

## You Can Make a Difference

**Always wanted to help out at an animal shelter, but thought it would be too emotional? Here are 23 ways to help animals without breaking your heart.**

*Maryjean Ballner*

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Manual labor. Hard work is welcomed to mend fences, fix cages and maintain shelter property. Behind the Scenes Some volunteering doesn't even require your presence at a shelter: Special projects. The ASPCA has a unique opportunity for book-loving volunteers: the Children's Bibliography Project. "Volunteers read and review books that give appropriate and positive messages about animals, which [we] post on our website," Grant says. Drivers. Collect donations from businesses or individuals, or drop off newsletters and fliers to local merchants. Attorneys, paralegal. Legal expertise can save nonprofit organizations expensive fees. Sewing. You can create pet beds and cat toys for shelter animals, or sell them to raise money. If you can't sew, you can cut fabric and pin batting for shelter sewing sessions. Shelter exhibits. Staff information booths at malls, county fairs and social events. Fliers. Hang fliers around your neighborhood to generate publicity for fund-raising events. Financial donations. Any amount of cash helps. Thrift shops. Shelters often have an associated thrift store, or an on-site retail store. You can volunteer to work there or donate items for the store to sell. Although spending time in an animal shelter can be emotionally taxing, the sadness is far outweighed by the knowledge that your actions make improvements. Being happy and useful often walk hand-in-hand. So, whatever your expertise, make that phone call: There's a shelter ready and waiting for you!

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