Information you should know for your Volunteer Stay with Us!

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7th kilometer Chania-Rethymno Highway, Souda Bay 73200
Crete

www.soudashelter.org

Who are we and how did it all begin?

The project began back in 2016 when the founder, Elizabeth Iliakis, unwillingly inherited the space which is known today as The Souda Shelter Project.
Back then though, it was nothing like it is today.
Then the space was occupied by over 250 animals.
There were no separate enclosures to keep the animals but 100 chains all around the perimeter of the shelter.
One hundred dogs chained and another 150 dogs running loose.
It was a nightmare of a space which needed change.

For the shelter to become what it is today, a lot of blood, sweat and tears was put into it.
The shelter tries to not house more than 100 animals.
The animals are very carefully looked after.
The dogs are well fed,
The spaces are super clean.
And the dogs are super socialized.
Their mental well being supersedes all other needs.
All dogs are treated as you would your house dog, with any medical needs tended to, with blankets and warm beds, toys and treats and with loads of love.

We are situated in the municipality of Chania, on the beautiful island of Crete.
Excellent food, even more excellent beaches and sights to see, Chania is an impressive city with very hospitable inhabitants.

Our Team

Our team consists of Elizabeth, founder and director of the Project. Elizabeth handles everything from finding funding, organizing building projects, corresponding with members and interested parties, interviewing potential adoptees, organizing events, dealing with legalities, budgeting and much more.
Elizabeth is a born and raised New Yorker who has been challenged with accusations of dog trafficking and illegal operations and has overcome all, keeping the shelter in full operational mode for all of these years.
Hundreds of animals have come and gone through the shelter doors. The shelter has hundreds of successful adoptions with testimonials which flood the social media pages of the Project.

Senior resident staff Amelie has been with the shelter from 2019. Amelie is of German descent.
She is the momma bear of the shelter; every animal looks at her and feels for her in a "different" way. It shows in the photos she captures of them; they love her like a momma love. Most all the amazing photos you see on our social media pages are Amelie's. Amelie handles the hands-on operations of the shelter, keeps track of all the medical therapies while observing every detail of each animal to make sure their stay is comfortable and each soul content.

Richard Turner and Craig Parker are two new members of our core team. They are from the UK and have worked fostering for the shelter in the past. Huge animal lovers and kind gentlemen, Richard and Craig's welcoming disposition make everyone feel at home, both two and four legged beings!

Sophia is a resident volunteer who has studied animal care and is very observant and delicate with the animals. She is a local. Sophia

makes sure each area she works in is spotless and the animal she comes in contact with happy.

Lisa is a resident volunteer who has worked full time at the shelter. Now, she visits and helps once a week. When she first joined us, Lisa had never dealt with dogs. A short time later Lisa runs the shelter operations like a champ getting the job done and done right. At this point you would never know that Lisa had no relations with dogs before, she and they are one. Lisa is from Germany as well.

You will also notice other volunteers during your stay, some of them come every year. Other volunteers are from school projects like Erasmus and others are freelance volunteers.

Fortunately for the Souda Shelter Project we are always graced with volunteers from all around the world who share the space and their love for the animals.
As one of our volunteers from Finland said, "Once you visit Souda Shelter you will always come back!"

Map of the Shelter

The shelter is comprised of ten parts and two entrances.

Warehouse

Kitchen area

Roadside

Main yard

Dog run

Backside

Finnish pens

Quarantine area

Carpen

New area

The most important rule of thumb is to always keep in mind that ALL DOORS MUST BE CLOSED TO ALL AREAS. Dogs are territorial, pack animals and if an animal is in their space and not in their pack, that animal is in danger of being killed. When moving in and out of an area always make sure no animal goes in or comes out with you.

VOLUNTEER INFORMATION BEFORE GETTING HERE

Before setting out on your trip to help us please make sure you realize the following:

For fall/winter months: Greece is cold and wet in the winter.
Temperatures can go down into the single digits.
Rain is constant.
Please make sure to pack waterproof and warm clothing. Wellies or rubber boots (galoshes) are a must.

For the spring/summer months: The Greek sun is dangerous.
Please make sure to keep heads covered with some type of hat.
Please make sure to use sunblock and to have light clothing.
Again rubber boots, Wellies (galoshes) or some other waterproof, slip-proof shoe a must.

In general, bring comfortable clothing according to the season which you do not mind getting dirty or wet.
Wellies can be bought here at the local hardware store for about 10 euro if you do not wish to carry your own.
We do have some extra that have been left behind by other volunteers but sizes are not a guarantee.

Our animals are all individual characters that require specialised attention. Some have been abandoned, some abused, each with a story of their own. Therefore, we have to be selective with the volunteers who come to help us. We usually expect you to have some experience with animals or if none, we need to know that you have a willingness to learn.
The Souda Shelter Project is a busy,
working rescue and we need people who are hardworking, reliable, flexible and a team player to cope with the
challenges that happen in all animal rescues.

ONCE YOU ARE HERE

Once you are here you will need to carry a packed snack or lunch with you and water/beverage.

Workday begins at 7am and ends at 3pm except if for drastic weather condition days. There is a second shift from 11am to 7pm. In the summer months, the workday is split, midday is too hot for the animals and for the workers so the day begins at 7 and ends at 1 or 2pm, depending on the degrees. There is a 2 hr night shift which is usually a one man shift.
Depending on the need for help, we will let you know what shift you will be assigned to. The most work is done from 7am to 11am so that is when the most help is needed.

Volunteer Code of Conduct

The SSP looks after some very vulnerable animals that require specific and important care.
For this reason, there is a Code of Conduct which everyone must strictly adhere to. There is zero tolerance for disrespecting the work ethic at the shelter. It could mean danger for you, the animals and your fellow workers.

- Follow the instructions and requests of the core team at all times.
- Pay careful attention when first being introduced to the various dogs. They are dogs and dogs can bite if triggered. If you are unsure of an animal and cannot remember its described character, feel free to ask a team member.

- Close and clip every gate or door behind you unless otherwise specified.
- Respect the animals and their space at all times. If animals are sleeping, let them sleep.
- Do not touch full food bowls.
- When cleaning, be careful NOT TO wet the animals or their bedding, make sure to pick up toys, etc. Bedding gets hung while cleaning and put back immediately after cleaning the space, toys get soaped and washed along with the bowls.
- Don't hug the dogs. Most have been abused and the gesture is aggressive and challenging to some animals.
- No picking up dogs, especially puppies before shown the proper way. And even then, avoid it unless one of the staff asks you to. A dog/puppy can get severely injured falling from someone's arms. Sit down with them and hold them that way. They love it and so will you.
- Immediately inform the team if the animal you are caring for is not right. For example, the animal shows weakness, will not get up to eat, has had very loose bowel movements or has thrown up.
- Do not make any changes to the dietary intake of the animals. Follow strictly either the request of the team or the board showing the daily dietary intake.
- If there is a fight amongst the dogs DO NOT get in between or put any hands or legs in the way. They will get bit! Dogs, when in fighting mode will not distinguish between the dog they are fighting and yourself. GRAB A WATER HOSE or water bucket. The act of fighting sounds very violent and deadly. Don't panic, you have time to grab some type of water to distract them, snap them out of their frenzy.
- Mobile phones are NOT welcome while interacting with the animals during cleaning and feeding. Mobile phones ARE welcome after the chores are done if you would like to take some selfies with the animals or some photos of the animals. Please feel free to share any photos you would like with us. We will use them on our social media platforms. You can send them to Elizabeth in WhatsApp.

- If something is requested of you by the team that you are not comfortable with, let them know. If there is something you do not understand, let them know. If you have been hurt, let them immediately know.

Daily Work Routine

As stated earlier the workday begins at 7am.
Upon arriving at the shelter, we change if necessary, into our work shoes, clothes.
Medicines are given by core staff only unless requested otherwise.
Assignments are given.
The space you are assigned to is the space you will clean (scoop, hang bedding, wash, wash bowls and toys, reapply bedding unless dirty, then with the advice of the team, replace).
The space you are assigned to is the space you will observe your animals.
Please carry treats with you which you will get from the team. Use the treats to enter/exit the spaces freely by luring the animals into wanting them and throwing them to the other side of the pen to enter. SMALL BITE TREATS PLEASE! Ask the staff.
Are your animals doing well? Do they have an appetite in general to play, for snuggles, are they curious? If so, great! If not let the staff know.
We will try to keep you in the same area for your stay to get to know your animals thus being more observant of your animals while learning their habits.
Once washing is done, there is food preparation and feeding.
Then there is one last round of scooping.
Please make sure to clean your scoopers regularly throughout the day. Please do not leave your scooper full, in the middle of the shelter. It smells terribly and is greatly unappealing to visitors. If you are done with your space or taking a break, immediately wash your scooper.

Breaks are fine being this is a physically demanding job. Feel free to take 15 minute breaks to get out of the sun, hydrate or grab a snack. Please inform the team when doing so.

Please note, cleaning thoroughly your space, your drains, your hose is imperative in leaving a clean, good smelling, healthy environment for our dogs.

It should take about three days before you start to get the hang of it.
Remember, the core team is there to support you and encourage questions.
Sometimes you will be working alone, sometimes with others so it is essential that, should you finish your work early, you continue to help your teammates.

The SSP works best when the team works well together.
NOBODY FINISHES UNTIL EVERYONE IS FINISHED.

And always remember wherever you are in the shelter make sure you always keep an eye on the animal(s) that you are with. Leave the enclosure if you do not feel comfortable. Immediately advise the team if any negative encounters occur.

OUTSIDE OF WORK

Chania is a fairly safe city. Please use the same precautions as you would in your own hometown.
Yes, there are strays in the street.
Please do not call to tell us about them unless they are injured and need immediate medical assistance.
There are three animal welfare groups working in the city so most probably they are already being cared for.

If you have any instances where you need help, you are not feeling well or you are in a difficult situation, feel free to call Elizabeth at

anytime. She obviously will not mind if it is a situation that needs immediate assistance.

Overall we would like to welcome you and wish you a pleasant, joyful, extraordinary experience.
Our dogs are awesome, our staff is kind, Chania is beautiful and the cause is worthy! ENJOY!

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Sincerely,

Elizabeth Iliakis
Founder and Director of Souda Shelter Project
President of the Philanthropic, Animal Welfare and Cultural Organization KYNonia
www.soudashelter.org
www.KYNonia.org