Event Volunteer Handbook

Volunteer Coordinator
Jessie Collins
925.310.5465
collins@maddiesfund.org
Introduction to Events

Maddie’s Adoption Program hosts a variety of events throughout each month. These events aim to educate the public about Maddie’s Fund, gain additional volunteers, and most of all help our foster pets find their forever homes. Adoption events are an important part of the adoption process; they allow the public to interact with our available pets, getting to know them and hopefully bond with them. On the flip side, it allows our pets to get used to interacting with new people and new surroundings.

With so many events, at least one event each week, the adoption program needs your help! We need volunteers to help with a variety of different tasks throughout the event, including handling the animals, interacting with the public, set up and break down, and much more. These tasks are broken down and grouped into four main event volunteer roles, which are the Event Greeter, Event Pet Ambassador, Event Adoption Guide, and the Event Lead. All these roles are vitally important to a successful event and we need help in all these positions. Maddie’s Fund will provide training and support for each position.

Our adoption events are held every Saturday, with the events taking place at different locations and times each weekend on a rotating schedule. Below is a list of our scheduled Saturday events:

- **1st Saturday**: Stoneridge Mall in Pleasanton
- **2nd Saturday**: Studio Seven Arts in Downtown Pleasanton
- **3rd & 4th Saturdays**: Town Center Books in Downtown Pleasanton
- **5th Saturday**: To be announced the week prior to event

In addition to these events, we do occasionally host a special event or a mid-week event. We will be in contact with volunteers interested in helping at events when these events come along.

The above adoption events are solely dog-oriented. Currently we do not host any cat adoption events. This is primarily due to the fact that cats generally prefer minimal change in their daily routine so they do not show well at adoption events. In addition to foster homes, some of our cats are located at the Dublin PetSmart, where they stay for a two week period of time, go to a foster home for two weeks if not adopted and then back to PetSmart. At this time there are no positions for volunteers interested in helping at cat events. If you are interested in helping at cat events let us know and we will be in contact with you if/when the opportunity becomes available.
All About Maddie’s Fund

Commonly Asked Questions

As event volunteers you will be in direct contact with the public while representing Maddie's Fund. Most people you will interact with will not know what Maddie’s Fund is, how they can help, or why the animals are even there. This means you will often be fielding a lot of questions. Here is a list of the most common questions asked and how to answer them. If you are asked a question you do not know the answer to and is not provided on this list, please refer them to the event lead or staff member if available.

What is Maddie’s Fund?

- Maddie’s Fund is a family foundation dedicated to improving the lives of companion animals, promoting adoptions and achieving a no-kill nation.
- Maddie’s Fund has 3 branches:
  - **Grant Giving:** Provides grants to shelters, rescues, and research institutions around the United States to further Maddie’s Fund’s overall goal of revolutionizing the status and wellbeing of companion animals. They also run and organize Maddie’s Pet Adoption Days (MPAD).
  - **Maddie’s Institute:** The educational branch of Maddie’s Fund. Hosts webinars, works with institutions, and pioneers other various projects that help to educate the public and rescue/shelter industry.
  - **Adoption Program:** Foster-based program that concentrates on finding homes for pets.

Who is Maddie?

- Maddie was a miniature schnauzer owned by Dave and Cheryl Duffield.
  - Maddie gave them such joy when they were struggling to start their business that they promised her if they ever had money they would give back to her kind, which they did by starting Maddie’s Fund.
  - Dave Duffield is one of the founders of PeopleSoft and Workday.

How can I help?

- Maddie's fund has a variety of different volunteer opportunities available that run from administrative duties that can be done from home, to event volunteers, to fostering.

Where do you get your foster pets from?

- Our foster pets are pulled primarily from shelters in the East Bay area.
Do you accept animals from the public?

- No, we get all our foster pets from shelters.

Do you have a shelter or facility I can visit?

- No, Maddie’s Adoption Program is a completely foster-based program. This means all of our animals are in foster homes until they are adopted.

How can I get more information about volunteering or fostering?

- The best way is to sign up on our volunteer sign-up sheet. You can also look on our website at maddiesfund.org. (There are flyers provided at the events that include our website and information)

What do you provide if I decide to Foster?

- Maddie's Fund provides everything you would need to foster a pet. This includes food, medical care, toys, leashes, support, etc... All you need to provide is lots of love!

I would love to foster but I can’t make it to all of the events. Can I still foster?

- Yes, depending on availability we can have volunteers help to transfer your foster pet to and from an event as well as handle it while it is at the event.

When are your events?

- Dog events are held every Saturday at various venues and times. For a list of our dog events you can visit our events calendar on our website. We do not currently host cat events but our cats are rotated in and out of the inside cages at the Dublin PetSmart for viewing.

I am under 18, can I volunteer with Maddie’s Fund?

- Unfortunately, at this time, we do not have a lot of volunteering opportunities available to people who are under 18. However, if you have a parent or guardian sign up as a volunteer with us you are welcome to participate in fostering and helping at events as long as the guardian is with you.

How much is your adoption fee?

- This can vary from pet to pet. Starting from free to $150. In general our cat adoption fee is $50 and our dog adoption fee is $150.
Event Volunteer Positions

What Can You Do to Help?

We have four different volunteer event positions that are available. Each position performs a specific function at events to ensure the event runs smoothly. The positions range from beginner to experienced and vary in the amount of training needed to perform that task. All volunteers at events additionally help with set up and break down. Please take a look at the following volunteer opportunities at events and let us know if you are interested.

Event Greeter

The Event Greeter, as the first point of contact to event visitors and potential adopters, provides an overall positive experience to visitors by providing information about Maddie’s Adoption Program, and answering questions. This position provides the opportunity to meet and interact with adopters, directly contributing to increased adoptions and building the program, while providing the deeply rewarding experience of finding an animal a home and a human a loving new family member.

Event Pet Ambassador

Event Pet Ambassadors care for foster pets at events, ensuring they are safe, comfortable and presented in the best possible light and provide an excellent customer experience for potential adopters and event visitors. This position provides the opportunity to interact with adoptable pets, other volunteers and adopters, directly contributing to increased adoptions and building the program, while providing the deeply rewarding experience of finding an animal a home and a human a loving new family member.

Event Adoption Guide

The Adoption Guide meets potential adopters, asks and answers questions to help them find a pet that fits their lifestyle, guides them through the adoption decision-making process, and helps to process the adoption paperwork. This position directly contributes to increased adoptions and building the program, while providing the deeply rewarding experience of finding an animal a home and a human a loving new family member.

Event Lead

The Event Lead is responsible for coordinating all aspects of individual events onsite including volunteers, fosters and supplies to ensure that event runs smoothly. This position provides the opportunity to meet and interact with other volunteers, adopters and available pets, directly contributing to increased adoptions and building the program, while providing the deeply rewarding experience of finding an animal a home and a human a loving new family member.
Customer Service

Customer service is essential to any successful event. As event volunteers, you will be representing Maddie’s Fund and be one of the first lines of contact between Maddie’s Fund and the public. This means that customer service plays a large role in any event volunteer position. Below are a few customer service tips aimed to help make sure our volunteers (you!) and the public have a pleasant experience at our events. The better the experience, the higher chance that our wonderful pets will find their forever homes!

The 6 DO’s of Customer Service

- DO greet people upon approach
- DO smile and make eye contact
- DO ask questions and LISTEN to answers
- DO ask if they have pets of their own
- DO introduce the pet; encourage to interact
- DO follow the Golden Rule! (Be courteous, kind, respectful)

The 5 DONT’s of Customer Service

- DON’T focus solely on the animal
- DON’T continue conversations with other volunteers when someone is looking at an animal
- DON’T talk/ text/ play games on your phone when someone is looking at an animal
- DON’T miss an opportunity to promote your animal. If someone looks interested, talk to them!
- DON’T oversell, though!
The Adoption Process

Our adoption process is warm and welcoming, encourages questions, provides access, education and open dialogue about our pets and animal welfare. We strive for inclusiveness and participation from the public and hope to provide a safe and nurturing community for all of our adopters.

In all our adoptions we strive to:

- Encourage and manifest pet adoption.
- Engage each and every person with open and curious dialogue. Ask open-ended questions, such as “do you have a pet?” or “what are you looking for in a companion?”
- Respect adopter’s experience and knowledge.
- Challenge assumptions and trust that adopters want what is best for the animals.
- Never say no and never ‘test’ potential adopters — instead use this space to educate and encourage adopters to make mindful decisions based on shared information.
- Build community — get to know adopters through the process, hear their stories and LISTEN to them.
- Offer advice and redirection rather than discouragement.
- View everyone as a potential adopter or supporter of pet adoptions and assume everyone has the best intentions.
- Help find a pet who fits the adopter’s needs and lifestyle. If there is a ‘wrong fit’ help adopter find the ‘right fit.’
- Remember our events are the best time and place to encourage adoption for life.
- Congratulate every adopter on their new family member. Make a connection through this celebratory moment.
- Ensure post-adoption relationships, explain resources and welcome adopters to the Maddie’s family.
Next Steps

Thank you for attending our Event Volunteer Orientation. We, and the pets in our program, really appreciate any help you can provide. Please follow the below steps if you are still interested in volunteering at our adoption events.

- Read through the Event Volunteer Handbook carefully and let the Volunteer Coordinator, Jessica Collins, know if you are still interested in volunteering at events and if so, which position(s) you are interested in.
- We will send you information on any additional training that needs to be completed for the position or positions you are interested in. The additional trainings are available to complete at home!
- You will shadow a trained volunteer in the position you are interested in at one adoption event prior to your first event.
- Sign up for an event via our volunteer activity “Sign Up” in your Maddie’s Fund Volunteer profile at XXX.
- If you have any questions, please contact Jessica Collins, Volunteer Coordinator, at 925-310-5465 or collins@maddiesfund.org

We look forward to seeing you at adoption events!