



## Story Tails Volunteer Program

Our Story Tails volunteers enjoy children and children's books and have the patience and positive attitude to work with children. We ask that Story Tails volunteers make a regular commitment so that the program can be successful. Ideally, it would be great to have people who could commit specific days or shifts each week, and for our Story Tails volunteers to be in communication with Kayla when coverage is needed.

Questions?

Email or call Kayla Gross at [kgross@womensanimalcenter.org](mailto:kgross@womensanimalcenter.org) or (215) 942-6829

### How do I sign up to help?

Just like you would sign up for dog walking, general duties, or cat handling, you should sign up for Story Tails reading under the "Scheduling" SignUp ([HERE](#)).

- Please be aware that if a volunteer is already signed up for that day/shift, you should look to sign up for a different shift. We only need one volunteer here at a time for this program.
- You can
  - Input the hours you are covering (after you've looked to see what the parent Story Tails calendar looks like) i.e. – '4:30-6:45pm, 2 sessions'. To view parent signups, please contact Laura or Kayla, and they can send you the links.
  - OR sign up in advance for the next few weeks, if you think you are free for specific hours of the day i.e. – 'Available all day' or 'Available 230pm and on'
- It makes MOST sense to also first look at the parent/child signup sheets via signup genius (**BUT DON'T SIGN UP USING THIS PAGE!**)
- Sessions are inputted into the signup sheet as 45 minutes, but the children/parents should only be in the room with the animals for 30 minutes. The extra 15 minutes ensures there won't be time conflicts with back-to-back readers. Please make sure you sign up for the correct shift times (i.e. – 10:30-11:15 or 3:45-5:15, which would be 2 sessions)

Please note that adoptions meets will occasionally happen during Story Tails, so the small animal room and community cat room may be occupied with adoption counselors and potential adopters. We also sometimes don't have any animals in either of those rooms! When this happens, please be patient and flexible and move the children into the cat adoption room where the children can sit in chairs and read to adoptable cats through their cages. They love it just as much!

## **What do Story Tails Volunteers need to do?**

- 1) Arrive at WAC 10 minutes before your session, and, as always, sign in when you arrive
- 2) Make sure all necessary forms are printed and neatly put in the lobby
- 3) If there is a first-time parent/child, please make sure you review the safety check list and have them sign the permission form in addition to signing in
- 4) Be aware of what room the child signed up to read in (cat room or small animal room) – this information can be found on the parent signup
- 5) Bring the children back to their assigned room, bring a chair or two for yourself and the parent to sit outside in the adoption hallway
- 6) Ensure the child is only reading for 30 minutes
  - If the people are late, you should **not** add additional time as there may be other children waiting
  - If there was a reason that the shelter had to push back the time, then you can add an additional 10 minutes to their session
- 7) Watch over the child to make sure everything is going ok! If anything happens, take them out of the room and bring them to the front desk or a staff member
- 8) If you sign up for more than one shift, listen for your name or 'Story Tails Volunteer' in the loud speaker for when other children and parents walk in!

## **Story Tails Rules & Guidelines**

- All parents **MUST** sign their child in before each session
- All parents will need to sign a permission form prior to the first session with the animals
- All parents must stay either with their child, outside of the room where their child is reading, or in the WAC building (a volunteer or staff member will be at each session as well)
- Should any child be bitten or scratched, they should immediately be taken to the first aid areas and the injury should be addressed

# Story Tails FAQs

## What is the Story Tails program all about?

The WAC "Story Tails" reading program gives children a creative and supportive outlet to practice their reading skills. It's a great way for children to build confidence in their literacy by reading stories out loud to a friendly and furry audience – our shelter pets! Reading to shelter animals not only helps the child but can significantly reduce stress for the shelter pets as well as reinforce a positive association with people!

## When is this program available?

Wednesday, and Thursday: 3:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.; Saturday: 12:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.

## Who can take advantage of this program?

Any child is encouraged to join in on the fun!

## What books will be read?

Over the years, we have had many books donated to us by different organizations and people that the children can read that are all relevant to Humane Education and animals. Your child is also welcome to bring their own books to share with our animals!

## Can children read to shelter dogs?

At this time, we don't have the volunteer assistance to have a dog program, but it's definitely something we'd love to develop. If you or someone you know would like volunteer, please email [volunteer@womensanimalcenter.org](mailto:volunteer@womensanimalcenter.org).

## Is there a fee?

Nope! The "Story Tails" program is completely free and open to the public. Of course, donations are always appreciated and go towards the care of our shelter animals.

## What are some of the benefits of the program?

- Improving the child's reading skills
- Helping our animals socialize, stay calm and associate positive experiences with humans
- Getting the child acquainted with animals
- Building a child's confidence
- Education in animal care and welfare
- Getting the child used to reading aloud

## Who will be with the child during the reading visit?

We will ensure a trained volunteer is either in the room with the child, or checking on the child and the animals every few minutes based on the parent's discretion. The parent is also able to be in the room with the child, should they decide this would be best. The parent must stay at WAC, either in the lobby or in the shelter, throughout the entire reading session.