



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 8 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 Noble Family 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!

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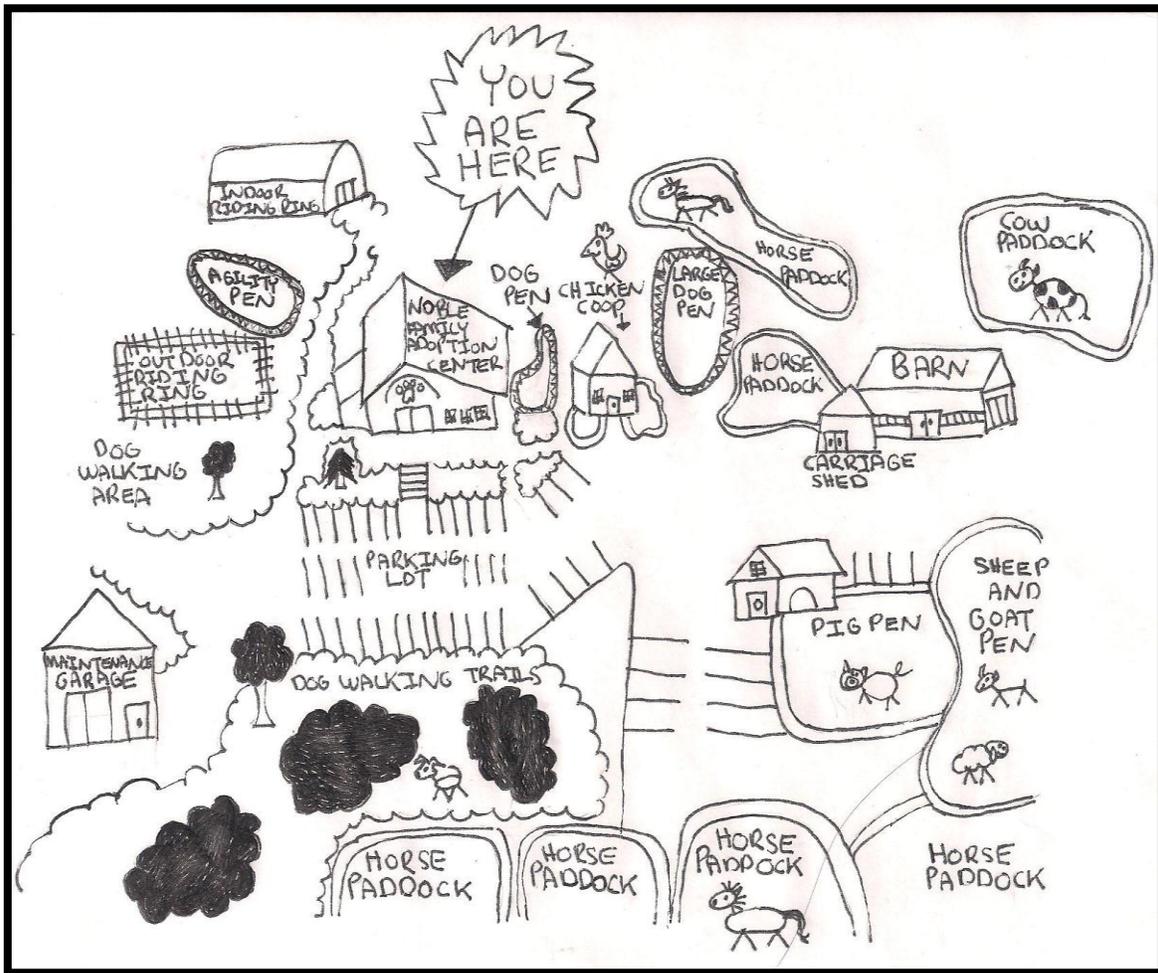
- *Map of Property*
- *Safety Guidelines*
- *All about Nevins Farm*
- *8 Station Sheets with Animal Information*

Noble Family Animal Care and Adoption Center

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- e. Dogs*

Equine and Farm Animal Adoption Centers

- f. Horses*
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Safety Guidelines

- There is a lot of traffic on the property, from cars going up and down the driveway to people and animals in the barn and adoption center. Be mindful of your surroundings and keep your group together.
- Animals are constantly moving in and out of the adoption centers. This includes horses, dogs and goats. Be cautious and give plenty of room to these animals.
- Please keep in mind that you are visiting a working farm 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 or horses 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 Nevins Farm

Mrs. Harriet Nevins donated her farm to the MSPCA in 1917. This act of generosity was the beginning of the MSPCA at Nevins Farm.

The farm was first known as "The Rest Home" and was used for horses who worked on the streets of Boston. To give them relief from the cobblestone streets, these horses would spend time in the rolling pastures of the Nevins Farm. As fewer horses worked on the streets, the role of the farm began to change, but our tradition of compassion and caring has never wavered. Our equine, farm animal, and small animal surrender, adoption, and foster care services are unique in the Northeast. As an open admission animal care and adoption center, we never turn animals away.

The MSPCA at Nevins Farm offers a variety of outreach and education programs, as well as dog training, an equine ambulance program, and Hillside Acre Animal Cemetery, which addresses the needs of animal owners when faced with the loss of their beloved pet.

Our new adoption center was built in 2004, and replaced a building that had been our adoption center since 1924. In fact, the old adoption center housed an adoption area that would have fit entirely inside of our current dog adoption room!

In recent years, we have expanded our farm animal accommodations to include a new chicken coop, an indoor horse riding ring, and a renovated pig enclosure.

Each year, the dedicated and professional staff at the Noble Family Animal Care and Adoption Center cares for nearly 7,000 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.

For horses and farm animals, Nevins Farm offers the opportunity to be adopted by a forever family. The Equine & Farm Animal Care and Adoption Centers at Nevins Farm are working adoption centers for horses and farm animals. Available for adoption are horses, goats, sheep, pigs, chickens, geese, ducks and occasionally cows, donkeys and llamas. The staff and volunteers put a tremendous amount of time and energy into caring for these animals and educating potential adopters about the needs of companion farm animals. Farm animals and horses rescued from abusive and neglectful situations throughout Massachusetts are brought to the MSPCA at Nevins Farm to recuperate and find an adoptive family.

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 Noble Family 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:

- We take in about 300 rabbits each year, many 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

Past the retail area, on the right, inside the Noble Family 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, and no tapping on the glass. **Ask a staff or volunteer before handling any of the cats at the MSPCA adoption center.**

Cats at the MSPCA:

- We take in about 1200 cats a year; almost 1/3 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 break-away 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. Small Mammals

Past the retail area, down the hallway on the right and around the corner, inside the Noble Family Animal Care and Adoption Center

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, 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 d. Birds and Reptiles

Past the retail area, down the hallway on the right and around the corner, inside the Noble Family 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 or reptiles at the MSPCA adoption center.

Birds and Reptiles at the MSPCA:

- We have mostly parakeets, doves, and cockatiels available for adoption, but also finches, canaries, lovebirds, and larger parrots.
- The reptiles we see most frequently include iguanas and Red Slider turtles.
- Most birds and reptiles 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.
- Reptiles need large tanks and heat lamps that are turned on during the daytime.

Best Home:

- Birds and reptiles 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 and Reptiles 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, wooden perches, cuddle bones, heat lamps and bulbs.
- Educate members of the community about proper bird and reptile 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.

Station e. Dogs

To the right of the front desk, inside the Noble Family Animal Care and Adoption Center

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, but you may ask a staff person at the front desk if you would like to walk a dog.**

Dogs at the MSPCA:

- We take in nearly 1000 dogs a year, 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 1/4 of the dogs surrendered to us are purebred, and about 1/4 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 f. Horses

Safety Considerations:

Horses are easily startled, so please use a quiet voice when in our barn. No running, yelling, feeding, or touching animals. Please stand aside when horses are being brought in and out of their stalls. Ask a staff or volunteer if you would like to learn more about a particular horse.

Horses at the MSPCA:

- In 2007, 21 horses were surrendered to the MSPCA at Nevins Farm. In 2011, just four years later, over 70 horses were surrendered to the MSPCA.
- Many horses are surrendered because of the high cost of horse ownership.
- We work closely with MSPCA's law enforcement department providing transportation and the collection of evidence in cases where horses are seized due to abuse or neglect.
- The only places that horses can't see are directly behind them and directly in front of them. This is why these can be dangerous places to stand when working around horses.
- Females are called mares, males are called stallions, and castrated males are called geldings.
- Horses should be housed in stalls, which should be large enough for the horse to turn around, lie down, and stand up. Stalls should be clean and dry, and protect a horse from bad weather.
- Horses need exercise to stay healthy. At the MSPCA at Nevins Farm, our horses are brought to paddocks during the daytime to graze and stretch their legs.
- Historically, horses have been working animals; they were bred to be ridden or to pull carts. Most modern horses have a lighter workload, and when deprived of an appropriate amount of exercise can become overweight and unhealthy.
- We are proud to have an Equine Ambulance as part of the MSPCA at Nevins Farm. The Equine Ambulance program is designed to provide emergency care and transportation to sick and injured horses. We have provided care services at national sport horse events.

Best Home:

- Horse owners need to consider many factors: the cost of food, appropriate board, acquiring tack, and riding/exercise.
- Our horses are at various stages of training. Adopters need to be prepared to work with a horse at its current stage.
- Adopters should form a relationship with an equine veterinarian to provide routine care, or emergency care in the event of an injury.

Ways to Help Horses at the MSPCA:

- Consider adoption!
- Donate Wish List items: gift cards to Dodge Grain and Dover Tack, mineral and plain salt blocks, long lines, horse clippers, natural sponges, vet wrap, horse fly spray and masks with ears, thrush buster, double diamond rope halters and matching heavy-weight lead ropes.
- Donate to Ashton's Fund, which provides medical care to farm animals in need.
- Educate members of the community about proper horse care.

Station 9. Goats, Sheep, and Pigs

Safety Considerations:

Please do not feed or touch the goats, sheep, or pigs. Ask a staff or volunteer if you would like to learn more about a particular farm animal.

Goats, Sheep, and Pigs at the MSPCA:

- As many as several dozen goats, sheep, and pigs are surrendered to Nevins Farm each year.
- The cost of care and zoning laws are the most common reasons for surrender of these animals.
- When pot-bellied pigs are surrendered, it is often because the previous owners intended to keep the animal indoors and it was destructive.
- We work with law enforcement to take in animals that have been neglected or abused.
- Sheep must be shorn each spring to keep them cool all summer long and to make sure their wool grows back in time to keep them warm all winter long.
- A farm animal's hooves need to be trimmed every few months.
- Goats and sheep eat a diet that should consist mainly of high-quality timothy hay. Grain is often fed to underweight goats, and salt blocks are a great supplement for all goats.
- Sheep and goats are ruminants, so they digest their food twice.
- Pigs are usually very clean animals. However, they like to dig in the dirt for roots and other food to eat, so they are best kept as outdoor animals.

Best Home:

- Most farm animals should have between 20 and 50 square feet of enclosed housing available to them, plus between 50 and 200 square feet of exercise area. Large pigs require more space than sheep or goats. The best housing is enclosed barns or sheds for pigs and 3-sided sheds for goats and sheep.
- High, sturdy woven-wire fences with electric wire at the top and bottom is recommended.
- Goats make great companion animals for horses and other farm animals.
- Check with local zoning laws if considering a farm animal, and locate a veterinarian who can provide preventative and emergency care. These animals should be given dewormers, hoof trims by an experienced vet or farrier, and have yearly rabies vaccines.

Ways to Help Farm Animals at the MSPCA:

- Consider adoption!
- Educate members of the community about proper farm animal care.
- Rather than visiting a petting zoo, visit the MSPCA at Nevins Farm! Not all petting zoos care for their animals properly, so it is important to support responsible farms.

Station h. Chickens, Ducks, and Geese

Safety Considerations:

Please do not feed or touch the chickens, ducks, or geese. No fingers in the fence, please. Birds have strong beaks and can bite hard. Ask a staff or volunteer if you would like to learn more about a particular bird.

Chickens and Water Fowl at the MSPCA:

- From several dozen to several hundred chickens and water fowl are surrendered to Nevins Farm each year, depending on whether any large groups are taken in.
- The most common reasons for surrender include noise, cost, zoning laws, and unwanted chicks.
- Roosters come in very frequently because neighbors often complain about their crowing all day long, and some roosters can be aggressive towards people, pets and other birds.
- We work with law enforcement by taking in birds that are neglected, strays or that aren't allowed in the town because of zoning restrictions.
- Our coop usually has a variety of chickens and ducks, and sometimes geese.
- Chickens have an interesting digestive system. The crop is where the food they eat is stored, and then the food moves to a muscular sack called the gizzard. Chickens eat small pebbles and stones that are stored in the gizzard. When food moves into the gizzard the muscles contract and the stones grind the food like teeth.
- Ducks need to be around water. They must be able to dip their eyes and bill under the water in order to stay healthy.
- These birds have a flock pecking order and need to live with other birds.

Best Home:

- The only homes considered for our birds is one in which they will be pets!
- The board of health in each community sets up specific zoning guidelines for livestock. It is important to check with your town's zoning laws before adopting a bird.
- Each chicken should have at least 3-4 square feet of enclosed housing in its coop.
- The ideal coop provides protection from bad weather and predators, provides ample exercise room (at least 10 square feet per chicken), and provides ventilation in summer heat and protection from cold drafts in winter. Coops need to be dry. It is best to provide nest boxes for egg laying.
- Egg hatching is discouraged, so we tell adopters to pull eggs that their chickens lay.

Ways to Help Chickens and Water Fowl at the MSPCA:

- Consider adoption!
- Educate members of the community about proper chicken and water fowl care.
- If someone you know is considering an egg-hatching project in a classroom, encourage them to speak to someone at the MSPCA before doing so to learn important information.

KIDS WISH LIST FOR THE NEVINS FARM AND EQUINE CENTER

We always appreciate **GIFT CARDS** to the following stores to help purchase items that our animals need:

Walmart, Staples, Dodge Grain, Dover Saddlery, Home Depot, Petco, Petsmart, Target & All Local Supermarkets

HAY - an average horse eats half a bale of hay a day! Supporting our "Buy a Bale" program helps to raise the money needed to purchase hay to feed our horses. Running a "Buy a Bale" fundraiser with your friends is also a fun way to support our barn! You can make a donation towards hay online at <http://www.mspca.org/buyabale>. Hay is probably our number one needed item for the farm animals, and it is one of our number one costs at the barn.

PINE SHAVINGS - We use pine shavings as bedding for our horses stalls. Because certain types of wood can make horses very sick (like black walnut, cedar or butternut shavings), you will want to purchase bags of pine shavings specifically made for horses at your local equine equipment store (like Dover Saddlery or Dodge Grain). Most horses find pine shavings to be quite comfortable!

THRUSH BUSTER - Thrush is a common "foot fungus" ailment that affects horse's feet problems that range from mild discomfort to lameness. Thrush can be caused by lack of regular picking and trimming/shoeing or from horses being kept in overcrowded or muddy paddocks and dirty stalls. Thrush Buster, as the name implies, helps us to treat the horses that come in with this ailment. If you have horses at home, some of the things that you can do to protect your horse against thrush are keeping your horse stall clean and fresh, providing your horse with lots of turnout and exercise, not overcrowding paddocks, daily hoof picking, hoof trimming/shoeing every 6-8 weeks, and ensuring your horse eats a healthy diet.

COTTON LEAD ROPE WITH CHAIN - A lead rope is a rope with a snap on one end that attaches to the halter and is used to lead our horses from their stall to their paddock. Leads can be made of materials such as leather or synthetics, but we prefer to use the more ecofriendly cotton version.

SUGAR IN A PLASTIC CONTAINER - You will probably be surprised at how we use this at our equine center! When mixed with betadine, the sugar forms a solution that is used to horses with wounds on their feet!

FAST ACTING DIGITAL THERMOMETER - These thermometers are used to quickly take a horses temperature when they are sick.

STRAW BROOMS, MANURE FORKS, & WHEELBARROWS - Cleaning up after farm animals is hard manual work! We need a lot of brooms, manure forks, and wheelbarrows to do the job.

DOUBLE SIDED CLIPS - Double sided clips are used to secure our horses feed and water buckets in their stalls.



KIDS WISH LIST FOR THE NOBLE FAMILY ANIMAL CARE & ADOPTION CENTER

We always appreciate **GIFT CARDS** to the following stores to help purchase items that our animals need:

Walmart, Staples, Dodge Grain, Dover Saddlery, Home Depot, Petco, Petsmart, Target & All Local Supermarkets

BLEACH - Ever wonder how we keep our animal shelter sparkling clean? We use bleach to clean each animal room, every single day! Bleach is a chemical used for disinfecting materials and surfaces, which is very important at an animal shelter. Just like us, if animals are kept in unsanitary conditions, they will be unhappy with their living conditions, and are also more likely to get sick. With more than 12 rooms that house animals in the Noble Family Animal Care and Adoption Center alone, we need lots of bleach to keep our animals healthy and happy!

CAT LITTER (clumping or non-clumping) - With around 1,200 cats surrendered to Nevins Farm each year, we go through a lot of cat litter! At the adoption center, we use non-clumping cat litter for our cats, since spilled cat litter can collect in our floor drains and clog them. Litter boxes filled with non-clumping cat litter need to be completely emptied each day, since it is not possible to fully remove urine from the box any other way. In our cat foster homes and offices, we prefer to use traditional clumping cat litter, which allows for easy waste removal.

TOWELS, BLANKETS, SHEETS & COMFORTERS (new or gently used) - Every animal needs a comfy bed! We go through tons of blankets (comforters, afghans, fleece ect.), sheets (pillow cases, flat or fitted), and towels (bath & hand sized) every year, making warm and comfortable bedding for our animals in the adoption center. Donating your used bedding to the animals at the adoption center is a great way to "recycle" them for good cause. Gently used or new dog and cat beds are also OK to donate. No pillows PLEASE, as our animal friends tend to make a big mess with these

LIQUID LAUNDRY DETERGENT - We do about 30 industrial sized loads of laundry a day at the adoption center, and washing blankets and toys for all of the animals at Nevins Farm uses a lot of liquid laundry detergent!

CANNED CAT & DOG FOOD - While the majority of our cats and dogs are happy to eat the Science Diet brand food that our veterinarians recommend, some of our residents can be very picky eaters! For those animals that may need a little bit of extra encouragement to eat during their shelter stay, we like to have a selection of other brands of food on hand that they may find more appealing.

ANIMAL TOYS (new or gently used) - One of the most important things that we do to help our animals be happy while they are here at the shelter is to exercise and play with them! Physical and mental stimulation is key to keeping pets from becoming bored or frustrated. While many people tend to donate toys to our cats and dogs, don't forget that our small animals (birds, rabbits, guinea pigs, ferrets, etc.) need toys too! Stuffed animal toys should be made for animals, not people, as stuffed animal toys for people can have parts (buttons, eyes, mechanical parts, etc.) that can be dangerous if our animals were to ingest them.