

Cat Volunteering 301

Becoming A Matchmaker for Emerald Cats

A series of horizontal stripes in various colors (yellow, green, blue, purple, orange, red, white, green) are located at the bottom of the slide.

Becoming A Matchmaker

- Adoption Basics
 - basic faqs answered
- Conducting Meet & Greet
 - basic rules for the public
 - safely introducing cats to visitors
 - getting your point across in a customer-friendly way
 - speaking positively about our animals
- Expecting the Unexpected
 - handling unexpected situations
- Next Steps



Adoption Basics

To save and enhance lives –
both four-legged and two-
legged!

Adoption Steps

STEP 1

Look for a cat that interests you

STEP 2

Participate in Meet & Greet with staff or volunteer

STEP 3

Meet with an Adoption Counselor

STEP 4

Adopt!

It's that simple!!



HSSV Adoption FAQs

Fee	Animal Type and Ongoing Specials
\$175	Cats and Kittens *\$275 for pairs
\$175	<u>“Mommy & Me”</u> adopt mom and baby for the price of one
\$275	<u>“Companion Cat”</u> adopt a cat and friend
\$87.50	<u>“Pets for Vets”</u> half priced for veterans/military
\$87.50	<u>“Seniors for Seniors”</u> Half priced for adults over 60 adopting a cat over 6 years old

HSSV Adoption FAQs continued

“Do they have all their shots?”

- Yes, all of our cats and kittens are vaccinated (shots are up to date), spayed/neutered, and microchipped.
- *Kittens under 5 months may need further vaccinations that will be the adopter's responsibility.*

HSSV Adoption FAQs Continued

“Can I get my cat vaccinated at HSSV?”

- Yes! We have a walk-in vaccination clinic.
- *We only offer medical services for animals in our care.*
- *Once an animal is adopted, it is the adopters responsibility to take it to their local veterinarian for additional care.*

HSSV Adoption FAQs continued

“What do you feed the cats?”

- Unless on a special diet, all our cats eat Adult/Kitten Royal Canin (dry kibble), and Adult/Kitten Royal Canin (wet food).
- Please note that cats at the NACs may have different diets – check with the staff for more details.

HSSV Adoption FAQs continued

“I left my carrier at home, can I borrow a box?”

All cats need to leave in a secure carrier. We sell plastic and temporary cardboard carriers in our Whole Pets store and at all Neighborhood Adoption Center stores.

HSSV Adoption FAQs continued:

“Can I put a cat on hold?”

- Yes! The hold fee is \$55 and will last until closing the end of the following day.

“How do I introduce my resident cat to the new cat?”

- Adoptions Staff can give you a handout and go over how to properly perform a cat-to-cat introduction. It is best to do once the transition period is over. [Click Here For Cat Intros.](#)

HSSV Adoption FAQs continued:

“What’s the best way to transition the cat to my home?”

- We recommend a slow to transition into any new environment. This period could take 7-14 days.
- We suggest a quiet confinement space like a small room (bathroom is the perfect size).
- Once the cat is comfortable around you and confident in its confinement space, you can slowly start letting the cat explore the rest of the house.

Conducting Meet & Greet

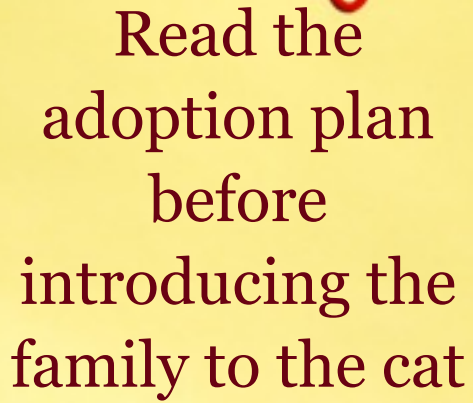


Adopters Come In All Shapes And Sizes

Keep an open mind - we are looking for people with open hearts and room in their homes



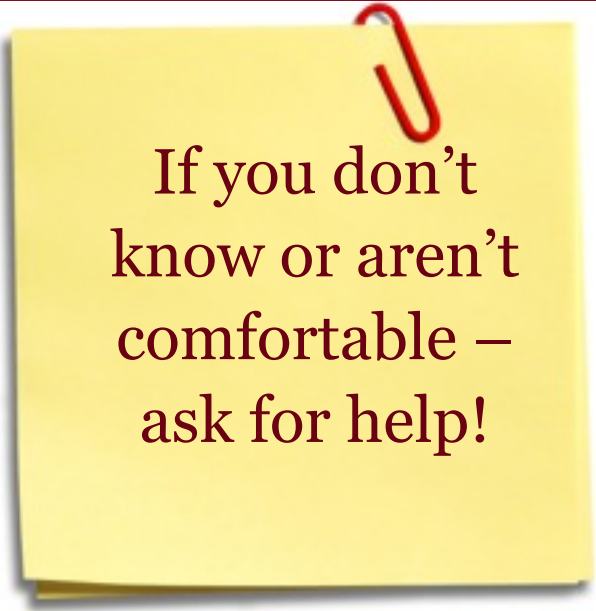
Stick To What You Know



Read the
adoption plan
before
introducing the
family to the cat



Use the “Special
Showing
Instructions for
successful Meet
n’ Greet



If you don’t
know or aren’t
comfortable –
ask for help!



How Do People Choose Cats?

The Interaction:
“Touch”



What Staff &
Volunteers
Say



Appearance
&
Behavior



Basic Meet n' Greet Rules:

- Sanitize hands (before and after)
- Stay with or near them (in case they have questions)
- Be aware of individualized handling
- Share the positive information listed in the adoption plans and [animal details spreadsheets](#), and let staff give the detailed information and education later



DOs and DON'Ts



Do This

- Greet all visitors, introduce yourself and remain available to answer questions or introduce a cat
- Positively reinforce the rules (say “*she prefers cheek rubs*” instead of “*don’t pet that way*”)
- Redirect inappropriate behaviors, or ask staff for help

Don't Do This

- Label visitors as “adopters” and others as “looky-loo’s” – everyone can be a pet patron
- Tell people what not to do -- SHOW them the appropriate behavior instead
- Expect every visitor to know how to interact with cats -- teach them

How to Greet a Cat

Touch is the best way people make a connection with an animal, and you are the one to facilitate that connection!



You can ask the guests to hold out their hand and let the cat sniff their hand before touching. They should start slow and take frequent petting breaks.



How To Play With A Cat

Another way to create a memorable interaction for our guests and residents is to play. Have the guests move the toy like prey; wiggle the toy like a snake going across the grass; make it dance like a bird in flight, or hide like a mouse running through a house. Only allow the cat to play with toys, never with fingers or hands.



How To Positively Describe Cat Behavior

Overstimulation:

“Bluebell is a very pretty cat and as much as I’d like to touch her too, we need to make sure it’s what she wants. Let me show you how to say hello to her and if she wants to be touched I will show you how. When she’s had enough, I’ll tell you to stop. It only takes a little bit of petting to make her happy.”

Play Aggression:

“Crispix is a big cat who still plays like a kitten. Sometimes, when he’s excited, he has trouble controlling his mouth and paws. His favorite thing to do is play, let’s find him a good toy so when we meet him, you can show him how much you like to play too.”

****Notice we used “mouth” and “paws” instead of “teeth” and “claws”.**

A Diamond cat:

“Ramona is a great girl who is looking for the right home. Let me find someone who knows more about her if you’d like to visit her.”

“C.C. is still settling in to her room. If you’d like to meet her, let me find you someone who she knows and more comfortable with.”

VIDEO TIME!



Click on this link to learn how to effectively communicate
with adopters!

Examples of Open-Ended Questions:

- What personality are you looking for in a cat?
Playful? Shy? Lap cat? Senior?
- What is your level of cat experience?
- Are there any unwanted behaviors you wouldn't want in your adopted cat?
- What inspired you to adopt a cat today?
- Who is going to be living with the adopted cat and interacting with them on a day-to-day basis?

Expecting the Unexpected



What To Do When Unexpected Issues Come Up:

- kids OR adults not listening to the rules?
 - repeat yourself and show your expectation
 - try to redirect the behavior
 - get a staff member
- concerning topics come up in conversation?
 - suggest another cat that might better suit their needs
 - excuse yourself and discreetly tell Adoptions Staff

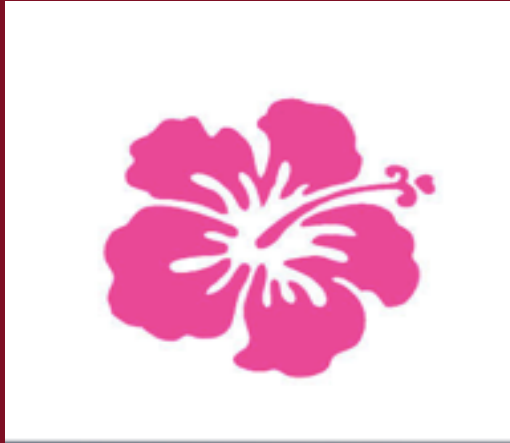
(example: if they mention that the cat will be outdoors only or a mouser, tell them about our Garden Cat Program! We have a cat for everyone)

What Does This Tag Mean?



- Animal is currently on hold for a family. Other families can meet with this animal and if they are interested in adopting—escort them to the Adoption Staff to get added as an Interested Party.
- We will call them if the hold falls through. If they want to adopt today, use the animal details to recommend a similar cat.

What Does This Tag Mean?



- Kitties with this sign are getting over small upper respiratory infections (colds). They are still available for adoption.
- Please show these cats last to a family to reduce spreading the virus.

What Does This Tag Mean?



- This animal has just arrived to HSSV and won't be available for Meet n' Greet or Adoption until our medical team and behavior team have assessed the cat.

What To Do When A Cat Uses Its Mouth To Communicate

- The public isn't as cat savvy as we are:
 - keep your eye on the cats body language
- If a cat bites or scratches a visitor:
 - immediately say “ouch!” and end the interaction calmly
- If you see concerning behaviors while showing a cat:
 - calmly end the interaction



OUCH!

What To Do When A Cat Uses Its Mouth To Communicate

- At the end of each Meet n' Greet session:
 - ask the visitor(s) if they would like to find out more about this specific cat with an Adoption Counselor or if they would like to meet some other cats.
 - add notes from Meet n' Greet(s) to socializer card(s)
- If a bite draws blood:
 - escort the visitor to the Adoptions Staff as soon as possible and then add your notes to the socializer card afterwards



OUCH!

Unexpected Situations Aside, What's Next??



Can't Find The Right Match?

Our staff would still like to get to know them and assist in the search. Escort them to the Adoptions Staff OR recommend that they visit another location that might have the perfect match!

We have 4 locations!



Animal Community Center
901 Ames Avenue
Milpitas, CA 95035



West San Jose NAC
inside Petco
500 El Paseo de Saratoga
San Jose, CA 95130



Sunnyvale NAC
inside Petco
160 East El Camino Real
Sunnyvale, CA 94087



Mountain View NAC
inside PetSmart
2400 E. Charleston Road
Mountain View, CA 94043

So, You did it! Meow what?

If a visitor is ready to adopt after the Meet & Greet is over, refer them to the Adoptions Staff to complete the adoption



Adoption Counselor Will Cover:



What behaviors we have seen thus far and inform adopters that behavior can be muted or exaggerated in the shelter environment

What we know about the cat's medical history thus far and to encourage adopters to establish a relationship with a local vet

Counsel family on how to successfully transition the cat into its new home and how to introduce him/her to everyone in the home



That's It! It's a Match!

All thanks to ...

YOU! You make adoptions happen!



YOU make connections, create positive experiences, and help send every visitor away with a smile (and a cat!)

Next Steps

- E-mail adoptions@hssv.org with 3 dates you are available for your 1 hour one-on-one mentor session (Monday – Sunday 10:30AM to 5PM).
- After your one-on-one mentor session with a skilled volunteer or staff member at your choice of location, you will receive your yellow badge that certifies you as a Cat Matchmaker!
- Put your matchmaking skills to use by introducing the public to our adoptable Emerald cats and kittens!
- Continue your education here at HSSV!



Cat Volunteer Levels

- ✓ CV 101: Cat Basics
- ✓ CV 201: Emerald Cat Socializing
- ✓ CV 301: Emerald Cat Matchmaking
- CV 401: Diamond Cat Socializing/Matchmaking
- CV 501: Sapphire Program
- Cat Behavior Eval Assistant

(See the volunteer website for more details!)

Additional Resources

[How To Adopt](#)

[Adoption FAQ and Reference Guide](#)

[Available Animals Page](#)

[Available Animals For Adoption Details](#)

[Brush Up On Cat Behavior](#)