



Everyone one of us has been labeled a volunteer at least once in our lives and I am sure you must have felt proud of that. Everyone does, because being a volunteer is about selflessly contributing one's time and effort for the benefit of others without expecting anything in return - that makes us feel good. People volunteer for different reasons: some just for the sake of earning credit or a certificate, some to gain new experiences and to build a network of new friends. Personally, I think it's

not important to question why someone is volunteering as long as they are utilizing their time sincerely to help someone and not just pretending to help.

As humans, we are unique and differ in terms of individuality: our likes and dislikes. Throughout life we make choices and develop certain affinities towards people and things. For me it has always been about animals. They are in most regard, the noblest and humblest of all creatures. They know of compassion and love which even humans seem to forget. It is distressing that we bear witness to a sad reality where animals, especially dogs, (in Nepal's context) are being abused and treated badly.

Street Dog Care Centre is a No Kill Centre located in Boudha and run by Andrea Bringmann who is from Germany. Seeing the poor condition of street dogs in Nepal, she made it a point to do something for them. The Centre was established in 2009. It tries its best to lend a helping hand to save and give a new lease of life to dogs that are diseased and injured. The activities are carried out in the center where up to 20 dogs in

Why I think being a **volunteer** **is cool**

TEXT & PHOTOS BY SAMYAK MOKTAN

serious condition are treated and looked after. They remain in the center until they are healthy and fit enough to venture back into the streets. The center also administers yearly Rabies vaccination program, sterilization in case of canine transmissible venereal tumor and facilitates adoption both in Nepal and abroad. It is in some sorts a safe haven for dogs, who for most of their life time have never known love. This was where I chose to volunteer and yes, I have to say that my time there was nothing less than an emotional upheaval. There were moments of culminating happiness together with instances of sheer grief.

My task as a volunteer was to help the veterinarian while

treating the dogs; to make them feel comfortable because just like us, even dogs are mighty scared of being poked by a syringe. I was to also help pacify them when they were in severe pain. Sometimes it was difficult as the dog would get scared and thus aggressive, making it difficult for us to control them. Dogs do have a temperament of their own but don't get disheartened; this is not the only job for a volunteer. You can also help by bathing the dogs, taking them for walks, powdering and brushing their fur or just playing with them and their adorable puppies.

Additionally, Street Dog Care Centre also manages a Saturday Day Camp inside the premises

of Boudhanath Stupa. This camp happens at 2 PM in the afternoon every Saturday. The basic idea is to encourage people to bring in sick dogs that they see lying around the stupa or from surrounding areas that are sick or injured. A veterinarian is present at the help booth with necessary medicines and dressing material and immediate help is given to the dog. If a certain dog's case is severe, it is taken to the care center and treated properly. Volunteers play a huge role as they help to hold the dog down so that the doctor can treat him/her. The next time you go to Boudha on a Saturday, you will definitely see the cool 'dog lovers' at work.

It is important to note that a volunteer's work is crucial because dogs get frightened and do not cooperate at times. It is hard for them to grasp that humans are trying to help them and not hurt them. So it is in the volunteer's hands to help the dog feel better and for me, that measure up to a mighty task, which will make you feel happy and proud of yourself. There can be no greater pleasure than to know that a dog is happy, healthy and feeling safe.

So take this moment and acknowledge how lucky we are to have been leading a happy life and let us also focus our attention on those who did not choose to suffer but are suffering. Further, with this realization we can choose to offer a little bit of our valuable time by volunteering. Volunteering for the sole purpose of helping another being is indeed cool. Volunteering could make you *look* and *feel* 'cool' for all the right reasons and that is something you would like, wouldn't you? 🐾

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