

# What Can One Person Do?

From [www.bestfriends.org](http://www.bestfriends.org)

Plenty! Here are some suggestions of items to donate and ways that one person can truly make a difference!

## Things You May Be Able to Give

You don't have to spend a lot of money. Perhaps you are no longer using some of these items around the house, or you may spot them at a yard sale or thrift store.

### **Basic things many shelters can use:**

- Bedding: towels, sheets, blankets, cat or dog beds, carpet squares
- Cleaning supplies
- Cat and dog food, cat litter, toys, collars, leashes
- Metal bowls, dog crates, grooming supplies

**Doghouses.** If you have an old doghouse that isn't being used, you can clean it up and pass it along for a dog in your neighborhood who could use it. Or give it to your local animal shelter and ask that it be given to a needy dog. Sometimes feral cat groups can refurbish and use doghouses.

**Office Supplies.** The next time your office is upgrading equipment, computers, or furniture, ask about donating the old stuff to the shelter. Basic office supplies such as copy paper, pens, post-it notes, are needed, too.

**Coupons.** Many shelters can use free or discount coupons for animal food or cat litter.

**Medical supplies.** Many spay/neuter clinics and shelters can use medical supplies.

**Humane traps.** Shelters are often in need of more humane traps for catching and transporting cats to and from the shelter. They also loan or rent them out to the community to help capture ferals or strays.

**Use of a photocopier.** Many groups cannot afford a copy machine and would appreciate an opportunity to duplicate flyers and forms.

**Prizes for fundraising auctions or raffles.** Many organizations and shelters can't afford to buy prizes for these events, so they appreciate any donations.

## Things You May Want to Do

*(Call your local shelter and speak with their volunteer coordinator today!)*

**Fix an animal.** Help a friend or acquaintance spay or neuter their pet. To find a local low-cost spay/neuter program, call your local shelter or contact 1-800-248-PETS or 1-888-PETS911 (or visit their website at [www.pets911.com](http://www.pets911.com)).

### **Donate your special skills and talents.**

- Computer skills: Create or manage a website for your local shelter, or help create a mailing list database.
- Graphic design and desktop publishing skills: Design a logo, brochure, newsletter, or poster for a local shelter or rescue group.

- Sewing, knitting, or crocheting talent: Offer to make pet beds or catnip mice. Visit the Snuggles Project website ([www.snugglesproject.org](http://www.snugglesproject.org)) for information on making pet “security blankets” for shelter animals.
- Building/construction skills: Make repairs around the shelter, or build a doghouse.
- Writing talent: Offer to help with writing their newsletter or an article for the local paper.
- Organizational skills: Help out with administrative tasks or event planning.
- Gardening skills: Ask if you can help beautify the landscaping around the shelter.

**Donate professional services.** Legal advice, accounting, public relations, dog training, grooming, graphic design, and printing are a few of the services that most shelters can use.

**Provide care for shelter animals.** Volunteer to clean cages, or feed, groom, or walk the animals.

**Promote animal adoptions.**

- List homeless animals on an adoption website.
- Photograph shelter animals for use on adoption websites, newspaper ads or posters.
- Create adoption posters and hang them around the community.

**Provide transportation.**

- Pick up donated pet food and supplies from local businesses.
- Drive animals to and from the vet clinic or adoption events.
- Provide transportation for people who need to get their pet fixed but cannot drive.

**Provide office help.**

- Write thank-you notes.
- Make follow-up phone calls.
- Do paperwork, record-keeping, data entry.

**Provide emergency help.** Make yourself available on an emergency basis to do whatever is needed.

**Speak up.** Sometimes what’s needed is a concerned citizen who will:

- Talk with local elected officials, attend city/county council meetings, and voice concern for the animals.
- Write a letter to the editor of the local paper to point out the contributions of a local organization, veterinarian, or others who have helped animals in need; to address current community animal issues; or to provide general information on spaying and neutering pets.
- Watch for pending legislation on local animal issues, and speak on behalf of the animals.

**Ask the local paper to run a free ad.** Many local newspapers will run a free ad to promote an animal in need of a home at the local shelter. You might be able to help by getting a photo and description to the paper each week. If the paper cannot donate the space, you may be able to get a local animal-related business to sponsor the ad.

**Do tabling.** Offer to set up an information table at a community event or fair, or outside the local supermarket, pet supply store or health food store. Focus on gathering addresses for their mailing list and handing out information about the group. Be sure to have on hand nice photos of animals that have been helped and, if possible, a real animal in need of a home.

**Seek donations for a local group.** Circulate a “Wish List” of items needed for the local shelter around your work place and gather the items on a set day. Or, offer to approach local businesses on behalf of an organization to raise funds or seek in-kind donations. Some stores will donate damaged packages of pet food.

**Talk with your veterinarian.** Thank your veterinarian for whatever help he or she may provide to homeless animals and local shelters. If your vet does not already help, ask if he or she would consider providing some discount services to the local shelter, or donating a few spay/neuter surgeries for feral cats.

**Get publicity.** Call the local TV station or newspaper to let them know about a special event or the work of a local organization and suggest that they report on it. Or, write an article for the local newspaper yourself.

**Tell your friends and neighbors.** Don't underestimate the value of word-of-mouth. Tell others what you are doing and why. Invite them to help out, too.

### **Larger Projects You Could Help to Organize:**

*(Call your local shelter and speak with their volunteer coordinator today!)*

**Plan a fundraising event.** This could be as simple as holding a yard sale and donating the proceeds to a shelter, or as involved as planning a benefit auction or walk-a-thon.

**Start a community e-group.** An e-group can help unite like-minded people, spread the word about animals in need of homes, promote local events, and advertise volunteer opportunities.

**Create a local event to help promote a national day.** You could plan a local observance of National Homeless Animals' Day ([www.isaronline.org/campaign.htm](http://www.isaronline.org/campaign.htm)), National Feral Cat Day ([www.alleycat.org](http://www.alleycat.org)), or Spay Day USA ([www.ddaf.org](http://www.ddaf.org)).

**Start a Week for the Animals.** Best Friends has a manual called How to Organize Your Own Week for the Animals to help you create a Week for the Animals in your town, city or state.

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