

VOLUNTEERING

at the **SAVED SOULS ANIMAL SHELTER** in Khon Kaen, Thailand



We would like to start by thanking you immensely for your interest in volunteering with us to help the hundreds of animals here at Saved Souls Animal Shelter!

The help, hard-work and commitment volunteers provide is essential to our cause, and brings hope to the 550+ dogs and 45 cats we have at our shelter.

Get ready to get sweaty, dirty and to receive hundreds kisses from our dogs daily!

Although it can be emotionally challenging to see the injured and sick animals we save, please know that the difference you will make will last forever, both in your heart and theirs.

WELCOME TO THE FURRY MADNESS!



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ALLOW US TO INTRODUCE OURSELVES

Saved Souls Foundation is a non-profit registered animal charity located in North Eastern Thailand, away from the beaten tracks.

It was started in 2010 by Gabriela Leonhard, who, driven by her compassion and love for animals, decided to establish a sanctuary to welcome all unwanted, unloved or abused dogs and cats that would cross her path.

The shelter is currently home to 550+ dogs and about 45 cats. Their origins are diverse - some are local rescues, saved from abusive situations or from the streets after injury or disease. Some are survivors of the illegal dog meat trade who were redirected to Saved Souls after having been saved from trucks by activists. Others were found abandoned at our front door. And many of them were sent to Gabriela by individuals or smaller organisations all around Thailand who had rescued them from the streets, but sadly had no place to shelter them.

WHAT WE BELIEVE IN

We believe in offering shelter and food to the animals who have no place to go or no one to look after them is a very noble cause. Every new rescue is not “just another dog” on our list, but a frightened soul that needs some food, a warm place to call home and lots of love.

However, we know that continuous individual rescues cannot be the long-term answer to the stray overpopulation problem in Thailand. Overpopulation means diseases, abuse, starvation, suffering and pain.



Sterilization is the only long-term solution! At Saved Souls, all animals are sterilized, but we are currently lacking the resources to extend a big sterilization project outside our walls. It is however a goal we are pursuing, and we have started to conduct small projects in the nearby villages.

The animal shelter is divided into areas A and B with 75 enclosures. Some of the enclosures are subdivided into lowercase letters. In addition, you will also find a clinic and enclosures for disabled dogs.

Don't forget that our animals are looking for a home, so feel free to fall in love and take one (or more) home!

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OUR REALITY

Saved Souls Animal Shelter is constantly facing many difficulties and issues. The shelter has become overcrowded, understaffed, with a cruel lack of funding. Its remote location and its poor visibility locally has so far prevented implementation of an efficient adoption program, resulting in a continuous flow of intakes but very few departures.

The staff (8 keepers for over 500 animals) is extremely stretched to perform its basic husbandry duties – cleaning, feeding, basic maintenance, etc., and sadly it means that there is not enough socialization time left for the dogs or for cats, impoverishing their quality of life.

Enclosures and runs are getting old: they need many repairs and improvements (concrete floors to replace the sand base that floods every monsoon season and attracts fleas and ticks and other unwelcome pests, enrichment features in the pens and cages to improve

the physical and psychological health of our residents, new roofs offering better cover and light, etc..).

We have our small clinic, but equipment and supplies are very limited, restricting us in the level of medical care we would like to provide.



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OUR SPECIAL NEEDS DOG

The population of Saved Souls Animal Shelter includes about 80 special needs dogs. Most of them were left paralyzed or required limbs to be amputated after road traffic accidents. We are also home to many blind dogs. Saved Souls is one of the rare shelters in Thailand to admit disabled dogs. We believe here that everybody deserves a chance!

Disabled dogs require specific care and attention. They are prone to sores, some need to be expressed, all need to have some exercise time on wheelchairs, physiotherapy or hydrotherapy.

At this moment in time, our facilities and arrangements sadly do not permit us to match those daily standard requirements, which is why we need your help! With volunteers on our team, we can have enough staff to make sure our disabled dogs get the attention they need.

Saved Souls Animal Shelter is currently in the process of improve its facilities and its daily running in order to offer better lives to rescue animals.

And for this ...

EVERY SOUL IS VALUABLE

» WE NEED YOU! «



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WORKING AS A VOLUNTEER AT OUR SAVED SOULS SHELTER

ASK YOURSELF

- Do you mind getting dirty? Our daily work involves a lot of grooming, enclosure cleaning, walking on muddy trails etc.
- Are you able to work with very little / zero supervision or guidance after your initial training?
- Are you able to avoid becoming overly distressed when witnessing difficult and emotional situations with injured, sick or disabled animals? Your distress can quickly pass to the animal, causing them more fear and stress. A cool head is key!
- Do you have an open mind? We operate with little funding and may not do things the way you expect.
- Will you respect and accept that the staff are already fully trained in their duties? Suggestions are happily welcomed and we do ask that volunteers come to management for any ideas they have!
- Are you able to work in a hot and humid environment?
- Have you got a deep willingness to help animals to the best of your abilities?



Volunteering with animals is hard work that requires commitment. It is not for everyone – loving animals is half the battle, but it's not enough. Even if you have volunteered in different charities or organisations before, please understand that the current situation of Saved Souls makes it an even more of a challenging environment than other charities, and that as a volunteer here you will be **required to be very independent, proactive, hard-working, committed and open-minded.**

Full training will be provided, and management will always be there for you for any questions, suggestions or concerns, but your schedule for the day will consist of mostly unsupervised work, either alone or with a volunteer for company! This can include asking you to feed a section of our dog enclosures, or asking you to take a dog on a walk around the area, or asking for your help to clean an enclosure.

Please take the time to think about those questions before joining us. Not put off by any of those questions?! Great! It means you are the right person, and we will be delighted to welcome you here.

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How you CAN HELP DURING YOUR STAY

1. Socialize, socialize, socialize. And then, socialize some more!

Socialization is very important for the behavioural health of the animals as it ultimately helps them find new homes in loving families. With so many dogs, you can guess that there are many different temperaments to be encountered.

There are the extremely friendly ones who are in desperate need of love and attention and who would welcome you with wagging tails, licks and a lot of happy excitement.

There are the shy ones, who are not accustomed to being stroked or cared for and who will need a bit of time to adjust.

And then there are the extremely timid dogs, who remain fearful of humans and cannot be touched. For those guys, we advise you to spend some quiet, non-interactive time with them in the enclosure, reading a book or just enjoying the scenery. This will allow the dogs to get used to your presence and become more comfortable. Volunteering at this shelter will require some extra patience.

Only a very small percentage of our dogs know how to walk on a lead / or obey any commands.

Volunteers are encouraged as much as possible to do some basic training with the dogs to improve their adoptability!



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2. Cats need love too!

Our cats have a special room with a small outside area. They are also in need of socialisation and human contact, so if you love cats (or simply want a day off from your usual company of wagging tails!) please give them a visit and spend some time with them.

Our cats can also range from extremely friendly to very timid, to socialisation is encouraged!



3. Disabled dogs

We have been lucky to have had many wheelchairs donated so we could provide our paralyzed dogs with the exercise they need, but in practice our staff do not have the time to use them. Volunteers are encouraged to use those wheelchairs to give our special needs dogs some physical exercise! Sessions need to be kept short and fun. Also be careful of dogs that are loose around the shelter.

Some of our disabled dogs can also benefit immensely from physio or hydro-therapy (we have a special pool and wet suits for our volunteers!). Short sessions of hydrotherapy (for example 3 sessions of 45 seconds swim with 2 minutes' rest in between) can help dogs with low mobility build back the muscles they have lost. Physiotherapy is also very important – massages, flexing legs.

Medical advice need to be solicited from the vet team/management prior any exercise if you are unsure.



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4. Photographers, Youtubers, Videographers, Instagramers - Content Creators

One of our main goals is improving our visibility online and to do that we need imagery! A LOT of it.

We are always looking for high quality content of the shelter and its installations, portraits and videos of the dogs and cats, material about the work accomplished in the clinic, the list is endless.

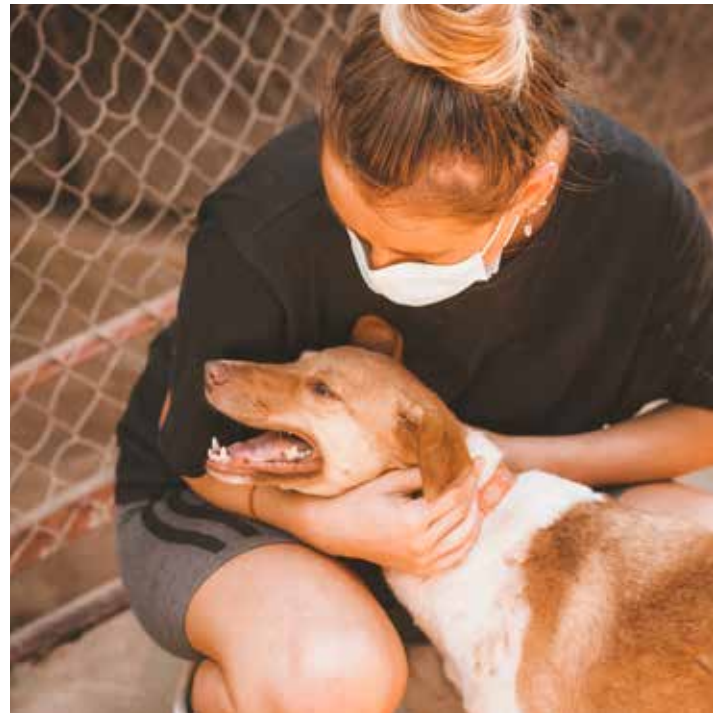
We encourage you to take pictures during your stay! Please feel free to share with the management of Saved Souls Animal Shelter any material that could benefit the marketing of our shelter. Any videos or adorable pictures you take will benefit us greatly in showing the rest of the world our lovely animals in need of a home!

Tag us in your posts! Feel free to use our hashtags to contribute to our social media campaign.

**#AnimalShelterThailand #SavedSoulsAnimalShelter
#VolunteerinThailand #SavedSoulsFoundation
#BeASoulSaver**

5. Keep an eye on the animals

With so many residents and very few staff, it is unfortunately easy to miss an animal not feeling well, or with an injury, etc. This is one of your most important tasks of your day! Acting as an extra pair of eyes for all of our animals during your daily routine and reporting any modification of behaviour or health issues to the vets or the management is vital to us!



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GROUND RULES

- Always use caution when trying to walk a dog on a lead as there are many loose dogs around.
- Please be careful with dogs that do not belong to the animal shelter, as they might be aggressive and could start a fight.
- Please return the dogs to the correct enclosure, it is extremely important. If you're not sure, ask one of our staff members.
- Please do not give "rewards" during your runs, as this can lead to jealousy between dogs and start fights. If you are looking to give one of our dogs a little more love, ask a staff member what the best way to do this is!
- If, for some reason, a fight begins while you are on a run, you can clap your hands, use an authoritative voice, stomp your feet, or sprinkle the dogs with water. DO NOT attempt to separate or hit the dogs at any time. If this does not help, please call the caretaker.
- We advise you to wear long sleeves and long trousers to protect you from scratches – dogs love to jump on people as a form of greeting!
- Despite being regularly treated, it may be that you see dogs with ticks. If you know how to remove them, do so. If not, inform a member of the staff.
- Always use caution on the runs. Most of the enclosures have an exterior and an interior gate. Always close the outer door first and then open the inner door. Many of these dogs are escape artists and can be out in a second: please be extra careful in the runs with single doors.
- If you see an animal that looks sick, please alert a staff member!
- You are responsible for the tidiness of your bungalow / volunteer house during your stay. At the end of your stay, please leave the premises the way you found them upon arrival.

Before coming

- We strongly recommend a doctor's visit before coming to Thailand to discuss recommended vaccinations. These may include Typhoid, Hepatitis A and rabies. Consult with your physician regarding such recommendations.
- You need to have a travel insurance. Saved Souls Foundation cannot be held responsible for any accidents, bites or any medical issues that might arise. On arrival you will be asked to sign a waiver of liability. While we have never had any accidents or problems, it is necessary to mention that working with animals is a bit more hazardous than a 9 to 5 office job.



WE ARE LOOKING FORWARD TO MEET YOU!