



## **THE HEART OF THE EARTH SANCTUARY AND RESCUE, INC CODE**

The animal rescue profession preserves a special trust relationship within our society. The Heart of the Earth Sanctuary and Rescue (HOTE) team members make a commitment to society and the animals that we will adhere to high ethical standards of conduct when working with animals, each other and while representing HOTE.

The Heart of the Earth Sanctuary and Rescue, Inc team members voluntarily agree to abide by the HOTE Code as a condition of their association with the organization. Violation will result in that association being terminated.

When HOTE was founded, it was firmly rooted in compassion and the desire to improve the lives homeless, abandoned, neglected and abused animals through rescue and adoption, and by creating an alliance with other sanctuaries, advocacy groups, rescues and animal shelters.

## **OUR ETHICS:**

We live by the tenet of respectful teamwork among our volunteers and our supporters. We encourage and support the endeavors of our members while helping animals in need.

The Heart of the Earth Sanctuary and Rescue has a managed intake policy. HOTE will schedule intake of animals to match our ability to assure humane care and safe movement through the shelter/rescue system to a positive outcome for every animal in our care. This will ultimately increase our capacity for care and ensure the five freedoms for each animal, which are:

- **Freedom from Hunger and Thirst** by ready access to fresh water and diet to maintain health and vigor.
- **Freedom from Discomfort** by providing an appropriate environment including shelter and a comfortable resting area.
- **Freedom from Pain, Injury or Disease** by prevention or rapid diagnosis and treatment.
- **Freedom to Express Normal Behavior** by providing sufficient space, proper facilities and company of the animal's own kind.

- **Freedom from Fear and Distress** by ensuring conditions and treatment which avoid mental suffering.

**The Heart of the Earth focuses on collaboration between organizations to strategically reduce shelter deaths, increase live shelter outcomes and measurably reduce shelter intake.**

- Heart of the Earth collaborates with animal shelters and rescues in Allegany County Maryland and Mineral County West Virginia, as well as with several other animal rescues in the region. They contact us when they take in animals in need of one-on-one care and support beyond what can be provided in the shelter setting. By pulling infirmed and elderly animals from these shelters, Heart of the Earth both reduces shelter deaths and increases live shelter outcomes.
- Heart of the Earth provides extensive veterinary care and socialization for the animals in the rescue/sanctuary. Every animal entering Heart of the Earth that is medically able is spayed or neutered, vaccinated and microchipped. If and when they are ready, they are adopted out to approved homes.
- Heart of the Earth is located in a low-income area, and many potential adopters live on fixed incomes or in public housing that requires animals are spayed and neutered and vaccinated. By providing these services prior to adoption, Heart of the Earth removes these barriers to adoption, thus increasing live shelter outcomes.
- Because they are spayed or neutered and microchipped before being adopted out, animals passing through Heart of the Earth will not contribute to pet over-population and are less likely to end up back in the shelter. These efforts both reduce shelter deaths and measurably reduce shelter intake.
- Animals not able to be adopted out live out their life in Heart of the Earth's sanctuary. This effort also reduces shelter deaths and shelter intake.

#### **OUR BEHAVIOR:**

- We will acquire an attitude of modesty in our actions, while striving for something bigger than ourselves.
- We will support and respect fellow HOTE team members on a personal and professional level.
- We will communicate honestly, justly and with integrity, both within and outside the HOTE rescue organization.

- We will never disrespect rescue/shelter colleagues and will always act professionally and courteous when representing HOTE.
- We will not take part in or condone the breeding and selling of any animal.
- We will not allow our personal opinions to jeopardize our end goal, nor will we engage in disrespectful discussions while dealing with rescue-related disputes/challenges in face to face discussions or on social media.
- We will always serve as ambassadors for animal adoption in every facet of our lives.
- We will fulfil all written contracts and/or verbal agreements that we enter into with a shelter, other rescue organization or vendor.
- We will respect the decisions and requirements of animal control as well as shelters and other rescue organizations when partnering with them.
- We understand and accept the limits of a rescue's resources, and we will not take in more animals than we have the space, time or financial means to care for.

### **ADOPTION PROCESS:**

Members must support, execute and emphasize the importance of a structured adoption process that ensures the safe, successful adoption of HOTE animals. This adoption process includes but is not limited to:

- Completion of an adoption application form and contract by the potential adopter.
- Screening of potential adopters through reference checks and home visits at the will of the rescue.
- Agreement that the animal will be returned to HOTE immediately if for any reason the adopter cannot keep the animal.

In exchange, HOTE agrees to provide the following:

- Spay/neuter surgery prior to adoption to 1) ensure the animal will not be used for breeding by the adopter, and 2) in the

event the animal ends up in a shelter or homeless, it will not be bred or contribute to feral/stray population growth.

- Microchipping prior to adoption so that if the animal is found roaming or stolen it can be returned to HOTE or the adopter.
- The animal's current veterinary paperwork upon final adoption.

#### **COMPLIANCE:**

Members must understand the importance of and agree to comply with applicable federal, state and local laws focused on animal welfare.