

# DETROIT BULLY CORPS



VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

## Welcome to Detroit Bully Corps, we are excited to have **Volunteer Commitment Contract**

You are such an important part of the overall wellbeing of the dogs we rescue. Without the communities help, we would not be able to help the dogs as we do. This volunteer handbook will serve as your guide for policies, procedures and rules within Detroit Bully Corps.

We encourage you to ask questions. We want everyone to be comfortable and understand that not everyone has the same skill set or knowledge.

### **OUR MISSION STATEMENT**

Detroit Bully Corps is a grassroots, nonprofit organization of responsible pit bull owners and enthusiasts. Our mission is to promote responsible ownership of what used to be "The American Family Dog." We have identified a need for education in animal abuse and breed awareness due to the tremendous number of events of animal abuse and dog fighting in Michigan. Dog fighting is a growing problem throughout the country largely because the laws for this need to be changed and there is no funding to police for it appropriately. Currently, the penalties for these crimes are minimal. We need reform in our laws for these crimes and changes from the people in the community, specifically the youth.

Our goals include awareness, advocacy work, fundraising and informing the public of the prejudice to this breed that the media, irresponsible owners and breeders have created upon one of the most loyal dogs a family could ever have as a member of their pack. We do what we can to help save pit bulls by donations from the community. We look to fight breed specific laws and show that they do not work. DBC works to inform the public of the truth there are not bad dogs, just bad owners! Education and awareness is a must if the bully breeds are to have half a chance of survival.

Only 1 in every 600 pit bulls in shelters and rescue groups will find a home, the other 599 don't. With staggering numbers like that, why breed? Spay and neuter your dogs right away, there is no excuse not to. We have a standing relationship with the Michigan Humane Society Anti Cruelty Division, developed specifically to address the animal abuse problem in our cities. We are hoping to get involved in the education programs within the community. We just try to do our part in helping the most misunderstood and abused breed. **FIGHT ABUSE NOT DOGS!**

### **OUR POLICIES**

Any and all dogs in our program will be housed at The Country Dog Inn, a boarding kennel. We cannot take in every dog we get a plea to help. We try and assist in finding a new home through networking. A joint mutual decision is made between Bill and Missi Bellottie for any dog entering our rescue.

All of our dogs are kept separate from other animals for a minimum of 30 days from the time of entering the rescue.

As a volunteer, you have two important distinctions to make, Opinion vs. Policy and Emotion vs. Fact. Dealing with animals is filled with emotion. Emotion, along with personal opinion can often become a problem. When opinions instead of facts are offered, usually with good intentions, it is often not to the actual benefit of the animals. The problem with misplaced good intentions is that it is often accompanied by the "I am the exception" and the "that has nothing to do with me" condition.

Never be embarrassed to say "I do not know." Providing inaccurate information and/or opinions can actually do more harm for the organization and the dogs. Pit bulls already have such a media and public stigma that discussions and representations of the breed must be handled with care and knowledge.

All volunteers are **REQUIRED** to complete a basic volunteer training session if the activity chosen requires it. It is important that you understand your duties. Any questions you might have will be answered by the Corps member conducting your training. We want you to feel comfortable with your volunteer duties and be knowledgeable when

asked questions by the general public. If after the training session, we do not feel comfortable with your abilities, additional training may be required.

Rescue dogs are not the same as your family pet. It is easy to misinterpret what they are telling us. When a dog licks the muzzle of another dog, it is a sign of submission from a dog within a pack. Pushing a dominant dog to give a kiss or to receive a hug may be asking for a nip. Hugging a dog tells him that you are dominant. Your dog at home might accept your behavior, while a strange dog may see your behavior as a challenge.

## **TRAINING**

Before beginning your wonderful journey with DBC, certain teams require a Volunteer Training Session which is scheduled as needed. These are for activities that involve ANY handling of a dog. The classes will last 1-2 hours. During this training, you will be instructed on information needed to properly handle dogs. We will demonstrate how to properly collar and leash the dogs. We will also explain corrections and commands used, as well as what to do if you do have a problem. Always use caution when dealing with the dogs. Never get too relaxed, you may be doing the right thing but someone else may not be and you need to be able to protect and correct the dog you are handling. Be alert to your surroundings. Be aware of what each dog is telling you. If you pick up signs that a dog is nervous or fearful, remove him from the situation immediately.

## **BITE PREVENTION**

One of the most important things to remember is to take **ALL** necessary precautions to avoid getting bitten by a dog. There is no reason a volunteer should ever approach any dog that is displaying signs of fear or aggression. If a dog displaying these signals needs to be handled for whatever reason, only Corps members should handle this animal. Accidents do happen. Sometimes animals bite without any warning signs. Volunteers should immediately take precautions if they notice any signs of fear or aggression. Most animals need several days to adjust to being in a new environment. Even once they do adjust, they would still not necessarily act ordinarily. Only walk dogs that display the signs of a relaxed dog. If a dog doesn't look happy at the prospect of going for a walk when you approach the cage, leave him alone and try again tomorrow.

**REMEMBER!** Bite wounds and scratches are very painful and can get badly infected.

Procedure to follow if you do get bit or scratched:

Notify a staff member immediately

Wash wound with soap and water,

Apply antibiotic ointment,

Cover wound with bandage,

Seek medical attention, antibiotics may be necessary

Make sure the Corps member is informed and a report completed.

**WE WANT TO ENSURE BITES DO NOT HAPPEN BY PROPERLY TRAINING HANDLERS AND DOGS.**

## **DRESS CODE**

Wear comfortable clothing that you don't mind getting wet and dirty. Wear closed toed, secure shoes. Grounds may often be wet, please wear appropriate shoes with good rubber soles that provide some protection from slipping and injury to the foot. Do not wear loose jewelry that may become tangled or caught in doors or by an animal. **Do not wear electronic** devices around the animals. They are a distraction to you and may become damaged from water or an animal knocking them off. Dress with your duties for the day in mind.

## CONDUCT

As a volunteer, you are a representative of Detroit Bully Corps. When involved in our events you are expected to present a good image of the organization at all times. This includes language. Please be respectful of our attendants as well as your fellow volunteers. If you disagree with someone, another volunteer, potential adopter, sponsor or event attendee, please refer the matter to the event coordinator. It is unacceptable to act unprofessionally at any time while representing Detroit Bully Corps at an event.

## DISMISSAL

Volunteers who do not adhere to the rules, regulations, policies and procedures of the department or who fail to satisfactorily perform their volunteer duties are subject to dismissal. All dogs with Detroit Bully Corps are to be treated kindly, professionally and with respect. Any failure to adhere to this policy will result in termination of volunteer service with Detroit Bully Corps.

As a volunteer, you are responsible for the safety and control of any Detroit Bully Corps rescue dogs you are handling.

### **As a Volunteer, I have the right to:**

- Be treated with respect
- Know whether my work is effective and how it can be improved
- Be given appropriate recognition for my contribution
- To decline ANY situation or working with any dog that makes me feel uncomfortable.

### **As a Volunteer, I am responsible for:**

- The safety of all animals and people in my work area
- Making suggestions and recommendations for improvements
- Asking for help when necessary
- Accepting the right of Detroit Bully Corps to dismiss me at any time for poor performance, poor attendance or the violation of any rules and regulations.
- Disclosure of any criminal convictions or any pending prosecution.
- Maintaining the confidentiality of any information or knowledge that may be written, heard or observed while volunteering with Detroit Bully Corps

Angels are special volunteers who may not be able to adopt a certain dog, but go the distance to see that an animal is well cared for. Our angels visit our dogs, help pay for vet bills, and often bring treats and toys to them. Detroit Bully Corps and the dogs are blessed to have some of these special people.

**I have read the Volunteer Commitment Contract and I am committed to making a positive difference with Detroit Bully Corps, therefore, I agree with all of the terms outlined above.**

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Print Name

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Date

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Signature

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Date

# Getting Started

Dog handling/Training Orientation

How to Handle dogs in DBC rescue:

( ) Explain how to introduce two dogs

\_\_\_\_\_ both animals are to remain on leashes at **ALL** times

\_\_\_\_\_ never let a citizen have control of the shelter dog

\_\_\_\_\_ watch for leashes becoming tangled

\_\_\_\_\_ look for warning signs the dog/dogs may give off

\_\_\_\_\_ what to do if a fight occurs