

CAT TLC VOLUNTEERS: PLEASE READ!!

I am excited to announce new Cat TLC protocol! Starting immediately, WHS Animal Care Staff will be adding a level to their evaluation of cats as they are placed for adoption. If they find a cat gets over-stimulated easily or lashes out with little warning, the kennel card will be marked with a **RED** sticker. This is a warning for volunteers! Please watch for these stickers and follow the following protocol:

- **Only volunteers with 35+ hours of WHS Cat TLC experience are allowed to handle RED cats**
- Regardless of experience, qualified volunteers **MUST** be very confident in their ability to read cat body language!
- Move very slowly & watch for any signs of over-stimulation
- Spend only the amount of time with the cat that **THEY** wish to allow; no more!
- Recognize that some cats may just need a quiet, hands-off visitor to let them know the world isn't always scary

Our Cat TLC trainers cover some body language information in the initial training sessions. We also provide handouts to new volunteers to help recognize these signs. For most of you, it has been a while since you have had this information provided. Please review these two articles prior to your next visit (available in the training notebook in the volunteer room):

- [Cat Chat: Understanding Feline Language](#)
- [Cat Talk: A Guide to Cat Body Language](#)

This new policy is being put in place for the well being of the volunteers as well as the animals. We obviously want to avoid volunteers getting bit. Not only is that an unpleasant experience for the volunteer, but WHS also has to report those incidents to L&I. As for the cat, they have to be placed in bite quarantine for 5 days. This not only extends their stay at the shelter, but also extends the length of time they are **NOT** getting socialized. This can be a very challenging thing for some cats to overcome.

By having volunteers be more aware of the cats' behavior and how to manage it, we can place more of the challenging cats up for adoption. You can all help with this process by following the guidelines, being honest about your abilities and taking the time to learn more about feline body language. If you have put in 35+ hours in Cat TLC but feel a little more training would be helpful, please contact me. I would be happy to help make this happen!

**I am working on a Cat 101-type class taught by our new friends at Chuckanut Vet. Stay tuned!!

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. You are a great team!!

Carly Brewer

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