

COMPANION ANIMAL PROGRAM

INFORMATION FOR VOLUNTEER'S



For many people pets are the most important companion in their lives but illness, disability or frailty can make caring for pets too difficult to manage alone.

Companion Animal Support Program was established to help residents in the City of Yarra aged over 55 or have a disability to care for their pet. This program is funded by the City of Yarra (CoY). It is a free service to those who are eligible for HACC services.

Volunteers need to have a love of animals and people, as well as some spare time. Volunteers work in partnership with the CAP Program Coordinator, and the pet owner. Volunteers help people keep their animal with them and stay in their home for longer. They are a vital link to the success of the program.

VOLUNTEER DUTIES AND GUIDELINES

- Assist with or carry out pet care, which may include exercising pets, grooming, feeding, washing pet, cleaning bedding, cages or kitty litter trays.
- Recognise the personal and external limitations of the volunteer role and only carry out tasks that have been agreed in consultation with the CAP Program Coordinator, resident & volunteer.
- Volunteers are responsible for collecting doggie waste – if fined, for not cleaning up waste, they are responsible for the fine.
- Attendance, wherever possible, at compulsory training sessions and social activities.
- Volunteers are to report any concerns/problems relating to pet owner or pet to CAP Program Coordinator.
- Volunteers are to avoid leash free parks where possible and dogs must ALWAYS be walked on a leash. If fined, volunteers will be responsible for the fine.
- Volunteers are covered by insurance in case of injury whilst performing their agreed volunteer duties for the CAP program.
- Volunteers should to take all precautions to ensure the dog in their care does not attack. If a dog should bite a person while being walked, any fine will be directed to the owner, but the volunteer is to exchange names with victim.
- Volunteers need to respect the decisions made by the animal's owner. The owner is ultimately responsible.

PET HEALTH CHECKLIST

Guidelines:

While no set of guidelines covers all eventualities, the following are a start.

- Observe the pet for abnormal behaviour and appearance.
- Is the owner anxious or worried about his/her pet?

Abnormal Behaviour may include:

- ◆Appetite changes ◆Scratching ◆Aggression ◆Shaking ◆Limping ◆Sleepiness ◆Head tilts ◆Diarrhoea
- ◆Vomiting ◆Drinking more ◆Urinating (or not) and defecating in the wrong place

Abnormal Appearance may include;

- ◆Hair loss ◆Swelling ◆Colour Changes ◆Posture ◆Bad Smells (from skin, mouth or bowels)
- ◆Eye Changes (Pupils large or small, cloudy corneas, closed eyes)

A FEW COMMON PROBLEMS:

Fleas:

Sometimes it is difficult to tell someone their pet has fleas but they are the most common cause of skin disease.

Fight wounds and abscesses:

Mainly in cats - prompt treatment will reduce the risk of an abscess and later kidney failure.

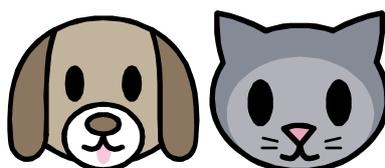
Vomiting and Diarrhoea:

Not very pleasant – always needs attention.

Infected Ears:

Smelly sore ear, shakes head, unhappy pet.

IF IN DOUBT, ALWAYS CONTACT A VETERINARIAN



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



Q: Can I bring a friend when walking the resident's dog?

A: No, unless they are also a CAP Volunteer. Volunteers are provided with information such as privacy, confidentiality and emergency procedures during the induction and orientation, therefore it is not appropriate to take someone who has not completed the induction/orientation.

Q: If the dog gets injured/ill during the walk, what should I do? What if the owner does not have the means to take it to the Vet (e.g. finances etc).

A: All decisions to take the dog to the Vet are to be made by the dog's owner or his/her relatives. If the dog gets injured/ill during the walk, you should inform the CAP Program Coordinator who will notify the owner or their family immediately and follow their direction. Volunteers are not to bear any costs associated with owner's/relatives decision to take the dog to the Vet.

Q: If the Volunteer finds that a resident is gravely ill, but the resident says that they don't want an ambulance and requests that their family is contacted instead, what should the Volunteer do? Who is liable for the cost of the ambulance?

A: Call an ambulance and also the on-call mobile number which is the on-call staff member will then contact the resident's family – you are able to reassure the resident that their family will be contacted. If there is a cost of the ambulance, it be the resident's/their family's responsibility.

Q: Are CAP Volunteers able to give medication/worm tablets to the dog if requested, or give the dog a brush if requested?

A: Volunteers are not to give any medication/tablets to pets, as it is beyond the scope of the role and training is not provided for this task. If a Volunteer is to sustain a bite whilst giving medication/tablets, they will not be covered by NRCH's Public Liability Insurance. If the owner requests that the Volunteer give the dog a brush, the Volunteer is to use their discretion as to the temperament of the dog, but they are able to refuse if they feel in danger of being bitten or injured by the dog. The program must be notified of the incident. If you require medical attention, please contact your local doctor or hospital.

Q: Can I enter a resident's home to look after their pet while they are not home/in hospital?

Under no circumstances may a volunteer enter a pet owners home if the pet owner is not at home. If the pet needs to be fed or walked arrangements need to be made for the pet to be accessible outside the house. In the event that a pet owner is in hospital/on holidays the CAP Program Coordinator will assist in making arrangements that do not require the volunteer to enter the home.

IF IN DOUBT, CONTACT PROGRAM COORDINATOR ON 9418 9894 OR 0418 511 989