



**National Mill Dog Rescue™**

# Volunteer Handbook

Dear Valued Volunteer,

Welcome to National Mill Dog Rescue (NMDR)! NMDR simply could not function without the commitment and sacrifice of our wonderful volunteers. Our volunteers, who come from all walks of life, bring the diversity, energy, and experience that makes NMDR such a special place. On average we have over 700 volunteers who contribute over 12,000 volunteer hours annually.

Working under the guidance of dedicated team leaders, volunteers contribute in areas including, but not limited to, rehabilitation, kennel maintenance, cleaning, feeding, bathing and grooming, exercising and socializing, providing transportation to appointments and events, organizing adoption fairs and fundraising events, maintaining our website and social media, and much, much more.

Volunteers are the lifeblood of NMDR, and without your commitment and dedication we could not exist. Our volunteer's unparalleled dedication to our dogs and unwavering commitment to our mission is commendable, and our gratitude is boundless.

Your support and encouragement is what keeps our mission alive. I look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

// signed, ts, August 30, 2019 //

Theresa Strader  
Executive Director

## **Mission Statement**

To rescue, rehabilitate and rehome breeding dogs and to educate the general public about the realities of the commercial dog breeding industry.

NMDR is the leading organization in the country devoted exclusively to rescuing puppy mill survivors. We are a private, nonprofit organization that relies on donations to operate. Over the past 12 years we have grown from a small group of committed individuals to an established organization whose daily operations are executed by a small staff and a host of volunteers.

## **NMDR History**

NMDR was established in February 2007, after our Founder, Theresa Strader, rescued her precious “Lily” from a mill dog auction. NMDR achieved 501(c)(3), Nonprofit status, incorporated in the State of Colorado, in July 2007.

Theresa found Lily in her cage in the dark barn where she lived. Sitting on her back legs, Lily was rubbing her stomach with her front paws and made eye contact with Theresa as if asking for help. Lily had an estimated 13 litters of puppies. Her precious puppies were taken away from her litter after litter. Living in a wire cage with a board to sleep on and a rabbit water bottle to drink from, Lily received little to no medical care. Lily had lost all her teeth and her lower jaw had rotted off. The human hand brought only misery.

Our pledge and passion is to put an end to the cruelty endured by mill dogs and to change the face of the commercial dog breeding industry by rescuing and helping mill dog survivors. We are committed to this mission until every dog in the industry is cared for humanely.

We rescue mill dog survivors throughout the United States. At a minimum, rescued dogs are spayed or neutered, updated on vaccinations, groomed and socialized. Only then are they available for adoption or placed in one of our many foster homes until they are adopted.

The second part of our mission is to educate the public about the plight of mill dogs. Education is our best hope of bringing an end to the suffering involved in the commercial dog breeding industry.

## **NMDR’s Core Focus Areas**

**Rescue:** The first step to freedom for mill dogs is rescuing them from breeders. As a result of years of building relationships and gaining trust, NMDR works with a network of well over 200 breeders. In most cases, these breeders choose to release their dogs to NMDR instead of

destroying them. Although working directly with breeders creates considerable cross-country travel (a typical rescue trip takes 3 days and can cover over 2,000 miles), rescue represents the initial and most significant part of transforming these dogs from serving as breeding stock to living in loving homes as adored members of a family. NMDR has also increased the number of rescue organizations and shelters we partner with over the past few years. The ability to transfer rescued dogs to our wonderful partners in Colorado and other states increases the number of dogs we are able to rescue while also helping to educate others on the plight of mill dogs.

**Medical and Behavioral Rehabilitation:** Sadly, as a result of years of neglect and little to no veterinary care, many mill dogs arrive with serious health and/or behavioral challenges. NMDR is dedicated to ensuring each dog is provided the care he or she deserves, including a full veterinary exam, immunizations, spay/neuter procedures, dental extractions, and other health care needs.

All new arrivals receive a behavioral assessment, and dogs with behavioral issues are placed in our comprehensive rehabilitation program where our dedicated Rehabilitation Team, comprised of staff members and volunteers, works with each dog to help ready them for eventual adoption.

**Adoption and Foster Programs:** One of the most exciting events at NMDR is adoption day. Our diligent Adoption Team works tirelessly to match families with dogs who fit their desires and lifestyles, and as a result we adopt out over 60 dogs each month. A key element of our rehoming process is our vibrant foster program. NMDR places over 200 dogs in foster homes annually, with a vast majority of these dogs finding their forever homes after several months with nurturing foster families.

**Education and Outreach:** Educating the public is critical to NMDR's mission. It is the long-term solution to bringing about change in the commercial dog-breeding industry. We conducted an impressive outreach program in 2018, reaching hundreds of thousands of people through social media, broadcast television and radio, print coverage in various publications, school programs, special events, adoption fairs, and a long list of other activities. Our website, [nmdr.org](http://nmdr.org), hosted a wealth of information ranging from pictures and short biographies of all dogs available for adoption, to information about upcoming events. Perhaps the biggest impact resulted from the tireless efforts of our talented social media team, which leveraged Facebook and other forums to reach over 660,000 followers. Our team of volunteers also manages our "Puppy Mill to Pet" page on Facebook, where adopters, potential adopters, and fans who have adopted mill dogs from other organizations visit to seek and receive advice, share challenges and successes, and learn more about mill dog behavior and the tools needed to help shape that behavior in a positive way. Our outreach and education is fueled by our passion, and will continue into new and exciting forums in the future.

## **Getting Started**

There are several steps to getting started as a volunteer with NMDR. First, access [nmdr.org](http://nmdr.org) and click the volunteer tab. From there you will:

1. Complete and submit the Liability Waiver.
2. Thoroughly review the NMDR Volunteer Handbook and the NMDR Policies and Procedures Manual, and carefully consider which team you would like to join based on your skills, interests, and availability.
3. Access Volunteer Matters and select “Register Now!” Complete the volunteer application.
4. Using the link you will receive via email, access [volunteermatters.com/nmdr](http://volunteermatters.com/nmdr) and sign up for a New Volunteer Orientation from the Calendars section of this site. Select an Orientation/Training shift that you are able to attend. Attend your scheduled Orientation/Training at our facility.
5. Once you have completed these requirements, you will need to identify a team(s) to join.
6. You will become an active volunteer once you have completed 20 hours. You may receive a volunteer badge with your name on it at that time. Please e-mail [customerservice@nmdr.org](mailto:customerservice@nmdr.org) to request your badge.
7. Please contact [customerservice@nmdr.org](mailto:customerservice@nmdr.org) with any new volunteer questions.

## **Volunteer Tracking**

Every hour you spend and every mile you drive volunteering with NMDR is important - to us and to our project partners. Your time and resources make a real difference. When we apply for grants and funding, they show the depth of community support for our projects and programs.

You will need to log in the time you spend and mileage driven (including to and from the kennel) on NMDR volunteer efforts in the Volunteer Matters system. This is vital because volunteer time can help NMDR meet requirements for matching funds. Certain grants stipulate that the nonprofit must match a percentage of grant funds and that the value of volunteer time may qualify toward satisfaction of the match requirement. Also, please note that NMDR does not manually track volunteer hours, so the only way we can account for hours and mileage is when you enter it in Volunteer Matters. In addition, you will not receive shift reminders via e-mail.

FYI: If you itemize your taxes, you may deduct the direct costs of operating your vehicle or the standard charitable mileage rate, as well as some other expenses. Track your volunteer mileage and consult your tax advisor or refer to IRS Publication 526, Charitable Contributions.

## **Youth Volunteer Age Restrictions**

**Youth 12 years old and under:** Unfortunately, as a result of insurance requirements, youth 12 years old and under may not volunteer at NMDR.

**Youth 13-15 years old:** May volunteer at the kennel when accompanied by a parent or legal guardian, and may socialize with dogs inside and outside when accompanied by a parent or legal guardian. Youth 13-15 years old may **not** be left alone for any period of time, no matter how short, and supervisory responsibilities may not be transferred from the parent or guardian to another adult unless previously approved by NMDR's Chief Operating Officer or Director of Kennel Operations. Youth 13-15 years old may not enter a kennel or walk dogs unless accompanied by a parent or guardian, and youth 13-15 years old may not bathe or groom dogs under any circumstances.

**Youth 16-18 years old:** May volunteer unaccompanied; however, may only work with dogs after securing approval of the Director of Kennel Operations. Youth 16-18 years old may not work with dogs enrolled in NMDR's Rehabilitation Program (includes red- and yellow-collared dogs).

### **Dress Code**

As volunteer your attire should be consistent with the type of work you are performing and with safety considerations. Examples of inappropriate dress include bare feet, flip-flops, tanks tops, midriffs, bathing suits and clothing with obscene or distasteful slogans or gestures.

### **Inappropriate and Unacceptable Behaviors**

Inappropriate and unacceptable behaviors are defined as negative and aggressive acts aimed at one or more individuals that cause them to feel hurt, embarrassed, incompetent, disrespected, anxious or depressed. Examples include, but are not limited to:

1. Excessive yelling, emotional outbursts and berating others.
2. Making threats and using intimidating tactics.
3. Any malicious behavior a responsible person would determine to be unprofessional, disturbing or harmful to another's psychological health.
4. Physical conduct that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment.
5. Verbal conduct such as epithets, derogatory comments, slurs, or jokes.
6. Any form of sexual harassment which is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

Again, the list above is not meant to be all inclusive. Volunteers should report and inappropriate or unacceptable behaviors to the on-duty Point of Contact (POC) immediately (Note: POCs are the team members who manage the front desk and control and direct kennel operations from Noon to 4:00 pm each day). POCs will then immediately report the incident to the Chief Operating Officer or Director of Kennel Operations who will in turn address the issue appropriately.

### **Safety**

Safety is a priority at NMDR. We strive to provide a clean, hazard-free and safe environment in accordance with the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970. As a volunteer you should observe all posted safety rules, adhere to all safety instructions and use NMDR-provided safety equipment as appropriate. Please ensure you are aware of the location of all safety and emergency equipment, as well as safety and/or emergency phone numbers. Any problems with NMDR-provided safety equipment should be reported to the POC immediately. If a volunteer is injured, no matter how minor, they must immediately report this to the POC and complete an “Initial Incident/Injury Report.”

### **Smoking and Tobacco Use**

Our goal is to provide a healthy and pleasant environment, and as a result, NMDR prohibits volunteer use of any form of tobacco on the NMDR campus. The exception is smoking and other tobacco use is permitted in the volunteer’s vehicle, and all tobacco by-products should be disposed of in such vehicle.

### **Volunteer Teams**

Once you have completed New Volunteer Orientation your next step is to login to volunteer matters and access the volunteer calendar. If you need assistance accessing volunteer matters please [emailcustomerservice@nmdr.org](mailto:emailcustomerservice@nmdr.org).

You will then need to join a Core Team (you will need to volunteer at least 4 hours a month to remain active). Information on the Core Teams, a short description of the duties associated with each team, and the contact information for each team lead is listed below:

- 1) AM Dog Care Team: The kennel is thoroughly cleaned every morning starting at 8:00 am by a team of staff and volunteers. This team is responsible for cleaning, sanitizing, and power washing the kennel, washing food bowls, providing clean water, food, beds & bedding for the dogs and starting the laundry process. Volunteers also walk and socialize dogs between 11:00 am and Noon. This is one of the most critical volunteer jobs at

NMDR and is our greatest area of need. Team leads: Carol Pierce ([cjvb11@aol.com](mailto:cjvb11@aol.com)) and Sherry Tlusty ([sherritlusty@gmail.com](mailto:sherritlusty@gmail.com)).

- 2) PM Dog Socialization Team: Team members focus on socializing dogs that are categorized as “blue” or “pink.” In addition, with approval from the team leader, experienced team members may socialize dogs categorized as “yellow.” Afternoon socialization sessions are 7 days a week between the hours of noon and 4:00 pm. Team members also assist with keeping kennels clean to include scooping, mopping, laundry, and additional light chores as needed. Team members must be comfortable handling dogs and must be able to follow direction from the team lead. Team lead: Christi Pate ([christip@nmdr.org](mailto:christip@nmdr.org))
- 3) Grooming Team: All dogs are bathed and groomed upon arrival and on a scheduled basis. Dogs are also groomed prior to medical procedures, prior to meeting potential adopters, and prior to departing the kennel with adopters or foster families. Ideally, team members have experience bathing and grooming dogs and are comfortable handling who have had limited socialization. A training orientation with the team lead is required. Team lead: Pam King ([pamela.p.king@gmail.com](mailto:pamela.p.king@gmail.com)).
- 4) Medications Team: This team is responsible for issuing medications to kennel dogs. The bulk of medications team shifts are in the late afternoon, although there is also an occasional need for volunteers on weekend and holiday mornings. Medical experience is not required, and all team members will be trained before being assigned a shift. Medications team members must be comfortable handling both large and small dogs and attention to detail is a must. Team lead: Helen Freeman ([helenf@nmdr.org](mailto:helenf@nmdr.org)).
- 5) Veterinary Transport Team: This team is responsible for transporting dogs to and from veterinary appointments on an as needed basis. In most cases, team members utilize their personal vehicles when transporting dogs; however, NMDR provides crates and any additional required equipment. Team members are not expected to transport dogs who are enrolled in NMDR’s Rehabilitation Program. Team lead: Helen Freeman ([helenf@nmdr.org](mailto:helenf@nmdr.org)).
- 6) Facilities Team (specialized skills): This team is responsible for helping to provide the basic, handyman-level repairs and maintenance required to keep the kennel operational. Duties also include also preventive maintenance. Team members take guidance from NMDR’s Facility Manager, Director of Kennel Operations, or Chief Operating Officer. Team lead: Kim Lehmann ([kiml@nmdr.org](mailto:kiml@nmdr.org)).

After completing at least 20 hours of volunteer work you are welcome to join one of our Specialty Teams. Each team will have their own training and hourly requirements. Please contact the team lead to find out more information.

- 1) Adoption Fair & Events Team: Team members transport dogs to and from adoptions fairs and community relations events. Team members remain with the dogs for the duration of the event, ensuring the dogs have access to water, shade, and are kept safe and secure. Team members are expected to interact with the public at events, share NMDR's mission with the public, and be prepared to discuss the dogs (an in-depth knowledge of each dog is not required) with potential adopters. Team members must be familiar with NMDR's history, mission, and adoption and foster program policies. Team lead: Jenny Whitt ([jennyw@nmdr.org](mailto:jennyw@nmdr.org)).
- 2) Education and Outreach Team: This team interacts directly with the local community. Team members provide presentations to local groups (schools, private and public organizations, etc.). Strong public speaking skills are required. In addition, team members are expected to have a comprehensive understanding of NMDR's history and mission. Team lead: Cathlin Parker ([cathlinp@nmdr.org](mailto:cathlinp@nmdr.org)).
- 3) Grants Team: The Grants Team conducts corporate and foundation fundraising. Team members research prospects, assist with grant writing, cultivate donors with Director of Development approval, and report progress to donors as appropriate. Team lead: Jan Shellhammer ([jans@nmdr.org](mailto:jans@nmdr.org)).
- 4) POC Team: Team members manage the front desk and help control kennel operations from Noon to 4:00 pm each day. Team members meet and greet all customers, provide tours, conduct meet and greets between potential adopters/fosters and dogs, complete adoption and foster contracts, provide oversight of other volunteers and community service members, ensure kennels are cleaned as needed, assist with laundry time permitting, etc. This is the most demanding of all volunteer positions. Team members must possess strong communications and customer service skills, while also being able to multi-task. Team lead: Patti Egelston ([pattie@nmdr.org](mailto:pattie@nmdr.org)).
- 5) Rehabilitation Team: Prospective team members must volunteer for 6 months before requesting to join the Rehabilitation Team. Team members work directly with NMDR's most difficult dogs, to include dogs with severe behavioral issues. As a result, team members should have considerable experience handling difficult dogs, must demonstrate an aptitude and the appropriate temperament for working with dogs, to include fearful dogs and dogs with a bite history or potential to bite. Team members will be interviewed and trained before joining the Rehabilitation Team: Team lead: Kim Lehman ([kiml@nmdr.org](mailto:kiml@nmdr.org)).

- 6) Social Media Team: Team members assist with monitoring various social media platforms, to include regulating discussions and addressing user questions and concerns. Team members must be familiar with various social media platforms, must be technically proficient, and must possess strong written communications skills. Duties associated with this team can be performed remotely from volunteer residences in the local area. Team lead: Melody Kahtava ([melodyk@nmdr.org](mailto:melodyk@nmdr.org)).
- 7) Volunteer Records Mgmt Team: Team members assist with maintaining various databases. Team members should possess strong computers skills. Duties associated with this team can be performed remotely, and volunteers do not need to reside in the local area. Team lead: Kim Lehman ([kiml@nmdr.org](mailto:kiml@nmdr.org)).
- 8) Volunteer Orientation Team: Team members lead Volunteer Orientation Training, to include providing the initial volunteer briefing, conducting a tour of NMDR facilities as part of orientation, providing basic training on handling dogs, providing an overview of all operating procedures, etc. Team members must have exemplary communications skills, must possess outstanding customer service skills, and must have an in-depth understanding of NMDR history and policy and procedures. Team lead: Kim Lehman ([kiml@nmdr.org](mailto:kiml@nmdr.org)).
- 9) Lost Dogs Team: Team members assist with finding adopted or fostered dogs who have escaped from their homes. Team members are often required to cover several miles on foot when searching for lost dogs. In addition, team members must be able to remain calm under pressure, and must have the ability to work as part of a cohesive team. Team lead: Christi Pate ([christip@nmdr.org](mailto:christip@nmdr.org)).

When you are at the kennel and in need of guidance, please ask the POC. They are always willing to help out a new volunteer! If you ever have any concerns, questions or ideas please contact the Chief Operating Officer, Chuck Arnold, at [chucka@nmdr.org](mailto:chucka@nmdr.org), the Director of Kennel Operations, Kim Lehman at [kiml@nmdr.org](mailto:kiml@nmdr.org), or Christi Pate at Customer Service (719) 445-6787 or via e-mail at [customerservice@nmdr.org](mailto:customerservice@nmdr.org)

### **Key contact information for NMDR**

Kennel Address: Lily's Haven 5335 JD Johnson Rd. Peyton CO 80831-7316	Mailing Address: National Mill Dog Rescue P.O. Box 88468 Colorado Springs CO 80908	Website: <a href="http://milldogrescue.org">milldogrescue.org</a> E-mail: <a href="mailto:customerservice@nmdr.org">customerservice@nmdr.org</a>
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