff member may ask you to take out a dog which is being considered for adoption. Nevertheless, the volunteers must never under any circumstances get involved in adoptions, or other tasks carried out by reception.

After taking a leash, confirm it is in good condition.

After leashing the dog, confirm that the collar fits snugly but is not too tight.

### Walking

Keep a secure distance from other dogs (there must be no contact between the dogs).

Keep the dog safe and away from cars, other animals, people.

**Never let the dog loose** outside the refuge, nor outside its cage, nor outside the enclosure.

If you wish to let the dog run, take the dog out in a car, or take it to paddle, ask permission at reception. In all cases, take the time to calm the dog down before you return, so that it does not pull during its next walks.

Adopt a pace suited to each dog: slow for puppies, old dogs or those who are sick.

On your return, check the equipment you used and report any problems.

**Please note: In the event of car trouble, it is the volunteers' car insurance which is to be used.**

In the enclosure:

Ensure that the door of the enclosure is closed properly before letting the dog loose.

Toys are available with the leashes.

Treats

Ask at reception if it is possible to give out treats (so as not to interfere with special diets).

Education

The dogs at SPA may be adopted at any time. You must be careful of the habits you teach the dog during your time together (See also Item 5. Education)

**Please note: Junior or beginner volunteers.**

For the **first two times out**, you must go with a senior volunteer and you must heed their advice.

You will be told which dogs you can take out, in order to judge what your capabilities are.

**If these rules are not conformed to, the office will review your participation and may revoke your membership.**

## **2. Grooming: giving the dog a sense of well-being**

It is possible to assist the person who is responsible for grooming the dogs, if this person agrees. She is present on Saturdays.

## **3. Cleaning the cage; promoting hygiene.**

Ask the staff which cage is accessible and needs a clean.

## **4. Socialisation: To restore trust.**

Some traumatised dogs must relearn trust in man before they can go out calmly. You must be prepared to be patient and kind when you spend time in their cage, familiarise them with your presence and your touch. Never restrain a dog which appears afraid, as you risk

being bitten. Before attempting this, you should ask authorisation from a staff member.

### **5. Education**

The SPA has an agreement with the canine club to improve the dogs' behaviour in order to increase the chances of our 4-legged friends being adopted. It is possible to volunteer to participate in these education classes. They mainly take place at the refuge. The office will select participants.

Rewards for good behaviour (cuddles, praise, treats) encourage the dog to behave well. To say NO is necessary when he does not behave well or puts himself in danger. We encourage you to apply these little rules during all your walks.

### **6. Maintenance**

We are always looking for volunteers who can help us maintain the wire fencing, walls etc.

### **7. Gardening**

Maintaining our green spaces in good condition keeps the dogs from catching parasites and gives a more welcoming aspect to the refuge.

### **8. Participate in external communication (internet site, Facebook etc.)**

The image of our association is important. It must reflect our policies and our choices. It must therefore encourage the arrival of new adoptees and promote animal welfare. If you have ideas about this, please share them with us.

### **9. Participate in collections**

Some of our volunteers participate in car boot sales, sell calendars, etc., with the aim of collecting money for our animals and for the refuge. Support for them would be very welcome...

The association requires that these activities must be agreed in advance with an appropriate member of the management team, who will outline procedures and designate a staff member to be consulted.

Voluntary help is most effective when it is regular, so please don't hesitate to return as often as possible.

Thank you for the time you spend on these animals

The SPA Creuse team.

January 23<sup>rd</sup> 2014, St Sulpice le Gueretois

I have read the document entitled Volunteers' Charter dated January 23<sup>rd</sup> and issued by the SPA of Creuse and I undertake to respect its rules.

Name

First name(s)

Signature

Signature of parent or legal guardian