

Proposal to the Volunteers

for creating a

Board of Volunteers

061221

THE INSIGHT

While the ultimate mission of the APL is the care and careful placement of the animals, the mindset of Leadership must always be - understandably - on the big picture. With so many ongoing challenges and moving parts and changing landscapes, the critical focus and decision-making must be based on *sustaining* and *assuring* the *ongoing efforts* of the APL.

Meanwhile, for a Volunteer grabbing a leash off the hook and stuffing a couple plastic bags into a pocket, her *only* concern is that dog behind the kennel door. Or that cat napping in the cage. Or the rabbit nibbling on the lettuce.

Time to bring these two powerful perspectives together for the aim of absolutely maxing out the purpose, effectiveness and practices of the APL, along with the life of each and every animal who spends as little time here as possible.

THE OPPORTUNITY

There already exists a *Board of Directors* to challenge and advise on matters of funding, policies, budgets, contracts, and long-term strategic planning.

We propose a ***Board of Volunteers*** whose sole focus is acting as advocate for the animals.

As **volunteers**, we have the luxury of not having to worry ourselves with the big picture—and that singular focus on the animals' welfare can provide the opportunity for APL management (and even the BOD) to benefit from valuable boots-on-the-ground optics.

As **people made up of various professional backgrounds**, we possess an array of skillsets—and these life experiences will aid in recognizing a deficiency or opportunity and identifying a way to overcome or benefit from it (ie: provide credible viewpoints and achievable solutions)

Not to mention, engaging a *Board of Volunteers* only bolsters the Cleveland APL *Board of Directors'* commitment to actively promoting and advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives at the APL.

THE STRUCTURE

Given the time demands on APL leadership and staff, the **Board of Volunteers will run itself.**

When there is a concern, idea, or challenge over a condition, policy or situation involving the care and welfare of an animal, it will be first brought up by the Volunteer to the BOV.

The BOV will clarify the issue and suggestion/solution in written form - **The BOV Brief.**

Danielle will be our 'go-to' at the APL if we have any questions (about policy, operations, etc) which we need clarified to better craft a credible suggestion/solution.

Once a month, on a regular, predetermined day (*the last Friday of the month?*) at a regular predetermined time (5 pm?), the APL leadership will make itself available, if needed, to meet for one hour to review/discuss the concern/idea/suggestion/Brief. (*The BOV will alert Danielle by that Monday if we have anything to share/discuss ... if not, no need to meet that month ... if so, Danielle will alert those particular leadership members relevant to any particular idea/issue we have to share to please attend that Friday.*)

Following the Friday meeting, the BOV will report results/updates/next steps to the Volunteers via email.

HOW THE *BOARD OF VOLUNTEERS* WILL OPERATE

All APL volunteers with at least 75 hours of service per year (on average) will be eligible to vote *for* and be elected *to* the Board.

To activate this initiative, Danielle or Randy will email all volunteers with info about the new BOV initiative/rationale and upcoming election of initial BOV nominees and instructions for voting. (Voting will happen on a dedicated Facebook page or BOV microsite set up by Randy).

Five to seven volunteers will serve on the board (one year terms, overlapping), but at least one from each area of focus:

- Cat handler
- Dog walker
- Support Role (ie: adoption desk, foster coach, playground supervisor, photographer, special event associate, etc)

The newly elected BOV members will elect a *Lead* to act as a regular liaison with Danielle & APL management.

All volunteers will be given an address to email ideas/concerns/suggestions (or a Facebook page will be set up to accept ideas). Once a month, on a predetermined day (*second Friday of the month?*), the VOB will Zoom with any volunteer who submitted an idea/concern/suggestion to discuss, and assure relevancy/clarity of the subject.

On a rotating basis, one member of the BOV will be in charge of writing up the BOV Brief to go over with Danielle/APL the following Friday.

If there is an idea/concern/suggestion to cover that month, the Lead will alert Danielle by the Monday *before* the Friday meeting, so Danielle can alert whomever APL supervisor/leader needs to attend.

The Lead (and sometimes one other BOV member) will attend the Friday meetings.

The BOV Lead will be made available to the APL BOD to sit in on advisory sessions, if ever desired by the BOD.

APL Board of Volunteer Mandates:

Always see it first through the animal's eyes.

Never proclaim a problem without also suggesting a solution.

*Never propose a new initiative without presenting
the possible execution/action plan.*

[BOV BRIEF - EXAMPLE #1]

Concern:

Underutilized dog yards.

Truism:

While brisk walks are beneficial, some of the more active dogs *need* to be able to run and expend pent up energy on a more regular basis. So what's stopping them? A policy put in place after the unfortunate incident with Jack: "*There must always be at least two dog walkers in the dog yards at all times ...*"

Problem:

It's challenging enough to get a full complement of dog walkers in during each and every shift, much less for a couple of them to coordinate on the fly taking out two active dogs at the same time to use the yards. It is simply not a realistic endeavor, and certainly not on a regular basis. So the dogs suffer.

Reality:

What happened to Jack was serious business. Both in terms of the physical harm done to him and the possible legal ramifications to the APL. So it makes perfect sense why new procedures and policies had to be put into place (no single use of yards, must carry walkie-talkie) to increase safety of the Volunteers while limiting possible litigation But the fact remains: the dogs aren't getting the exercise they need.

Proposed Solutions:

Access

— There are smaller dogs whose ability to do serious damage is limited to nonexistent. There are medium and larger and older dogs who are clearly not overly active and excitable. These dogs can be identified during safering and a special note made on the white board indicating they are *One of the Ones* (may be taken by one volunteer alone into a yard). This will vastly increase the opportunities for other Volunteers walking by with more active/excitable dogs to pop into the other yard for more active play.

Safety

— It's always a concern, even with the smaller/older/less excitable dogs. But better than a walkie talkie (which, if suddenly attacked, may have to be used to beat back the dog) would be a wireless outdoor camera with audio that's always on, visible on a screen at the front desk. If people are getting attacked they can scream or blow a whistle to secure the attention of front desk, who can immediately let the person know help is on the way.

(Here's a solar battery powered one: https://www.amazon.com/dp/B07B5YH7YN/ref=redir_mobile_desktop?encoding=UTF8&aaxitk=87e9917b878fae30c24fe75fa4fa661a&bsa_cr_id=9705655770601&pd_rd_plhdr=1&pd_rd_r=cae32b7b-f881-4599-b60c-72071738bde7&pd_rd_w=en&pd_rd_wg=CyELP&ref=sbx_be_s_sparkle_mcd_asin_1_img)

— Since it will take time for help to arrive anyway, small pepper spray devices can be available in the yards. These keychains models can be worn around a finger like ring: https://www.amazon.com/Dragons-Breath-Fashion-Strength-Formula/dp/B07T6XDZ3R/ref=pd_lpo_200_t_1/133-4005059-3999922?encoding=UTF8&pd_rd_i=B07T1LXKQV&pd_r_r=code3a5f-8b18-43b8-b673-dbee0f61b78e&pd_rd_w=qCpe5&pd_rd_wg=Fpq3&pf_rd_p=a0d6e987-6561-454c-84f8-2ce292b79a8&pf_rd_r=ZMNNW1W4A2T5HP1NJ4P7Z&psc=1&refRID=ZMNNW1W4A2T5HP1NJ4P7Z

— Train Volunteers what actions to take if attacked. Keep the actions limited and simple. Like this: [//www.youtube.com/watch?v=ifd71La1fbA&t=161s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ifd71La1fbA&t=161s)

Legalities

— Create a separate legal device for Volunteers to sign if they want to use the yard. Included on the device is a quick quiz they fill out before signing (indicating/proving they know what they are supposed to do if attacked, they are aware pepper spray is available, they are aware a camera will be on them [but may not necessary assure somebody will see and come to their rescue]). Make the language as plain and direct as possible to convey that the volunteer is deciding to use the yards by their own will and will not hold APL responsible for any incident that may happen with a dog in the yard.

[VOB BRIEF - EXAMPLE #2]

Concern:

Some dogs need more socializing

Truism:

The more the APL understands about each dog (how well it does or doesn't interact with other dogs, how well it does out and about in the world when walking amongst dogs, traffic, etc) the better. These insights also provide more in-depth/valuable profiles about the dogs which can help attract more adopters (or even help identify the qualities *the adopter should have* for any particular dog).

Opportunity

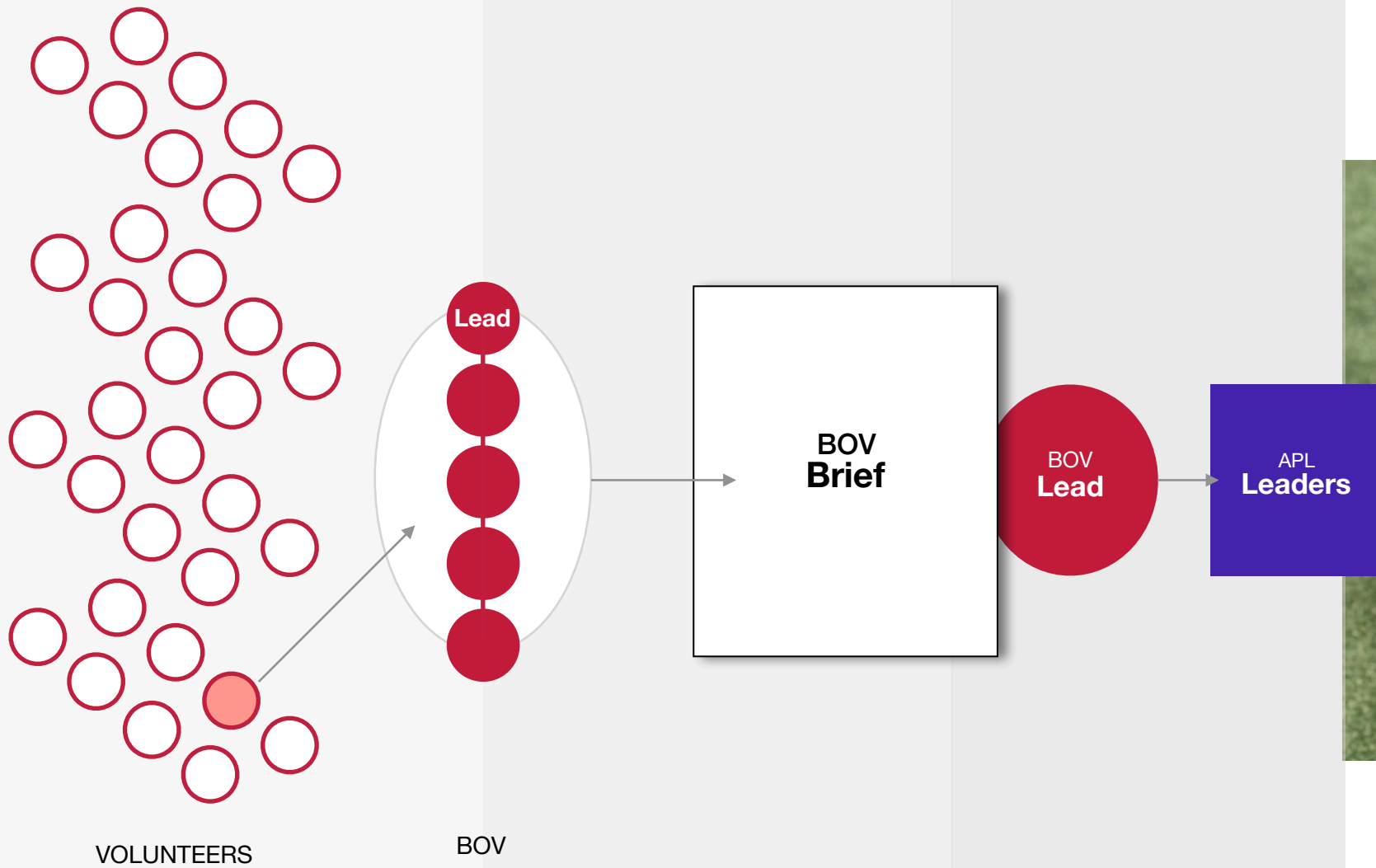
Begin a regular DogPack walk on Saturdays. Choose the dogs most needing this extra experience, who could most benefit (shy, unsure, or overly excitable).

How DogPack Walk will be structured and run:

Dina will act as lead. DogPack walk will be held one Saturday each month, promoted via *Cleveland APL Dog Walkers* facebook page. Volunteers (and the APL staff) will suggest proper dogs for the walk. Dina will put together list of dogs, list of volunteers who will walk on that Saturday, and email both to Paulina for approval and staging. On walk day, Dina or Paulina will take charge in assigning the right/appropriate walker to the right dog.

Added benefits

- Fast track getting some dogs 'out of their shells'
- More complete reporting will beef up dog bio reports for potential adoptees
- Promotional and PR opportunities
- Valuable chance for Volunteers to get to know one another better
- Volunteer Advisory Council members could attend with new Volunteers to better access the newer Volunteer's skills with dogs, to help determine their color rating.



A volunteer has a suggestion and Zooms with BOV ... BOV helps clarify the idea and creates a brief ... the Lead presents Brief to Leadership = Decision/Action/Results

This far more efficient and focused process of intaking, validating, prioritizing, clarifying & ideating solutions will reduce the time and energy the APL needs to spend on responding to Volunteer suggestions

HOPES, DREAMS, EXPECTATIONS

Regarding serving on the Board:

The list of candidates that all the Volunteers will vote for/approve as the Inaugural team of Volunteer board members will be based on suggestions by Danielle (who knows us all pretty well and can suggestion a strong, potent 'mix' of folks) and, of course, each individual's desire to serve.

On the inaugural team of Volunteer board members, half will serve a 12-month term, half will serve an 18-month term.

After 12 months, half the Board will be replaced by new Volunteers elected to serve a 12-month term ... 6 months after that, the other half the Board will be replaced by new Volunteers elected to serve a 12-month term. This will set up a healthy 'overlap' of new/old board members going forward, with half of the Board being refreshed every 6 months. Any past Board Volunteer is eligible to serve again after sitting out one term.

Thus, the hope is that we will always have an abundance of Volunteers (of all categories: Cat Handlers, Dog Walkers, Support Roles) who are enthusiastic about their opportunity to serve at least one term on the Board of Volunteers.

Regarding the idea/concern/suggestion that any Volunteer will bring forward:

The purpose of the Board is to help crystalize and focus any idea that is presented to APL leadership.

The implementation of some ideas may require more work than others, and it would be expected that the Volunteer who brought forth the idea — if it is approved by APL Leadership — would also help see it come to light, if needed.

Using one of the BOV Briefs above as an example, the Volunteer who suggested the ideas for getting more use out of the Dog Yards would also offer to research and assemble a list of outdoor cameras, monitors, whistles, etc, ... to do as much work as possible and make it as easy and efficient for the APL to 'take it from there.' There will likely be some ideas that can be completely executed by the Volunteers.

Are these activities you would be interested in participating in? If so, please use the next page to let us know

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[If you choose to support this proposal and have your name added to the list below,
please **email Randy right now** with your **first and last name.**]

*We, the Volunteers, are excited to activate the Board of Volunteers
and put it to work to further the mission of the APL:*

Dina Murphy	Randy DeMuesy	Your name	Your name
Sharon Paul	Your name	Your name	Your name
Suzanne Zupan	Your name	Your name	Your name
Ellie Zupan	Your name	Your name	Your name
Angela DeMuesy	Your name	Your name	Your name