

Happy Dogs
Koh Chang



VOLUNTEER
INFORMATION



ABOUT US

Happy Dogs Koh Chang was founded in 2012 to support in helping and saving the island's stray dogs. We feed and provide care to over 200 street dogs a day & currently have two dog shelters on Koh Chang Island, Thailand.

'The Safe House' & 'The Sanctuary of Hope'

At these two shelters we have between 15-30 dogs each, who were rescued from the streets by Martina the founder and owner of Happy Dogs Koh Chang. It will be your responsibility as a volunteer to provide love and care to these special dogs in our shelters.

In this document you will find all the necessary information about becoming a volunteer with Happy Dogs and what it entails. Please read the information thoroughly to help you to decide if volunteering with our organisation is the right choice for you.



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VOLUNTEER BENEFITS

In return for volunteering with our organisation we provide



ACCOMMODATION

We provide accommodation to our volunteers at both shelters.
The accommodation differs between the two:

THE SANCTUARY OF HOPE

'The Sanctuary' accommodation is off site, just a short 2 minute walk away from The Sanctuary. Located in 'Klong Prao' the busy area of the island.

Simple clean fan room with en-suite bathrooms attached, located in a 2 story apartment house. The kitchen is at The Sanctuary and you will need to walk over to use.

We have two rooms for volunteers, suitable for couples, friends and singles. Singles may have to share a room with another volunteer of the same sex depending on how many volunteers we have at the given time.

THE SAFE HOUSE

'The Safe House' accommodation is based on-site and you will be living with the dogs. Located in 'Klong Son' a quieter area of the island surrounded by beautiful mountains and rivers.

The accommodation is a big modern house that you will share with other volunteers. It has 3 bedrooms, all with an ensuite bathroom attached. The house has a big kitchen which is shared between volunteers. Beautiful rooftop hangout area with 360 degree mountain views.

Each room can accommodate 2 people. Suitable for couples, friends and singles. Singles may have to share a room with another volunteer of the same sex depending on how many volunteers we have at the given time.



TRANSPORT

We have a regular motorbike and 'salang' (motorbike with sidecar) for volunteers to share at both locations.

Mountain bikes can be provided on request for volunteers who cannot drive a motorbike.



INTERNET

We provide fast unlimited wifi at both locations for our volunteers to use and enjoy during their free time.

Happy Dogs
Koh Chang



VOLUNTEER REQUIREMENTS

Here at Happy Dogs we are searching for genuine dog lovers.
We host people from all walks of life, if you can show love to our animals, you are welcome!

WHAT WE LOOK FOR IN A VOLUNTEER



Enthusiastic dog lover that is comfortable and confident around dogs



Common sense and problem solving skills are essential



Experience caring for & living with dogs



Responsible, reliable & hardworking who doesn't mind getting dirty.



Initiative & proactive, having the ability to do things without having to be told



Can help and care for the dogs in a team environment as well as independently



Warning this volunteering experience is not for people who are scared of dogs and don't genuinely love spending time with them.

FITNESS

A reasonable level of physical fitness is required to be a volunteer. You need to be fit enough to go for multiple walks a day with the dogs. Keep in mind the weather is hot and humid. Must be comfortable to lift 15kg. Often you will need to pick up and lift dogs to give them a bath or sometimes lift them up if they get spooked by something on a walk.

AGE

We generally only accept volunteers 25+ however exceptions can be made for the right, responsible, trustworthy & mature people.

COMMITMENT

We require a **minimum stay and commitment of 3-4 weeks from all our volunteers.** However some volunteers choose to stay with us for months. We have this minimum timeframe as it takes time to teach new volunteers as well as the dogs benefit most when around people for a longer time, this gives them time to bond, gain trust and develop a connection with you.
Once you have committed to coming, we and the dogs rely on you.

Happy Dogs
Koh Chang



DAILY TASKS

While everyday is different, these are a few tasks you can expect to do each day.



Preparing food and feeding the dogs & giving daily medications.



Picking up dog poop.



Multiple daily walks



General cleaning & household chores



Washing dog bowls.



Washing dogs



Refilling water bowls.



Training & socialising the dogs



Light gardening



Settling the dogs when barking

Everyday is different and comes with new challenges. We trust our volunteers to have initiative and be proactive. There's a variety of things to do to keep busy and have a fun time during your stay.



VOLUNTEERING SCHEDULE



Volunteers help out 5 days a week, working either a **MORNING** or **AFTERNOON** shift. This leaves the other half of the day free to enjoy as well as 2 full day off per week.

For example if you work the morning shift you would then have the full afternoon free and vice versa. Volunteers find this is a good balance of free time and time spent with the dogs.

The shifts are shared equally, with a minimum 2 people per shift when possible. We try organise shifts a week ahead of time so volunteers can make the most of their free time here on the island. Shifts can change depending on which shelter you are at and the different needs of each shelter at different times. There always has to be at least one person at the shelters at all times, so the dogs are never left unattended so there is always someone there in case of an emergency.



NIGHT SHIFT

We ask our volunteers to do a night shift once or twice a week, this shift may sound daunting at first but it's an easy shift, and you still get to enjoy your sleep. You simply have to get up and quiet the dogs if you hear barking during the night, this means volunteers and our neighbours get a good night's sleep every night.

Night shift is slightly different at each shelter

THE SAFE HOUSE

During night shift you will need to stay at home with the dogs and hangout with them until you go to bed. If there is barking during the night you will need to go check on the dogs and quiet them down.

THE SANCTUARY OF HOPE

Night shift may or may not be required depending on volunteer numbers at the time. Sometimes we have long term volunteers who sleep in the bedroom on-site of the shelter so night shift is not required. If required you will need to spend 1-2 nights a week sleeping onsite at the Sanctuary and check on the dogs if you hear barking.



SHELTER RULES

We have a few rules in our shelters to keep our dogs and volunteers safe and happy, if you decide to join us you will need to follow these rules.



Absolutely **NO** drugs at the shelters. **NO** alcohol while on shift. We need our volunteers to be in a clear headspace while working with the dogs.



No using the shared motorbikes while under the influence of drugs or alcohol. If you have an accident on one of our motorbikes **you need to organise and pay for the repairs.**



Keeping your room and shared spaces clean and tidy. Cleaning up after yourself, being polite and mindful that you will be sharing a space with other volunteers.



Curfew, We understand and want our volunteers to enjoy themselves in their free time however this is not a suitable place for party people! Your priority while you stay with us at Happy Dogs should be the dogs. If you intend to be out past 11:00pm please seek alternative accommodation for the night. Please be mindful of the fact that you live and share a space with others. You will wake up the dogs if coming come late, the barking will wake up other volunteers and will likely wake up the neighbours too.



No sitting around on phones or laptops while on shift. Your **ON** shift time should be dedicated to helping the dogs and the shelter.



NO smoking in the house or bedrooms. Use one of our verandas outside. You need to be a mindful and polite smoker. Cleaning out ash trays often and keep them out of dogs' reach. You need to keep some space between you and the dogs while smoking as dogs exposed to secondhand smoke are prone to eye infections, allergies, and respiratory issues including lung cancer.



DAMAGE DEPOSIT

We ask all volunteers to give a deposit of **2000 Thai Baht** on their arrival day. This money will be returned to you on your departure date if you respect the guidelines.

Your deposit will **NOT** be returned if you do not follow the guidelines below.



DRUGS + ALCOHOL

No bringing drugs into the shelter or shelter accommodations. You cannot be under the influence of any substance while on shift. No smoking in non-smoking areas of accommodation such as the bedrooms/bathrooms.



DISCRIMINATION

We believe in equality for all and have zero tolerance policy for any type of discrimination. This includes but is not limited to racism, sexism, homophobia and transphobia. If you are caught discriminating against anyone you will be asked to leave immediately and your deposit will not be returned.



DAMAGE

Damaging the shelter or shared motorbikes without taking responsibility to cover the damages.



EARLY DEPARTURE

If you decide to leave for any reason before the minimum 3 week timeframe you agreed upon you will forfeit your deposit. It takes a great deal of time and effort to organise and train new volunteers. If you choose to leave early you will let down the staff and the dogs. This leaves Happy Dogs in a difficult position as it's very hard to organise last minute volunteers to replace you.



If your deposit is not returned due to any of the reasons stated the money will go directly to the dogs under Happy Dogs care.

Happy Dogs
Koh Chang



DISCIPLINE



When you arrive at Happy Dogs, our adorable friendly dogs will be happy to meet you with a few shy exceptions. You will need to be patient and remember that you are a new member joining into their existing pack. Some have traumatic backgrounds, so this can be a scary experience for them.

Once the doggies are comfortable with you you will need to assert your dominance over them so that they know you are in charge and the boss when they are being naughty. **This means not being afraid to tell them NO when necessary ect.** This is incredibly important otherwise they will continue to act out and not show any respect towards you.

The dogs may try to 'test' their dominance with you during your first few days here. This means they might act out, stealing each other's food, barking more than usual and sometimes fighting with each other. This is because you are a new member joining their existing "pack" and they don't yet respect you, that will change once you show some authority. It may feel overwhelming at first but once you win over their love, and they respect you they will all be extremely loving, loyal and obedient!



Telling the dogs loudly NO or STOP
Splashing them with water
Getting close & calming them down
with pats ect when barking



We NEVER discipline the dogs by hitting them or throwing things at them; we never want them physically harmed. Some already have trust issues from traumatic experiences with humans and we never want to make this worse.

Happy Dogs
Koh Chang



HOW FAR AWAY IS EVERYTHING?

Here you will find a helpful guide to how far away everything is located from our two shelters



THE SAFE HOUSE



THE SANCTUARY OF HOPE

LOCAL MARKETS & RESTAURANTS & STREET FOOD & 7-11	5 minutes by motorbike 10 minutes by push bike 20 minutes by walking	1 minutes by motorbike 1 minutes by push bike 2 minutes by walking
CLOSEST BEACH	7-10 minutes by motorbike 20 minutes by push bike 40 minutes walking	5 minutes by motorbike 7 minutes by push bike 10 minutes walking
CLOSEST WATERFALL	5 minutes by motorbike 15 minutes by push bike 30 minutes walking	5 minutes by motorbike 15 minutes by push bike 25 minutes walking
BUSY AREAS OF THE ISLAND	15 minutes by motorbike Not suitable for riding a push bike or walking	1 minutes by motorbike 2 minutes by push bike 5 minutes by walking
SUPERMARKET & PHARMACY	15-20 minutes by motorbike Not suitable for riding a push bike or walking	30 seconds by motorbike 1 minute by push bike 2 minutes walking
FERRY TO MAINLAND	7 minutes by motorbike 35 minutes by push bike (steep hill) 45 minutes walking (steep hill)	25 minutes by motorbike Not suitable to walk or ride push bikes.
HOSPITAL	20 minutes by motorbike Not suitable for riding a push bike or walking	10 minutes by motorbike Not suitable for riding a push bike or walking

Happy Dogs
Koh Chang



LOCATION

The Happy Dogs Koh Chang Shelters are located on the beautiful island of Koh Chang Thailand, just a five hour drive from Bangkok.

The two shelters are in different areas of the island.



THE SAFE HOUSE

The Safe House is located in Klong Son, a quiet local area of the island surrounded by beautiful mountains, river and jungle. A quiet place where you can enjoy the serenity and be just a short drive away from beaches, restaurants, street food, waterfalls and supermarkets.



THE SANCTUARY OF HOPE

The Sanctuary is located in the busier more central area of the island, Klong Prao. Walking distance from beaches, supermarkets, street food and more.



Please remember we are located in Thailand nearby the jungle, this means occasionally we have a few unwanted animal visitors.

If you have a phobia or fear of insects and reptiles this is not the right place for you.



NOTICE TO THOSE WHO CANNOT DRIVE A MOTORBIKE

The island is very mountainous so only certain parts of the island are suitable for riding a push bike and walking. Ideally volunteers are able to drive a motorbike as it is one of the easiest and best ways to see the island. **The Sanctuary of Hope** is more suitable for those who cannot ride a motorbike due to the fact that it is located in a very central area of the island, walking distance to the beach, street food, supermarkets ect.

The Safe House is located in a more remote area of the island, if you cannot ride a motorbike it is still possible to volunteer at this location but can be more challenging for yourself and other volunteers. Many of the tasks required you to be able to ride a motorbike such as taking the trash out, refilling drinking water etc. You will need to make up for not being able to do these tasks by doing other jobs so the workload is even for everyone volunteering.

We can provide you with a push bike which you can use to visit the closest beach, waterfall, and the local markets, restaurants and 7-11. To get to further away parts of the island you will need to use public transport (songthaews) these are sometimes irregular but run about once an hour from 7/11 about a 20 minute walk away. You can also ask if you can tag along with other volunteers who can drive, **but please don't rely on this. Please keep this in mind if you choose to volunteer at this location and cannot ride a motorbike.**



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



Is there a minimum age requirement?

We generally only accept volunteers 25+ however exceptions can be made for the right, responsible mature people.



Do I need to have any vaccinations?

Koh Chang has been Rabies free since 2004, and all our dogs get regular vaccinations so it is not necessary to have a rabies shot. We do recommend you are up to date with your tetanus shots.



Do you provide food for volunteers?

No sorry, as we are a non profit organisation we unfortunately do not have the funding to provide food to volunteers. Our funding goes directly towards the dogs under our care for food and medical care. However the local markets and restaurants are very affordable.



What is the weather like?

Koh Chang weather consists of 2 seasons

Dry season - November to May, you can expect sun almost everyday with cool refreshing breeze some evenings.
The rainy season - May to the end of October, you can expect a mix of rainy days along with some sunshine too.



What should I pack and wear?

Comfortable clothes for hot humid weather that you can easily move in and can get dirty.

Comfortable walking shoes

Mosquito repellent

Hat & Sunscreen

Happy Dogs
Koh Chang



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



Do you offer any training?

Our organisation is volunteer run, so on arrival other volunteers (if available) will give you the basic training and teach you everything you need to know. Common sense and problem solving skills is essential.



Is there a minimum requirement for volunteering?

Yes we require a minimum 3 week minimum commitment no exceptions.



I am a digital nomad and work online, can I work and volunteer at the same time?

Yes many of our volunteers work online while volunteering. You will need to organise your time well and please consider that we ask you not to work your online job while on shift with the dogs. You will need to work during your spare and free time.



Do I need to bring anything for the dogs?

The dogs will be happy with just your company, however if you would like to bring something special for them you are most welcome to. Treats, food, toys and other supplies such as leads, collars ect are gratefully accepted.



Are people with children allowed to volunteer?

Sorry, no. We do not accept families as many of our dogs are still in training and it's not a safe environment for children.



What's there to do in my free time?

There are many things to do on the island during your free time, beaches, rivers, waterfalls, mangroves and trekking are just a few of the many things you can see while exploring around the island.

Happy Dogs
Koh Chang



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



I don't have any experience with dogs can i still volunteer?

We need people who are comfortable and confident around dogs, this is not the right environment for people who have never cared or lived with dogs before. We need people who understand basic dog behavior or are willing to learn.



Do your dogs bite?

Although some dogs are friendlier than others, any dog is capable of biting, regardless of its breed or size. Even the nicest dog may snap or bite when it's injured, afraid or feels threatened. It's important to understand dog body language and the fact that most dogs show specific warning signs before biting. These include growling, snapping, raised fur, a rigid posture, and rapid tail wagging. If you are aware of these signs it's incredibly unlikely any of our doggies will try bite.



Do I need specific skills to volunteer?

No, you don't need any specific skills to volunteer, as long as you are a serious dog lover, comfortable around dogs and have common sense we would love to have you join us. If you do have a specific skill such as a vet, dog trainer, photographer, website designer, builder etc. Please let us know when applying, we always need help in these areas



I don't ride a motorbike but want to learn, can someone teach me while i volunteer?

We provide mountain bikes on request to volunteers who cannot ride a motorbike. If you would like to learn you can ask another volunteer to teach you if they are comfortable to do so. Please remember any damage to the motorbike if an accident occurs will need to be paid for by you the driver. If you are injured we are not liable and recommend all volunteers have travel insurance that covers them riding a motorbike.



Is volunteering free?

Yes volunteering with us at Happy Dogs is completely free, all you need to pay for is your transport to the island, food and any other extras you need during your stay. However most volunteers generously choose to leave a donation of their choice to Happy Dogs when they depart to help us continue what we are doing. However this is at your discretion and entirely up to you.

Happy Dogs
Koh Chang



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



I want to volunteer but I have a dog. Can I bring it?

Unfortunately no, it's very difficult to bring new dogs into our dogs "territory". Long term applicants (over 2 months we can try to organise something but cannot make any promises)



I'm coming to the island but don't have enough time to volunteer, can I still visit?

Yes. You are welcome to visit both of our shelters, by appointment only.



Are the dogs available for adoption overseas ?

Yes. All our dogs are available for adoption within Thailand and Internationally. Many of our past volunteers have fallen in love with our Safe House dogs and taken them back home with them. Please get in contact if you would like more details . We have lots of experience handling international adoptions and it's a relatively easy and affordable process depending on the country.



Can you provide me with a volunteer visa?

Unfortunately no, we are unable to help with attaining a volunteer visa as our organisation is not owned by a Thai person which unfortunately is a requirement of obtaining the 'Volunteer visa' you would need to get a different type of visa. All our volunteers usually get a normal tourist visa.



I want to volunteer, but i don't want to stay in the provided accommodation. I want to organise my own accommodation off site is it possible?

Yes you can still volunteer with us even if you are not staying in one of our shelters. We always need people to help walk and care for our dogs. We prefer if you can still commit to 3 weeks as some dogs need more time to develop a bond with you.