**A picture containing drawing

Description automatically generatedWays Volunteers Can Help at Home During Pandemic**

This is a list of some idea of things you can ask volunteers to do now, at home. Some organizations say they have had such an outpouring of volunteer support that they do not have enough things for all these would-be volunteers to do. Use this as inspiration to create a customized list for your organization.

* **Make cat toys**. There are examples online for simple cat toys to make. Sewn catnip-filled toys, crocheted toys, or simple toys like stuffing baby socks with catnip can provide enrichment to the cats in the shelter. You can find more inventive toys for people to make, too, such as cat feeder puzzles made of egg cartons.
* **Make cat beds or blankets**. Snuggles project is an organization that promotes this activity: <https://www.snugglesproject.org/>.
* **Sew washable tie-on drapes/curtains for cages** that help cats get a little privacy. You will want to provide the size you need.
* **Create dog enrichment toys** including homemade puzzle feeders.
* **Make PPE for staff and visitors** – masks are a favorite. Volunteers can even make PPE for your clinic – the University of Florida’s Shelter Medicine Program has info on how PPE can be made for vet clinics here: <https://sheltermedicine.vetmed.ufl.edu/shelter-services/covid-19-resources/sanitation-ppe-surgical-supply-alternatives-animal-shelters/ppe-alternatives/>.
* **Provide foster care**. Ask people to foster a senior pet who needs a break from the shelter or a litter of puppies or kittens.
* **Make adoption follow-up calls**. Train volunteers to make post-adoption follow up calls. (We can provide a form that you can adapt. Just let us know if you want it.)
* **Create and monitor a Facebook or Pinterest page** for foster caregivers or for other volunteers engaged in virtual volunteering where people can share ideas and photos.
* **Trap-Neuter-Return**. Train volunteers to trap feral cats, bring them to your clinic to get fixed, and take them back to where they were found. There are businesses and senior citizens willing to have TNR done, but are not able to physically manage trapping cats. You can also engage volunteers in feeding feral cat colonies your organization may be managing.
* **Plan a yard sale** to raise money for the organization. The event will need to be outdoors during the pandemic in order to be safe.
* **Organize an online fundraise**r, like a photo contest. See [gogophotocontest.com](https://www.gogophotocontest.com/).
* **Provide transportation for animals** who need vet care.
* **Deliver pet food** to people in need.
* **Respond to calls for help from the publi**c. Train volunteers (provide a guide) so they can respond to calls from people who need help with their pets. (We can provide a sample “Animal Help Desk” manual you can adapt.)
* **Thank donors.** Train volunteers to help with writing thank you notes or to participate in a thank-a-thon where donors are called and thanked.
* **Promote animals for adoption** through social media.
* **Provide a professional skill**. Ask volunteers for help if you need a graphic designer to spiff up your literature or someone with technical skills to help you get things organized.

Something you can do to help volunteers feel engaged while they are stuck at home is to offer them free virtual training. One possibility to consider:

* Animal Behaviorist Kelley Bollen, MS, CABC, offers virtual animal behavior talks for shelter volunteers. It is a cost-effective way to provide valuable training to your volunteers and help them feel appreciated and involved even when they are not able to volunteer in person. You can learn more about Kelley’s program Alive & Thriving at <https://www.humanenetwork.org/alive-thriving>.