Self-Guided Tour Packet

This packet is designed to provide individuals, families, and small groups information about our Adoption Centers and the animals we place for adoption. To best utilize this packet, we suggest you start by reviewing the “Safety Guidelines” with your group. Use the enclosed map to find the 5 stations on the property that correspond to the animal information sheets in your packet. The first station is our rabbit adoption room, found to the left of the front door of the Boston Animal Care and Adoption Center. As you visit each animal adoption area, you can learn more about our animals and why they come to the MSPCA by reading the related sheets.

We hope you enjoy your visit, and have a safe and fun learning experience!

Packet Contents:
- Safety Guidelines
- All about the MSPCA
- 5 Station Sheets with Animal Information

Boston Animal Care and Adoption Center
- Rabbits
- Cats
- Dogs
- Small Mammals
- Birds
- Wish List
Safety Guidelines

➤ There is a lot of traffic on the property, from cars going up and down the driveway to the adoption center. Be mindful of your surroundings and keep your group together.

➤ Animals are constantly moving in and out of the adoption center and the hospital next door. Be cautious and give plenty of room to these animals.

➤ Please keep in mind that you are visiting a working animal shelter and not a petting zoo. Animals should not be touched or fed. If you would like to handle an animal, you must ask a staff or volunteer.

➤ Do not approach dogs being walked on the property without asking a staff person or volunteer for permission. The dogs you see outside may be here for surrender, and have unpredictable behavior. We want everyone to have a safe experience while at the MSPCA.

➤ People come to our facility for a variety of reasons including animal surrenders, euthanasia requests, and adoptions. Please keep this in mind when visiting the adoption centers.
All about the MSPCA-Angell

One of the first humane organizations in America, founded shortly after the Civil War, the MSPCA-Angell has seen vast changes in society, the environment, and the roles of animals in our lives. It has helped make laws and set standards that have fundamentally shaped our sense of kindness and care for animals - and for one another.

In 1868, George Thorndike Angell, a Boston lawyer, founded the MSPCA and became its first president on March 23. Mr. Angell founded the MSPCA after reading about an instance of cruelty in which two horses -- each bearing two riders over 40 miles of rough roads -- were raced to death.

Angell's high-profile protest of the deadly race was joined by influential Bostonian Emily Appleton, and in less than a month 1,200 citizens banded together to shape a new anticruelty group -- the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (MSPCA).

Today, the MSPCA-Angell continues to rescue, shelter, protect, heal, and advocate for more animals than any other American humane organization, giving hands-on care to many thousands of animals each year. We also provide emergency assistance and strategic-planning help for animal-protection groups across the country and around the globe. Through our legislative work, humane-education efforts, and community-based assistance initiatives, we help create lasting change for animals and people.

The MSPCA moved to our current location at 350 South Huntington Avenue in 1976. In 2005, construction began in Boston on the new Helen Schmidt Stanton Clinical Center, the first piece of the MSPCA's Capital Campaign for Angell Animal Medical Center and the Boston Animal Care and Adoption Center, "A New Front Door to Compassion and Care. Each year, the dedicated and professional staff at the Boston Animal Care and Adoption Center cares for nearly 6,000 unwanted and homeless dogs, cats, rabbits and other small animals. We not only provide for their safety and well-being, but also serve as a community resource for hundreds of weekly visitors.

We are skilled at finding the right match between animal companions and new families. The staff offers counseling on animal behavior, training and support. We work with local breed rescue groups, other shelters and more than 100 volunteer foster families to find lifelong homes for animals in need.
Station a. Rabbits

On the left as you enter the front door of the Boston MSPCA Animal Care and Adoption Center

Safety Considerations:
Rabbits are prey animals and easily startled, so please use a low-volume voice when in our rabbit room and do not tap on the glass. No fingers in the cages, please.

Ask a staff or volunteer before handling any of the rabbits at the MSPCA adoption center.

Rabbits at the MSPCA:
- A common reason for surrender is because the family “lost interest”.
- Our rabbit room is at the front of the building because most people don’t realize we adopt out rabbits or that they can be as engaging and fun as cats and dogs.
- We spay or neuter all of our rabbits because they reproduce very quickly and are prone to reproductive cancers when intact (not spayed or neutered).
- Rabbits have a specialized diet of timothy hay, supplemented with vegetables.
- It is safer for rabbits to live indoors, where they are protected from weather and predators.
- Rabbits can be litter box trained!

Best Home:
- Rabbits don’t require a lot of space, but they do need socialization and exercise.
- Rabbit owners should have a hazard-free area in their home where their rabbit can exercise outside of its cage for at least 30 minutes a day.
- The main cost in owning a rabbit is the cost of food and bedding.
- Rabbits can be great pets for adults and children, as long as there is an understanding that the commitment to a rabbit lasts the rabbit’s lifetime: often longer than ten years. Even after the novelty wears off, your rabbit will still need a caring home!

Ways to Help Rabbits at the MSPCA:
- Adopt a rabbit!
- Donate Wish List items: timothy hay-based rabbit food, toys (hard plastic baby keys), large wooden houses, fresh vegetables and fruit (dandelion greens, kale, romaine lettuce, carrots, apples, strawberry tops).
- Educate members of the community about proper pet rabbit care, the rabbit overpopulation problem, and the importance of spay/neuter.
**Station b. Cats**

The Second door on your left at the Boston MSPCA Animal Care and Adoption Center

**Safety Considerations:**
Cats are predators and very well equipped to defend themselves with sharp claws and teeth. No fingers in the cages, please.

**Ask a staff or volunteer before handling any of the cats at the MSPCA adoption center.**

**Cats at the MSPCA:**
- We took in 2,700 cats in 2013; almost 1/2 were surrendered as strays.
- Stray cats are owned cats that have been lost, abandoned, or free-roaming and not reclaimed.
- It is very important that all cats (even indoor) wear collars and ID tags.
- Less than 2% of cats without ID (collars or microchips) are reunited with their owners.
- Our cat room is at the front of the animal shelter because we take in more cats than any other animal at the shelter and we want to highlight them.
- Spay/neuter is very important: intact cats can have as many as 5 litters in one year.
- Cats are safest when housed indoors. Cats with access to the outdoors are exposed to many dangers, including traffic, wildlife, loose dogs, bad weather, and cat viruses.
- The claws of a cat serve a very useful purpose for the animal, so we discourage declawing cats.

**Best Home:**
- Cats can be an ideal pet for a busier family because they can be home alone for longer periods of time than a dog.
- Cats need attention and socialization to ensure that they are friendly and well-adjusted.
- Families with curious cats and kittens need to be especially careful to keep harmful items out of their cat’s reach and provide them with safe toys and scratching posts.
- Cats can be great pets for adults and children, as long as there is an understanding that the commitment to a cat can last as long as 20 years! Consider an adult cat!

**Ways to Help Cats at the MSPCA:**
- Adopt a cat!
- Donate Wish List items: high quality canned and pouch wet food, nail trimmers, washable toys, gently used or new scratching posts and carriers, clay litter.
- Educate members of the community about proper pet cat care, the cat overpopulation problem, and the importance of spay/neuter.
- Keep your cat indoors and put a break-away collar and ID tag on your cat (a microchip is a great idea, too!)- encourage friends and neighbors to do the same.
Station c. Dogs

Once in the Boston MSPCA, walk through the front lobby through the glass door labeled “Dogs” and then take a right through another glass door to take you to the dog adoption floor.

Safety Considerations:
Most of our dogs are very social animals, but being in a kennel tends to make them more stressed than they would be in a home environment. It is important that no one put their fingers in the cages or tap on the glass on our dog “homeroom” doors. If a dog barks at you or your children, please just walk away.

Visitors are not allowed to open dog kennels, and only visitors interested in potentially adopting a dog are allowed to take the dog on a walk.

Dogs at the MSPCA:
- We took in nearly 1,000 dogs in 2013, surrendered for a variety of reasons.
- Dogs surrendered in the 6 month to 1 year age range are often brought in because the owners did not anticipate the time and energy involved in training a young dog.
- About ¼ of the dogs surrendered to us are purebred, and about ¼ of them are pit bulls.
- We take thorough profiles on dogs and do comprehensive behavior assessments to help us determine the most suitable adoptive home.
- Most dogs have been bred for a job, including hunting, guarding, herding, or retrieving. This is an important consideration to make in choosing a dog for a pet.
- Dogs are pack animals, which makes them great companions. Pet dogs need plenty of daily exercise, toys and play, and “downtime” with their family.
- Our training classes use marker-based training protocols. This is different from correction-based training in that it sets up a system of reward for desired behaviors rather than punishment for unwanted behaviors.
- Dogs should always wear appropriately fitted collars with ID tags. Dogs should always be on leash in public areas for their safety and the public’s safety. We microchip all of our dogs.

Best Home:
- Dogs require patience, kindness, and companionship.
- All dogs need regular grooming, including nail trims, baths, and brushing, as well as yearly vet exams & distemper and rabies vaccines.
- Families with limited time or space should consider dog ownership carefully. For example, a high energy dog or a puppy is not the best choice for a family frequently away from home.

Ways to Help Dogs at the MSPCA:
- Adopt a dog!
- Donate Wish List items: high quality canned food, durable and washable toys, gently used or new dog beds and crates, Kong toys, peanut butter, string cheese, hot dogs, dog treats.
- Educate members of the community about proper pet dog care, the dog overpopulation problem, and the importance of spay/neuter.
- Practice safe habits with your dog. Train her, keep her safe, and teach others (especially children) to be safe around her.
Station d. Small Mammals

Once in the Boston MSPCA; walk past the retail area, across from the rabbit adoption area is the Small Animal room.

Safety Considerations:
Most small mammals are prey animals and easily startled, so please use a quiet voice when in our small mammal room and do not tap on the glass. No fingers in the cages, please.

Ask a staff or volunteer before handling any of the small mammals at the MSPCA adoption center.

Small Mammals at the MSPCA:

- Many small mammals are surrendered because “the children lost interest” or because they were an “accidental litter.”
- Our small mammals include ferrets, rats, mice, gerbils, hamsters, guinea pigs, and occasionally we also have hedgehogs, degus, and chinchillas.
- Guinea pigs are similar to rabbits in their biology and behavior.
- Guinea pigs cannot produce their own Vitamin C, so they need supplements (red pepper or vitamins).
- Pocket pets (hamsters, mice, gerbils) need an appropriate cage and method of exercise depending on their size. No spoked wheels for tailed animals!
- It is important to separate males and females to avoid unwanted litters.
- Ferrets became legal pets in MA in 1996. Strict breeding restrictions require that they be sold as already spayed/neutered, de-scented, and rabies vaccinated.
- Ferrets are very curious and playful animals.

Best Home:
- Small mammals are very popular first-time pets, but they still require a commitment from a family.
- Most small mammals need daily cage cleaning and daily handling to keep socialized.
- It is important that parents assume the responsibility of caring for an animal if their child loses interest.

Ways to Help Small Mammals at the MSPCA:
- Adopt one!
- Donate Wish List items: Kaytee Complete Guinea Pig Food, Totally Ferret brand ferret food, Mazuri Hamster and Gerbil food, rat blocks, ferret hammocks, wooden hide boxes, fully enclosed exercise wheels, Vitamin C tablets, and fresh vegetables.
- Educate members of the community about proper small mammal care.
- If someone you know is considering getting a “pocket pet” for a classroom, encourage them to speak to someone at the MSPCA to learn about important considerations.
Station e. Birds

Past the retail area, down the hallway on the left, past the small mammal adoption area, inside the Boston Animal Care and Adoption Center

Safety Considerations:
Some of our birds are not hand-friendly, so no fingers in the cages, please. Their beaks can be very sharp.

Ask a staff or volunteer before handling any of the birds at the MSPCA adoption center.

Birds at the MSPCA:
- We have mostly parakeets, doves, and cockatiels available for adoption, but also finches, canaries, lovebirds, and larger parrots.
- Most birds are considered exotic pets because they are not native to this area and are often brought to the US from South America illegally.
- Many birds like to live in pairs for companionship. Single birds must be socialized to avoid boredom, and will often attach to one person.
- Many larger parrots live for 70+ years. Smaller birds can live 10-20 years.
- Ideal bird cage dimensions depend on the bird. Many birds need a variety of perches and nesting materials in their cage. Most birds need regular exercise out of the cage.

Best Home:
- Birds are popular apartment pets because they are generally caged.
- Many larger birds can live a long time, so adoption should be carefully considered.
- Both can be great pets for an individual or family who has the time, commitment, and finances available.
- Hand-taming birds is an art form that requires time and patience.

Ways to Help Birds at the MSPCA:
- Adopt one!
- Donate Wish List items: non-dyed or vegetable-dyed wooden hanging bird toys, parakeet, cockatiel, and parrot food, gently used or new bird cages and wooden perches.
- Educate members of the community about proper bird care.
- Do not buy pet food or supplies from stores that sell birds or reptiles- instead, support adoption centers and retail businesses that only sell supplies.

Thank you for visiting the animals and our adoption center! Please feel free to ask any additional questions you may have to a staff member at the front desk.
Ways to Make a Difference for People and Animals

There are many things you can do at home, in your school or in your neighborhood to help animals in the shelter! Here are some ideas:

- Collect needed items from the Wish Lists. Hold a neighborhood or school collection for blankets, towels, dog and cat toys, collars and leashes and more! (see attached list) Call the shelter to see if there are any special or immediate needs.

- Let your purchasing dollars be heard! Don’t shop at stores that sell pets. Let the stores that only sell supplies know you appreciate them.

- Form a committee at your church, synagogue or club – any organization that brings people together. Get a speaker to educate people about pet overpopulation and other animal issues. Decide what you as a group can do to help animals.

- If you know someone who needs advice on adopting a pet, information on pet care or anything other animal issues, have them call the shelter.

- If you see an animal being abused or neglected, call your local animal control officer or the MSPCA’s Law Enforcement Department for help.

- Put posters up at local stores, your school or place of worship about how to help animals in your community.

- Organize a “Pennies for Pets” program. Collect the money in a canister or jar you create and donate it to the shelter.

- Do your part to end overpopulation by having your pet spayed or neutered. Tell other people to do the same.

- When thinking of adding a pet to your family, adopt one from a shelter. Whether it is a hamster, iguana, rabbit, cat or dog, shelters have a wide variety of animals looking for loving homes like yours!

Contact the MSPCA Shelter in Boston about arranging a school field trip or having someone come talk to your class or group.
Homeless animals need your help!

We always need:

Blankets, washcloths, towels, sheets, soft bedding, canned cat food
no pillows please

For the dogs:
Training Treats
String Cheese, Beef or Chicken Broth, Hot Dogs
Interactive/Hard to Destruct Toys (Kongs, Jolly Balls, Tuff Toys (Pictured to the right etc), etc.
D.A.P. (calming scent release for dogs)

For the cats:
Canned Food – Fancy Feast, Friskies, 9Lives
Feliway-(calming scent release for cats)
Toys (jingle balls, catnip, play mice, wand toys etc.)
Cushy cat beds
Cat Carriers
Litterboxes
Grooming brushes

For the rabbits and small mammals:
Wooden toys or houses
Carefresh Pet Bedding
Rabbit and Small Animal Toys and Treats
Bird Toys and Treats
Highback litter boxes (pictured to right)
Timothy Hay
Please no leafy greens! But would love red peppers, parsley, bananas and apples!

Miscellaneous Supplies:
Hand sanitizer!  Bleach!
White copy paper  Dishwashing liquid
Paper towels  Office supplies, Pens!

Donations accepted at MSPCA Boston Adoption Center
350 South Huntington Ave. Boston MA 02130  www.mspca.org/boston